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*An investigation into culture shock and its effect on  
international students in a tertiary environment in New  
Zealand.*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for a  
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## Abstract

Culture shock is a term associated with the adjustment that one experiences when exposed to a culture different to one's own. In the context of this research, culture shock experienced by international students travelling to New Zealand for the purpose of education is examined. The research questions explored are: What are the components of culture shock, and how does this affect the learning experience for international students? What is the gap between student expectations and reality in the teaching and learning environment? What are the tensions for academics and other key institutional staff in supporting international students?

A mixed method approach was adopted with a questionnaire used to inform the questions for a small focus group. The key findings showed that although students were generally satisfied with their international education experience, there were areas which created challenges for both students and academics. Different expectations about how education occurs and the job role of academic staff, along with challenges settling into a new community impacted on feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction experienced due to culture shock. Finance and English language challenges were the most prominent components of culture shock experienced by international students. The need to find a part time job to reduce financial pressure; challenges created by translating information between mother tongue and English; and cultural distance were experienced by many students. Students experienced freedom of expression which was new for them, and unexpected in their learning sojourn. The practical element of teaching and the use of business examples exceeded student expectations. Aspects of Fanghanel's three types of academics – productive, reproductive and transformative were all present in the minds of the students, which, on some level created tensions between staff and students over the role of an academic. Aspects of culture shock such as accommodation and financial pressures were noted as tensions affecting the educational experience for international students.

Components of culture shock were experienced to some degree by all students in this study. Differences in the expectations of the role of academics were experienced by students, particularly by those from an Asian cultural background where the teaching and learning environment in their home country is quite different from New Zealand. Students felt that academic staff on the programme showed traits of all Fanghanel's categories reinforcing gaps in expectations and reality within the student experience in the programme and perceived ambiguity of the role of an academic in postgraduate education.

## Preface

This thesis looks at the issue of culture shock for international students studying in rural New Zealand. A questionnaire and focus group provided the raw data for this analysis. It has been written to fulfil the final requirements of a Master of Education from Massey University, and was researched and written between July 2019 and June 2020. Ethics approval was sought and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee in September 2019.

This project was an area of personal interest for the researcher and was completed with support and guidance from supervisors Associate Professor Sally Hansen and Dr Genaro Oliveira.

To my husband Nathan and daughter Roseanna who put up with me working nights and weekends to complete this research, thank you both for your love and support. You are my motivation!

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## Glossary

The definitions noted below provide clarity regarding key terms used in this study. They give context to the terms used in the New Zealand environment. They have been taken largely from Ward's (2001, p.2) work in the New Zealand educational context:

Cross cultural	involving more than one culture
Cultural distance	the amount of perceived similarity / dissimilarity between two cultures
Host national's	individuals who are nationals of a country that accepts (and hosts) international students
Sojourner	a person who temporarily relocates to another country, generally for a specific time and purpose (e.g. education, work) with the intention of returning to his/her home country.
Culture shock	the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes (Oxford Dictionary, 2019)
Acculturation	exposure to and the possible adoption and assimilation of customs and culture of host country, in order to 'settle' in their chosen population is the process of acculturation (Hartwell, Edwards & Brown, 2011, p.1393)

# 1. Introduction

*An investigation into culture shock and its effect on international students in a tertiary environment in New Zealand.*

## 1.1 Setting the scene

This research looks at the postgraduate international student experience at the Southern Institute of Technology (SIT) in Invercargill, specifically focusing on culture shock and its effects within this population. The researcher is an academic within the School of Business at SIT and has noticed a gap in the expectations of international students around the teaching and learning environment on arrival to study in New Zealand. This study explores the distance between student's expectations prior to coming to SIT and once they have been here for one semester or more. The study also posed the question if there is a missed opportunity for tertiary institutions and academic staff to better prepare international students for the teaching and learning environment in New Zealand. In gaining a better understanding of the teaching and learning environment, the role of an academic is considered using the categories proposed by Fanghanel (2012) – production, reproduction and transformation.

The Southern Institute of Technology (Te Whare Wananga o Murihiku) is a regional tertiary institution based in the Southland province of New Zealand. Tertiary education was established in the Invercargill area in 1885 and the main SIT campus resides in the city, with smaller campuses in Gore, Queenstown and Christchurch (Studyinnewzealand, n.d). SIT offers over 160 programmes at master's, postgraduate, graduate, degree, diploma and certificate levels (SouthlandNZ, n.d). International students are an important part of the fabric of SIT, with over 1,800 international students (964 EFTS) from various parts of the world studying in 2018, out of a total pool of 13,131 students (4168 EFTS) (SIT, 2019, p.5). As an Institute of Technology, SIT is one of 16 Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) in New Zealand. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority defines an ITP as an institute that "delivers technical, vocational and professional education. They also promote research, particularly applied and technological research, that aids development" (NZQA, n.d, para4). The ITP sector is separate to the University sector with a more vocational focus to their subject offerings. Since 2008, in an attempt to address labour shortages in Southland, SIT adopted new strategies to encourage international students to Invercargill (SIT, 2019a).

The Southland Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) has been a key promoter of the importance of international students in the region to attract a "working age population with young families to complete post-graduate qualifications and take up employment in

Southland” (SoRDS, 2015, p.45). SIT’s growth in international student numbers aligns to the International Education Strategy for Southland which is forecasting the enrolments to grow to “over 2800 International students by 2025” (SIT, 28 March 2019b, para9). The growth in the international student market is also in line with the recently published international education strategy, where the New Zealand Government is actively seeking to market international education for social, cultural and economic benefits (New Zealand Education, 2018). International students are seen by SIT and the Southland community as a means to bolster population and the workforce (SoRDS, 2015), and enhance the cultural diversity of this rural community and ensure its ongoing longevity (Southland Chamber of Commerce, 2017). It is for this reason that the current study will be of both economic value to the institution and scholarly value to address the gap in the literature.

## 1.2 The issue of culture shock

The Oxford English Dictionary defines culture shock as “the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life or set of attitudes” (Lexico, 2019, para1). Culture shock is a concept which explains the disconnect between expectation and reality which can be hard to cope with (Cummins, Catling, Hogan & Homer, 2007). It is a phenomenon which can be experienced by international students arriving in New Zealand to start their study. Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman (2008) suggested that “the notion of culture shock has been transformed into contact-induced stress accompanied by skill deficits that can be managed” (p.65). This can be seen in the challenges international students face because they are not aware of the social norms in a host country. Cultural nuances, coupled with a second language, and studying in a new environment can impede a student’s ability to acclimatise to a new environment. Feelings of culture shock have been described as stresses related to attempts to achieve psychological adaptation - loss of role, friends, and prized possessions; fear of rejection by the members of the new culture; confusion in the attempts to forge a role in the new culture; anxiety or disgust in response to cultural differences; and general feelings of helplessness, including confusion, depression, and frustration (Pyvis & Chapman, 2005 cited in Egenes, 2012).

Research by Chapdelaine & Alexitch (2004) showed that a lack of culture-specific social skills impeded the ability of international students to have effective interaction with hosts and this created social difficulty. The U-shaped curve proposed by Lysgaard (1955) to understand cross cultural research, notes culture shock as one of the four stages of the model. A review of this model conducted by Lewthwaite (1997) indicates that the following four elements are present: “(1) The honeymoon high, followed by (2) a bottoming out resulting from cultural

maladjustment (culture shock stage), and finally a climb up and out to (3) cultural acceptance and (4) adaptation” (p.168). An investigation of the literature around the use of Lysgaard’s theory by Black & Mendenhall (1991) suggested that generally the U-shaped curve hypothesis is supported, but that different methodologies makes the ability to generalise results of the studies reviewed problematic. In this review it was suggested that culture shock happens more often when the cultural distance is further between the home and host culture (Hofstede, 1980 cited in Black & Mendenhall, 1991). With an increase in students from an Eastern or Asia Pacific context where cultural differences are more marked, it is expected that students from these areas are more likely to suffer from culture shock. The cultural distance between Eastern and Asian Pacific and New Zealand culture is greater than students from other Western cultures, such as America and the UK.

While there has been research related to various aspects of international students studying in New Zealand (Ward, 2001), there is very little which deals with the aspect of culture shock. It is this gap in the research literature that has encouraged the researcher to explore some of the aspects of an emerging intercultural approach to the learning environment. According to Selvarajah (2006) “Culture is a complex phenomenon. There is no universally accepted means of measuring culture, nor has there been any satisfactory method to examine the interaction between cultural elements and other factors which may be at play” (p.143). Culture shock recognises the importance of social interactions for international students in their education journey and institutes are active in reaching out to students about the feelings they may experience as students in a new culture (Exeter University, n.d). Research suggests that the main adjustments common to international students are language, academic, social and cultural, and financial areas (Cheung, 2013). It is these aspects which have been explored in greater detail in this study.

New Zealand was one of the first Western countries to permit open access to study for Chinese nationals, and education providers experienced an exponential rise of students from this area, with China being the largest source of international students (NZ Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2018). The business of international education became a global phenomenon, and statistics show that the number of international students increased rapidly, with 83% of students from Asia in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2017), with an estimated eight million international students worldwide by 2025 (Bjandari, 2009 cited in Cheung, 2013). The economic value of international education is high, with over \$5 billion attributed to this export earner (Beehive, 30 Oct 2018).

The New Zealand Education Strategy 2018-2030 was recently launched by the NZ Government to acknowledge the expectation of international education in its contribution to a thriving and globally connected New Zealand (NZ Government, 2018). The role of internationalisation in education is noted in the literature as one of contrasts; on one hand a variety of benefits, on the other, a steady stream of challenges (see Rennick, 2015; Cadman & Song, 2012; Skyrme & McGee, 2016; Skyrme, 2005; Ting, 2012; Williams et al, 2013). Research into the area of culture shock experienced by international students, and how this influences the interaction with academic and institutional support staff will be of significant value in this challenging environment.

### 1.3 International Education Environment: the global market and the New Zealand environment

Competition for international students has increased markedly since the 1950s when systematic research about this phenomenon first appeared in the literature. Globalisation has increased competition in the international education arena, with universities looking to better accommodate the diverse needs of the international student (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). Global citizens are important to better understand issues such as sustainability and climate change in the future, making international education an attractive avenue for policy makers (New Zealand Government, August 2018, p.22). However, the challenges of attracting well-qualified international students is complex (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015, p.254). With an estimated “five million internationally mobile students, expected to increase to 7-8 million by 2025” (New Zealand Government, August 2018, p.11), a piece of the global education pie is an important trade commodity for many countries and an important strategy for tertiary institutes (Muthaly, Lobo, & Jen-Yuan, 2013; Yean, 2012).

In New Zealand international education has increased in the past five years, particularly in the Chinese and Indian student markets making up 50% of all international students in New Zealand (New Zealand Government, August 2018). The benefits to hosting international students are not only economic, although this is often a key driver (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Yean, 2012; Selvarajah, 2006; Lipura & Collins, 2020). Greater understanding of other cultures, contribution to the advancement of knowledge, and improved global relationships are also key elements to international education (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004).

### 1.4 The International Student Market in New Zealand

New Zealand was one of the first Western countries to permit open access to student visas by Chinese nationals (Ministry of Education, June 2014), and China remains one of the top five

source countries for students along with India, Japan, South Korea, and America (Ministry of Education, 2013). In the 1950s as the rest of the world was also experiencing a boom in international education, New Zealand introduced the Colombo Plan where students from the Asia-Pacific region attended New Zealand universities (New Zealand Government, August 2018). Since then, the international student market has gained momentum, and in the last 25 years has become a large export industry contributing \$5.1 billion to the economy in 2018 (New Zealand Education, 31 October 2018). Students from China and India are key source markets for the ITP sector (Ministry of Education, June 2014), with over 26% of international students studying at tertiary level (i-Graduate, 2011). The value of international education has been recognised in the literature for some time, along with its significance as an overseas revenue earner (Selvarajah, 2006).

It is interesting to note, that 75% of international students to New Zealand didn't apply to any other countries (i-Graduate, 2011), showing a positive outlook in the market. The reasons why students choose a particular country for their educational sojourn include: reputation, price, subject offerings, applied orientation, recommendation, personal contacts with academics, pathway and articulation arrangements, location and speed of response, and the opportunity for study in an unfamiliar culture to prepare themselves more effectively for an international career (see Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015; Muthaly, Lobo, & Jen-Yuan, 2013; Kaur & Singh, 2015). They aim to seek a perceived higher quality of education than in their home country, making them more likely to gain jobs with multinational employers (see Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

The New Zealand Government recognises the value to the economy and culture as "it generates economic benefits to the NZ regional economies; supports tourism; increases global trade, investment links and international collaboration; enriches NZ education; enhances the skills and productivity of the NZ workforce; and increases cultural capital and cultural diversity" (New Zealand Government, August 2018, p.8). Policy documentation related to supporting international students has been developed showing the importance of this market from a national level, most recently the International Education Strategy (New Zealand Government, August 2018) and the International Student Wellbeing Strategy: economic wellbeing, education, health and wellbeing, and inclusion (New Zealand Government, August 2018). These reports clearly acknowledge the importance of the international student market in New Zealand.

## 1.5 International Students at the Southern Institute of Technology

The international student market has been hugely important to the Southland region and was identified in the Southern Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) as a key contribution to the economy. “International students have made a steady and growing contribution to the Southland economy and community over many years... predominately completing post-graduate and business programmes” (SoRDS, 2015, p.45). The Southland community is supportive of the influx of international students with Venture Southland offering free workshops for these sojourners to get up to speed with employment rights and employment opportunities, and to encourage employment in the local community (Education Counts, 2018a). SIT values the importance of international students, not just from an economic point of view, but also because domestic students get an opportunity to interact with diverse cultural experiences which is beneficial to our society (New Zealand Government, August 2018).

## 1.6 Academic roles in teaching international students

The role an academic plays in the experience that international students has is considered part of the concept of culture shock. Research by Skyrme & McGee (2016) indicates that tension exists for academics trying to support international students in tertiary study, and through the exploration of the issue of culture shock and the gap in student expectations and experience this present study connects the role of the academic in the student’s educational journey. Roberts, Dunworth & Boldy (2018) found that helpfulness of academic staff impacted on an international student’s perception of institutional support services and they discussed some of the challenges for both students and academics in an Australian environment, touching on the theme of gaps in expectations.

Although international education is not a new concept, challenges remain around differing expectations of academics, students and institutions alike (Crossman & Bordia, 2008). Skyrme (2005) suggests that language remains one of the key barriers for both international students and academic staff. Her study of Chinese international students showed that although students met English language requirements to study at a New Zealand tertiary institution, this did not necessarily extend to their ability to make sense of lecture material or communicate both orally and in a written form at the required level (Skyrme, 2005). This was echoed in the study completed by Song (2014) which showed that language is the main challenge for international students with English as a second language. These finding aligns with the concept of ‘shock’ associated with a host culture.

Conflict over the role of an academic in Higher Education (HE), and uncertainty over *whose job is it?* to manage and support international student expectations is complex. Marquis & Meadows (2018) noted both societal and individual expectations of HE academics contributing to the complex environment. Skyrme & McGee (2016) used Fanghanel's (2012) categorisation of tertiary teachers to provide clarity about the differing intentions of academic staff. Fanghanel proposed a framework that academics operate to a large extent according to their values about education using three main categories – production, reproduction or transformation (Callow, 2013). The biggest contrast was between transformative teachers and reproductive teachers as noted by Skyrme & McGee (2016). Their research suggested that teachers with a transformative orientation were much more likely to feel that supporting international students was part of their role than those with a reproductive focus, who indicated the onus was on the students to adapt to the discipline and learning challenges were seen as *not my job* (Skyrme & McGee, 2016).

### 1.7 Rationale for study

The current study explores the difference between student expectations of tertiary study prior to leaving their home country and once they arrive. Alongside this, it considers the complex role of an academic in supporting international students to show how important culture shock is in the relationship, and how this affects the gap in expectations. Research by Cheung (2013, p.223) suggests the main adjustments common to international students are related to language, academic, social and cultural, and financial areas. These five aspects have been used to explain the effect of culture shock and identify which student group(s) were most affected. In addition to addressing an academic literature gap, the research is also significant because of the increasing competition for international students globally (see Manjet Kaur, 2015; Zhang, Worthington & Hu, 2017; Ross, Heaney & Cooper, 2007). It also acknowledges the importance of a satisfactory experience for the student in gaining good international student numbers in future years (Bayyurt, 2019). Aspects of academic experience for international students such as curriculum design, teacher knowledge, academic standards and institutional support are captured and related to culture shock and overall satisfaction with the education experience. Marketing of a positive student experience can be useful for connecting with prospective students.

### 1.8 Potential benefits of the study

Satisfaction of the international student group is a key driver for marketing and attracting prospective students (Generosa, Molano, Stokes & Schulze, 2013). Potential benefits of this study for the Southern Institute of Technology include opportunities for better management of

both staff and student expectations to improve support for international students in the learning environment. It is anticipated that this current study will also help to address the gap in the literature regarding student perceptions of international study in the New Zealand environment. Further, this study has the potential to have wider implications for the New Zealand international education environment and may be replicated in other tertiary environments to provide wider results and comparisons on a global scale, as we better understand the expectations of international students in the tertiary environment.

### 1.9 Research Design – exploratory research

This study primarily aims to explore aspects of culture shock that are experienced by international students, identify who experiences culture shock and why, and examine how culture shock influences the role of academics in HE, and how academics are components of and contributors to culture shock. A secondary aim is to provide recommendations to the institute about possible ways to mitigate culture shock, and better align the distance between students' and academics' expectations and actual experience.

A questionnaire was conducted with the postgraduate international population within the School of Business at SIT, and these data were analysed to inform the direction and questions for the nested sample who became part of the focus group discussion. Questions for the focus group were constructed to explore themes from the questionnaire. It was considered that using a sequential approach would influence the research questions for the qualitative phase of the data analysis, which gives legitimacy to the second phase (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

A simple random sample was chosen for the quantitative phase where any international student studying on the postgraduate programme has an equal and independent chance of being chosen for the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The student experience from the questionnaire results was used to inform the questions for the next phase, the focus group. Therefore, qualitative data is the dominant research method in this study, exploring the difference between expectations and reality of these international students. A nested sample was used for the qualitative phase as this sampling method allows for further investigation and explanation of themes and concepts identified in the previous stage (Ibid). Students who completed the questionnaire were asked to advise the researcher of their interest in participating in a focus group to discuss their experiences further. The theory discussed by Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) was used to inform these decisions.

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) advocate the use of a mixed methods approach to provide greater understanding than what could be achieved by using only one method. Using a mixed methods approach to gather quantitative data on the student group, allows the researcher to identify themes and patterns from within their responses. The focus group adds the student *voice* to the results and greater level of depth to the statistics. Using a focus group, themes in the statistics are explained through content analysis, descriptive summaries and quotes (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The study gathered data to answer the research questions separately and then combine them to “maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of each type of data to answer the research aim” (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2010, p.5). Therefore, the research questions which guided this study (noted over the page) were developed to align with the respective strengths of each method to investigate the same underlying phenomenon as suggested by Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2006).

#### 1.10 Research Questions

The quantitative method is the initial phase of the study to gather the student experience, with the qualitative method allowing greater explanation of the quantitative data and to make connections with the role of an academic. A focus group can be defined as “composed of a small number of participants, facilitated by a ‘moderator’, in which the topic is defined clearly and precisely and there is a focus on enabling and recording interactive discussion between participants” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016, p.716). Strengths of the qualitative approach include a variety of aspects, but for this research this method is designed to get an understanding and description of people’s personal experiences of the phenomena (culture shock) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The use of a focus group in this way overcomes the weakness of the quantitative questionnaire which will tell us where the problem is, but not necessarily why there is a problem. In this study the focus group was used to discuss pre-held views on the issue (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The researcher was the moderator. The focus group participants were selected from a nested sample of the questionnaire sample.

The research questions were constructed to investigate key elements of the research aim. They were devised after considering the literature around the subject area and identified gaps in knowledge. Stage one of the research, the questionnaire, looked to gather data about RQ1 and RQ3. The second stage, consisting of the focus group, added value to RQ1 and sought the student voice for RQ2.

RQ1

What are the components of culture shock, and how does it affect the learning experience for international students?

RQ2

What is the gap between student expectations and the reality in the teaching and learning environment?

RQ3

What are the tensions for academic staff and other key institutional staff in supporting international students?

### 1.11 Research Thesis Profile

The following chapter investigates the literature themes which underpin the study, focusing on the key areas of culture shock, international students and the challenges that academics and support staff face in a complex tertiary educational environment. The methodology chapter will give specific detail about the research design, sample, analysis and objectives to support the research. A mixed methods approach will be used, incorporating both questionnaire and focus group methods to investigate the research questions. This will be followed by a chapter to present the findings and analyse key areas of the primary research. Interpretation of the findings will incorporate theory and the participants' voices to answer the research objectives. Finally, the research will be concluded, with a discussion of limitations and opportunities for further research uncovered.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews seminal and contemporary literature related to the area of culture shock for international sojourners in the global HE context, with a specific focus on literature relevant to the New Zealand tertiary situation. The review explores the theoretical grounding for culture shock and look at how this informs our knowledge of the current environment. There has been a growth in New Zealand based literature since the early 1990s (Hartwell, Edwards & Brown, 2011) and this will be a key consideration to develop a contextualised discussion of the topic. This review seeks to consider the available literature to gain a better understanding of key concepts and research conducted to date.

### 2.1 Introduction

There is a wide variety of research which looks at the journey of the international student, their educational sojourn and the influence of culture shock. Yet the issue of culture shock has retained the interest of researchers in the field of academia. Research shows that international students must adjust to their new surroundings and encounter more cultural and language issues than domestic peers (Cheung, 2013). Globalisation continues to increase the numbers of educational sojourners, and cross-cultural human capital is gaining more recognition (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011; Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi & von der Heide, 2016). Although various authors have noted that there is a huge amount of literature related to the international student experience, there is still room for added value (Ward, 2001; Selvarajah, 2006; Saravanan, Mohamad & Alias, 2019). Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim (2014) noted that “the silver lining ... is increased ethical awareness among countries and higher education in hosting and safeguarding the student throughout their international higher education experience” (p.235). With the numbers of international students arriving into New Zealand rising, and the benefits of export education highly sought after (Ward, 2001), the way that institutions accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds will be of increasing importance (Skyrme, 2007 cited in Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016).

### 2.2 International Student

An international student is “loosely regarded as a student holding foreign nationality who is pursuing post-secondary education outside of his/her country of origin” (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014, p.236). Other terms we see being used interchangeably with this are “foreign student”, “overseas student” and “sojourner” (Ibid). Literature about the international student appeared after the 1950s when there was a greater recognition of movement of students for education and the social and psychological problems which accompanied them (Araiza &

Kutugata, 2013). The move towards global citizenship in business, accelerated the push for study abroad, with a widening emphasis on the skills that could be gained from an international sojourn (New Zealand Government, August 2018). This saw the beginning of a body of knowledge to explore the impacts of studying abroad with students who are learning the host culture from a position of an outsider (Greatrex-White, 2008). In the context of this research, sojourners are defined as “from other countries who are in New Zealand temporarily for tertiary study” (Lewthwaite, 1997, p.167).

### 2.3 Culture

According to Selvarajah (2006) “culture is a complex phenomenon” (p.143), cultures differ in terms of expectations, cultural norms, distance, customs, traditions and language (Basarab, 2015; Vromans & van Engen, 2013). Culture is a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instructions for governing behaviour (Geertz, 1973) or a patterned way of thinking, feeling and reacting (Kluckhohn, 1954 cited in Chung, Fam & Holdsworth, 2009). Research suggests that culture determines behaviour, and that the motivation for acculturation depends on the willingness to learn about the new society and the willingness of society to open to different cultures (Nayar, 2015). Culture determines how an individual reacts and responds to the challenges in their new environment (Basarab, 2015). Often students choose international education to learn a new culture and experience different business environments, taking steps towards becoming global citizens. In the context of HE and the sojourner, culture is very important because many students perceive that they are leaving behind traditional learning and teaching experiences to embrace a new, more challenging style which they perceive to be superior (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014).

### 2.4 Culture Shock Definition

Culture shock is a phenomenon “experienced by people who spend an extended period of time (usually more than three months) in a foreign country. This phenomenon takes the form (state) of stress (unfolding through a process) caused by the transition of an individual between culturally different climates” (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011, p.89). There is a wide range of literature about culture shock and a range of different terms which have been used to describe the adjustment that someone goes through when experiencing a new culture. Terms such as culture shock, adjustment, cross-cultural adaptation, acculturation, cultural distance, reality shock or sojourner adjustment can all be found in the literature to describe this phenomenon (Ward, 2001; Cummins, Catling, Homer & Hogan, 2007; Black & Mendenhall,

1991; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008), with the term culture shock repeatedly refined and renamed (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004).

Similarly, the concept of 'shock' is debated widely, and some academics indicate that the shock which comes from stressful life changes, may be more accurately portrayed as part of an adaptation process rather than shock itself (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013). The dominant theory suggests that this is a universal phenomenon, where 'shock' occurs because there is a "disconnect between expectation and reality which can be hard for an individual to cope with" (Cummins, Catling, Hogan & Homer, 2007, p.271). Although Kealey (1989) cited in (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011) provides a contrary argument, suggesting that it is not inevitable that shock will occur. The literature is united in recognition that culture shock doesn't affect everyone the same, and the variety of models show diversity of thinking within the academic community. This research will use the term culture shock as the dominant term to describe the adjustment someone goes through when experiencing a new culture. Although the term is being constantly discussed and adapted in the literature, 'culture shock' is still seen as the most common explanation of this phenomenon in the body of literature.

Seminal theorists are many, as the body of knowledge has gained traction since the first studies in the late 1950s. Kalervo Oberg, anthropologist, is recognised as an important contributor to early literature introducing the term 'culture shock' in his work in 1960. According to Oberg, culture shock results from the changes to cultural signs and symbols which create anxiety, frustration or helplessness (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; see also Furnham, 1992). Originally, Oberg referred to culture shock as an occupational disease (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011), but over the course of time this term has been adapted as more research is conducted and the term is debated in the literature. Disciplines such as social psychology and education have studied the concept of culture shock (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013), and cross-culture literature in sociology uses culture shock often to present the negative feelings which are described in research (Greatrex-White, 2008). Terms such as adaptation and acculturation are being increasingly used instead of culture shock as the academic debate recognises the ability to manage and improve the effects and symptoms of culture shock (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013).

Norwegian sociologist Sverre Lysgaard contributed to this body of knowledge with his U-shaped curve (1955), a formal model to describe the unfolding of culture shock (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011). Variations of this model remain a dominant point of discussion around culture shock theory in contemporary literature today.

## 2.5 Theories of Culture Shock

There are numerous theories of culture shock which expand on the seminal work by Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg (1960). These theories provide conceptual frameworks within which research can be conducted, and predictions can be made about the amount of distress caused by the change of culture (Furnham, 2012). The U-curve model proposed by Lysgaard (1955) was found to be the most commonly used theoretical framework for culture shock in a review by Black & Mendenhall (1991), and researchers were generally supportive of the U-shaped curve. However, this review also noted that most used Lysgaard's model as a "description of phases of adjustment (rather) than a theoretical framework of how and why individuals move from one stage to the next" (Black & Mendenhall, 1991, p.232).

## 2.6 The Effects of Culture Shock on International Students

International students choose to move away from their home culture to study abroad for a variety of reasons, and the stressors that they are likely to experience often fall into two categories: academic and educational environment, and socio-cultural and personal (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013). The literature discusses a number of the different ways which students might be affected by culture shock: withdrawal (Selvarajah, 2006; Cheung, 2013); stereotyping (Ward, 2001), homesickness (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011); difficulty adapting to cultural norms (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010); language issues in day to day life (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011); lack of local exposure and experiences (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014); lack of social networks and support (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008; Chong & Razek, 2014); lack of confidence in English language at an academic level (Lewthwaite, 1997); stress related to academic achievement (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013); loneliness (Chong & Razek, 2014); underrepresentation racially on campus (Chong & Razek, 2014); and financial considerations / difficulties (Lorz, Netz & Quast, 2015).

Living away from one's home country requires an adjustment in a sociocultural, environmental and physiological way (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013), and there is a strong theme in the literature of anxiety and anticipation which comes with living independently in a new country (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). A mismatch of expectations is a key part of the literature related to culture shock and the international sojourner, with research suggesting that many students were unprepared for the differences (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011). Students, particularly from Asian countries are reported in the literature as having the most challenges, with differences in Western (Individual) and Confucian (Collective)

based societies providing extra challenges for this group (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Lewthwaite, 1997). Often students are unsure how to operate within the new culture, Berry (1998) indicates the crucial issue is “whether to (1) keep their original identity and behave in accordance with their original cultural values (attachment) or (2) adapt to the host mainstream culture and behave in line with the host cultural value system (adjustment)” (cited in Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi & von der Heide, 2016, p.654). Individuals tendencies towards either the attachment or the adjustment orientations form their identification with the respective culture.

Social learning theory suggests that adjustment is part of the learning process when exposed to a new culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1991), yet this can be stifled by ethnocentricity. If a sojourner believes that their own culture is superior to that of the host country, then research indicates that these students will be more likely to experience culture shock (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). However, it is a complex process, and Greatrex-White (2008) propose “a sense of being tied to the home culture; moving back and forth like an object caught on the edge of a wave – neither in the sea or on the beach. The host culture might be seen but not always understood, whilst the home culture, previously invisible and taken for granted, suddenly becomes very visible” (p.535). It is these differences in behaviours and expectations at a host university that can challenge students, leading to effects of culture shock (Rienties, Heliot & Jindal-Snape, 2013). This difference can be distressing for students with language issues who have difficulty expressing themselves in social and academic situations (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011).

Positive experiences expressed in the research often stem from students who have greater levels of participation in social interaction with host nationals, for example, peer mentoring programmes (Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016); authentic prearrival information e.g. videos of a typical lecture, previous student experiences (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011); matching expectations with reality regarding performance (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014); and social interactions with hosts (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). Positive peer interactions or having host national friends alleviates some of the negative aspects of culture shock and research shows that students who have positive experience with peers are likely adjust more quickly to their environment both academically and socially (Chong & Razek, 2014). In the academic environment this adjustment differs according to the skills and abilities of individual students (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013). Matching the psychological contract between sojourners and institutions is seen to be key to reducing culture shock on

campus (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014, p.155). Something the literature suggests could be better managed by institutions.

## 2.7 International Students in the New Zealand Tertiary Environment

Although there have been international students in New Zealand since the 1950s, most of the recent literature is written in American, UK or Australian contexts (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014). However, there is some good evidence-based research which has been conducted in several tertiary education settings in New Zealand (see Ward, 2001; Lewthwaite, 1997; Selvarajah, 2006; Chung, Fam & Holdsworth, 2009; Nayar, 2015; Skyrme, 2007; Skyrme & McGee, 2016). There is a clear focus on providing for the diverse needs of international students, as research shows that institutions need to meet student expectations and avoid feelings of disappointment or exploitation among the sojourner (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). The recent Government policy around the International Student Wellbeing Strategy indicates the direction and expectations from a regulation level (New Zealand Government, June 2017). Research shows that the first year of study is particularly stressful for sojourners (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014), and the onus on tertiary institutions has always been clear to provide the resources to cater for both academic and social needs of students (Lewthwaite, 1997).

New Zealand was the first country in the world to introduce pastoral care requirements for international students (in 2002) (New Zealand Government, June 2017). This initiative has been supported by the implementation of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice which updated requirements and focused on the outcomes expected from agents and education providers. These documents are in line with the aims of the International Education Strategy (New Zealand Government, August 2018). There are examples of institutions with good support systems for international students, including the Southern Institute of Technology.

The International Student Barometer Survey indicated that tertiary institutions provide orientation sessions to help international students settle into their new campus life (i-Graduate, 2011). New Zealand has an international reputation for being safe, but research shows that international students are often young, living away from support systems and can be vulnerable leading to negative experiences in our country (New Zealand Government, June 2017). The importance of the international student market underpins the policy documentation at Government level, and the participation of individual institutions at grass roots level (New Zealand Government, August 2018).

Financial factors strongly influence international students in New Zealand, and they are acutely aware of the higher fees they pay (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). Research shows that financial expenses, travel costs and strong family pressure to succeed can add to culture shock (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013), and the decision-making process to study abroad (Lorz, Netz & Quast, 2015). Although superiority of host country education is seen as an influencer of student choice, research in the Australian context indicated that there is little evidence to support this as research often comes from an institutional context (acceptance rate, completion rates, institution rating), rather than the student's point of view (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). This lack of shared expectations may compound cultural differences and lead to varying degrees of culture shock (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011). Although there is much Government support for international students in the New Zealand tertiary environment, student numbers on campus, in itself is not a predictor to develop intercultural interactions or understanding (Ward, 2001). Institutions need to provide adequate academic support for students such as cross-cultural communication, study skills and English language skills (Selvarajah, 2006; see also Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). For students who aren't part of the dominant culture in a tertiary classroom they can be misunderstood as under-prepared, unmotivated or unintelligent (Ward, 2001), which further exacerbates cultural distance and culture shock.

## 2.8 Academic Challenges for International Students

International students who come to New Zealand have four main adjustments: "language, academic, social and financial" (Cheung, 2013, p.223) to contend with in their sojourn. International students also come to New Zealand to experience a new culture, and although this is not a new situation, the differences can create transition and adjustment difficulties (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). There are a range of studies which have been conducted on the level of interaction between domestic and international students. Generally international students want greater interaction with host students, and this is particularly visible between countries with a high level of cultural distance, especially Asian cultures who report low levels of interaction with host students (see Ward, 2001; Greatrex-White, 2008; Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016). Of course, those students who have strong friendship networks and support systems are more likely to adjust quicker, with less stress (Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016; see also Ward, 2001; Lewthwaite, 1997).

Language is an important aspect of the discussion in the literature, with language proficiency noted as a key challenge (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011; Cheung, 2013). The English proficiency tests that students complete before acceptance into a tertiary programme (such as Test of

English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or similar) do not guarantee success, and many sojourners still have difficulty with the language (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011; Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Although English language tests are being refined all the time (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010), the scores students gain in these tests may not reflect their true abilities (Cheung, 2013), causing contradictions between expectations and ability (Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Research suggests that many sojourners experienced difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cheung, 2013), this carries through to challenges in communication in everyday life (Rudolph, 1994 cited in Lewthwaite, 1997; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012).

Research by Selvarajah (2006) showed different cultures often preferred different assessment methods (see also Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). Each student will bring their own expectations about education, formed from their home education experience (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011), adjusting to a new educational system is complex (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). This complexity may present in the classroom in a variety of academic challenges, such as: anxiety around examinations (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Lewthwaite, 1997); lack of participation in classroom activities because of different learning practices, differences in expectations around critical analysis, oral presentations and participation (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011). Some of these behaviours can be misunderstood by teaching staff, and training may help to better support the learning needs of international students (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011).

## 2.9 Evidence of Changes in the Classroom

“The educational environment is a microcosm of the larger society and reflects its values, traditions and practices” (Ward, 2001). As more research is conducted, a better understanding of the needs of international students has seen changes to curriculum and pedagogy (Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi & von der Heide, 2016; Ward, 2001). Current research indicates that institutes and the social networks of students have a large impact on how international students adjust in an international learning environment (Rienties, Heliot & Jindal-Snape, 2013; Cheung, 2013). The literature refers to institutions moving towards internationalising their offerings, where both content and the process of education are considered (Ward, 2001). Studies in the Australian environment looked at how to include a more Asian teaching and learning culture, for example group assessment (rather than individual) (Selvarajah, 2006). Yet other studies have shown how students appreciate the skills they learn in a Western style classroom (Cheung, 2013). However, international students often report differences in expectations versus classroom reality (Yean, 2012; Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi & von der Heide, 2016). Evidence

also suggests that internationalisation still largely occurs within the dominant Western context. Business classrooms traditionally use a range of Western teaching and learning strategies that focus on critical analysis, oral discussion, problem solving, case studies and discussion groups that can be unfamiliar to international students (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011).

Active learning or team-learning has increased in HE and the use of technology is on the rise to provide a more student-centred environment (Rienties, Heliot & Jindal-Snape, 2013). Studies have shown that Chinese students preferred to work with other Chinese students, over other cultures because of cultural differences or unspoken norms which mean they don't feel they can express their views freely in a classroom (Ibid). Group work was also seen as an area of concern in the literature, where students (particularly from Asian cultures) felt high levels of anxiety because of their preconceived language deficiency (Lewthwaite, 1997; Cheung, 2013). In summary, the literature shows that although there have been some efforts made to understand the diverse needs of international students, very little of this has consistently been adopted at a classroom level.

## 2.10 Gaps in Student Expectations in Education

There is a lot of discussion in the literature regarding gaps in sojourners expectations of cultural differences, of academic expectations, of behaviours, customs and social skills (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). Furnham & Bochner's (1982) model suggests that sojourners experience difficulties because they do not know the implied social rules that regulate interactions with peers (cited in Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). Where there is high cultural distance between home and host culture, this is further exacerbated (Lewthwaite, 1997). Research into satisfaction levels of the sojourner in New Zealand suggest that positive interaction with academic staff, has a direct bearing on satisfaction (Lewthwaite, 1997). Students' ability to adapt to their new environment was noted in the literature as an incremental and reiterative process following the principles of Andersons (1994) model (Lewthwaite, 1997).

A common theme in the literature was the evidence of culture shock at a variety of levels of the sojourn experience. The four stages of Lysgaard's (1955) U-shaped curve were repeatedly reported in the literature to describe gaps in expectations and their effects on culture shock (Arunasalam & Burton, 2018; Greatrex-White, 2008). This culture shock also links to expectations around unethical academic behaviours such as plagiarism (Ting, 2012; Skyrme & McGee, 2016), and was backed up in the study by Sharaei, Nejati, Quazi & von der Heidt (2016)

which found that students' level of acculturation to the host country attributed to unethical plagiarism intentions.

English proficiency was again dominant in the literature, and the impact language skills have on both academic and social adjustment (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). The quality of information that sojourners gather before leaving home, has a direct relationship to expectations of education in the host country and the gaps that are experienced (Muthaly, Lobo, & Jen-Yuan, 2013). However, research from Australia contrasts with this view and indicates that sojourners adapt well over time and can successfully complete their education goals, much the same as domestic students (Volet, Rensha & Tietzels, 1994 cited in Ward, 2001).

### 2.11 Interaction of Sojourners with Institute Support Staff

The literature showed that there was a wide variety of support services on campus for sojourners, helping to manage expectations, close gaps and reduce culture shock (see Hemsley-Brown, 2015; Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014; Llorca & Cots, 2014). Orientations for students with clear cultural expectations were reported as successful initiatives in the literature including counselling, multicultural societies, Writing and Academic Centres, and social clubs (see Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014; Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011; Lewthwaite, 1997; Yean, 2012; Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011; Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010; Cheung, 2013). Research from Australia suggested that the most important aspect of an institute's support for students was clear information about ...” not just content, but the learning processes, the social activities, and the links to potential employment. International students are looking at the world from a different perspective, assessing the relevance and quality to fit into a context quite different from the one in which they decide to study” (Daglish, Haker, Lawson, Nelson & Reese, 2011, p.168).

Pre-entry information material is an aspect which, although reported in the literature, is not done so in detail. Most research has been conducted when students arrive the country, very little examines what happens pre-arrival. Crossman & Bordia (2008) talked about the importance of the psychological contract and making sure expectations are set in advance of arrival to ensure fulfilment of expectations. Studies have shown that cultural information is important (Lewthwaite, 1997). Open days with a physical presence from an institute can help to manage expectations of prospective students (Chung, Fam & Holdsworth, 2009), and the

need for improved intercultural competency of staff (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014). This gap in the literature is investigated in more detail in the following study.

### 2.12 The Role of an Academic

There is a good body of knowledge in the literature about student expectations of academics, and about academic experiences with students. The challenge appears to be about where the role of ‘teacher’ starts and ends? Skyrme & McGee (2016) discussed the tensions of scaffolding and support for students versus student autonomy and the attitude of staff that ‘it’s not my job’. The literature notes cultural differences in expectations between Western and Asian learning. Pratt (1991) commented that American teachers are facilitators promoting autonomy in their learners, consistent with Ward (2001) findings with British teachers as organisers, but Chinese teachers were authority figures whom students do not question (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). This finding highlighted the research by Cheung (2013) who noted that Chinese students (used to a teacher centred model) struggled in a Western context where their educational background and limited English language made academic adjustment more difficult.

As noted previously in the literature, most sojourners to New Zealand come from Asian countries, and the mismatch of expectations in cultural beliefs and values about education is crucial to the levels of culture shock experienced. Although numbers of sojourners have steadily increased in recent times, the point is made in the literature that international students are expected to adapt more than teachers to academic norms (Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016). However, there is limited research about the roles and responsibilities of academic staff (Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Further, it is also frequently proposed in much of the literature that the onus of successful integration of international students to an institution should be at an institutional policy level (Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016).

### 2.13 Challenges for Academics

According to Skyrme & McGee (2016), “tensions and complexity are not in themselves necessarily bad things and are not even ever avoidable. Academic staff in universities are accustomed to working in a complex environment” (p.766). However, increasing numbers of sojourners in academic classrooms presents several challenges for academics. As discussed previously role incongruence influences both academics and sojourners, the level of culture shock experienced, and satisfaction of academic experience. New Zealand research frequently mentions issues around English proficiency in the classroom (Yean, 2012; Skyrme, 2007). Ward’s (2001) research indicated a variety of gaps in expectations between teachers and

students, particularly in terms of classroom discussion and interaction. This pattern was consistent with Cheung's (2013) findings, and a source of frustration for domestic students (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). Improved awareness of key cultural factors which impact on international student learning experiences need to be made (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011), but this is of course challenging for individual academics to achieve.

International research indicates that academics need to adapt teaching and provide additional support for sojourners (both in and out of the classroom) (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013). Research at Massey University by Selvarajah (2006) showed that staff had noted differences in the study objectives and behaviours of Asian students to New Zealand European students. This research recommended that "educational paradigm shifts in technologies, methods and perceptions are needed if changes in education styles are to take place" (Selvarajah, 2006, p.142). This recommendation is consistent with the conclusions by Skyrme & McGee (2016) about benefits to an institution, academics and sojourners, and they found that investigations of teachers' practice and attitudes suggest that these benefits are not always fully realised. It has been suggested that it is the role of individual institutions, and policy makers to develop policy frameworks to safe guard the academic and social well-being of international students (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014). The economic gains of having international students is well publicised (Lipura & Collins, 2020), but the presence of international students in classes or at an institution rarely prompts faculty members to internationalise what they teach and until this happens these challenges will remain (Ward, 2001; Skyrme & McGee, 2016). This research suggests a move from the negative connotations of 'shock' to an opportunity for both sides to see these challenges as opportunities.

#### 2.14 Being an Academic – Fanghanel

Callow (2013) reviewed Fanghanel's book *'Being an Academic'* where she concluded that academics operate according to their personal values about education. The three main categories are – production, reproduction and transformation. This framework provides an opportunity to reflect on what being an academic means today (Fanghanel, 2012). The role of the academic can be examined in terms of their teaching practices and defined by the categories noted above. Fanghanel's 'production' concept focuses on developing aptitudes and skills relevant to the real world of work, where education is valued as economic investment (Fanghanel, 2012). Often seen in education in vocational areas, where the focus is more on links to professional practice and industry, rather than necessarily discipline specific. The literature gives the example of: "theoretical studies do not attain their highest development

until they find some application in human life” (Dewey, 1923, p.53), here the academic is a facilitator, preparing students for industry.

The ‘reproduction’ category encourages learning in a different way. “Students are driven by curiosity, they learn for the sake of getting to know and with a view to finding their own place and their own voice within the discipline they have embraced” (Fanghanel, 2012, p.8). The discipline is important in this view, where the academic follows a teacher lead approach, such as the Confucian view of knowledge. In this view, teachers and books are considered authoritative sources in imparting knowledge. Books are seen as reliable as they are assumed to have been tested in practice, the purpose of the student is to refine and support taught knowledge (Arunasalam & Burton, 2018). The onus is on the student to investigate the body of knowledge in a discipline, be driven by their own curiosity, not for the academic to adjust to the students’ needs (Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Reproduction in the classroom environment aims to investigate the past to discern the nature of the forces that contribute to the embeddedness of current practices (McAllister, 2005).

Finally, ‘transformation’ where the emphasis of education is on the transformation of individuals or of society (Fanghanel, 2012). McAllister’s (2005) review of nursing education and the impact on the sojourner strongly promoted a ‘transformational’ perspective, “critical educators believe that for students to make an impact on their world, they must have space to practice – articulating new knowledge and its effects on their lives, and then to share those interpretations with others” (p.12). Considering the sojourner, Skyrme & McGee (2016) examined a transformational academic’s view where the value would be for academics, domestic and international students to open their minds to new ways of thinking and viewing the world. This idea is echoed in the work of Dewey (1923) who wrote “...the more the scientific spirit of inquiry and love of thinking is introduced into professional teaching, the surer the broad and liberal intellectual interest and taste to be the product” (p.53).

When using Fanghanel’s framework to consider the role of an academic in the sojourner experience, where an academic sees their fit in the three categories will directly influence the educational experience in tertiary education. Research by Skyrme & McGee (2016) found the greatest contrast in academic style was between reproduction and transformation, and this can be really challenging for academic staff working with sojourners, both at a pedagogical and practical level. The reality is certainly more complex with academics possibly exhibiting a combination of these categories at times.

### 2.15 Culture Shock experienced by Students and the Role of an Academic

The literature is clear that students have differing expectations from their interactions with academics during their sojourn, and that lecturers can become a component of culture shock during this interaction. Research shows that students can experience a disconnect between expectations and experience in areas such as individual feedback, personal relationships, empathy and responsiveness (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014). Academic staff often reported extra workload and language problems when teaching international students (Ward, 2001; Skyrme, 2005).

Research by Araiza & Kutugata (2013) reported 'shock' from German students about having their attendance recorded by academic staff, because in their home university their attendance was voluntary, and they felt like they were back in high school. This sense of difference was also felt by students completing assessment which was different from their home education, for example multichoice versus essay (Arunasalam & Burton, 2018). The inevitability of difference in expectations of academics and students is clear in the research, and the dominant view in the literature still shows that the responsibility for adapting to and succeeding in study lies with the sojourner (Ward, 2001).

### 2.16 Complex Role of an Academic

Drawing on the framework that Fanghanel proposed, it is clear in the literature that the role of an academic is becoming more complex. Institutions may require academic staff to attend training to better manage sojourners in their classrooms (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013, p.3193), or at least for academics to become familiar with students' backgrounds, assumptions and expectations (Arunasalam & Burton, 2018) particularly to avoid issues such as stereotyping of sojourners (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). Some researchers going as far as encouraging academic staff to interact with students outside of class (Cheung, 2013), yet this will be influenced by the size of the international cohort (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004) and the level of study. The literature recognises the role of the academic in the reduction in culture shock for sojourners, but there is much debate about the best methods to do this (Soontiens, Kerr, Ang & Scully, 2016).

Differences in expectations are reported in the literature, and the work of Ward (2001) sums up the general New Zealand classroom environment:

“The differences were most pronounced in connection with classroom participation and student-teacher relationships. For example, compared to the teachers, overseas students generally wanted more error correction, believed that they should agree with

the lecturer, and more strongly favoured acceptance of authority. On the other hand, the educators were more likely to believe that students should have an internal locus of academic control and take responsibility for their own learning” (p.14).

This theme can also be seen in the research of Selvarajah (2006) and Arunasalam & Burton (2018). Skyrme (2007) noted the challenges for Chinese students who meet university English language entry criteria but who have difficulty sufficiently comprehending and extracting meaning from academic material, both textbooks and lectures. Academic roles are complex, and a diverse educational environment will only increase the complexity for the future (Skyrme, 2016).

### 2.17 Gaps in the Literature

Although there is a wide variety of research related to international students in the tertiary environment, which has increased steadily since the seminal research of the 1950s, there are still gaps to be noted. Student expectations is a poorly researched area (Chavan, Bowden-Everson, Lundmark & Zwar, 2014), as are measurement of concepts such as cultural distance (Vromans & van Engen, 2013) and cultural values (Chung, Fam & Holdsworth, 2009). As noted earlier, a large proportion of the research is conducted in America, Australia and the UK, and most prominently in the field of postgraduate education (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014). Particularly important for this research is that there has been little to no direct investigation of how these (cross-cultural difference) impact on the international classroom (Ward, 2001). Although we know that culture shock exists, and can impact severely on some sojourners, the differences and how they are viewed in a classroom setting are not well understood, even in the almost twenty years since this research was published (Ward, 2001). It is this gap that the study addresses.

### 2.18 Limitations to Previous Research

Much of the published research has been conducted in single institutions (Hemsley-Brown, 2015; Chong & Razek, 2014), within postgraduate programmes (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004), and generally in a small scale (Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014). A review of the literature by Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim (2014) showed 66.2% of the articles reviewed were atheoretical, “that is, articles without explicit description, review or a re-examination or medication of theories/ concepts /models /paradigms in guiding the research or review concerned” (p.244). Vromans & van Engen (2013) also found that most research conducted in this field was cross sectional rather than longitudinal, with small sample sizes (Vromans & van Engen, 2013). These limitations will be considered in developing the research methodology for this study.

## 2.19 Summary

The review of the literature shows that there is a diverse body of knowledge related to the international student education experience and culture shock, but there is very little that looks specifically at how culture shock affects the expectations of students, and how these impacts on the complex role of the academic in the classroom environment. This topic is a work in progress, with increasing levels of interest from institutions about the growing complexity in the tertiary environment, and how best to support both academics and sojourners.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the research methods, data collection, sampling and analysis. It provides discussion and clarification about the research process and why questionnaire and focus groups were chosen as the research methods. Data collection is explained, with a diagrammatic representation of the mixed methods research procedure. Sampling is outlined showing the students subset for results, with a focus on the postgraduate international student within the School of Business at SIT. Ethical considerations are discussed and examples of supporting documentation can be found in the Appendices.

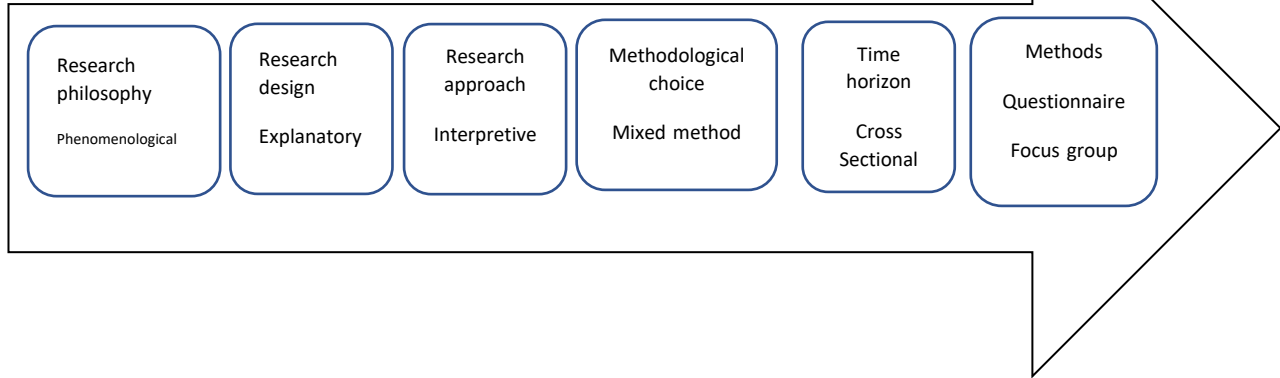
### 3.2 Research strategy

An increasing number of international students and a deficiency around the effect of culture shock in the literature indicated the need for further attention and the purpose of this study. Although the focus of this research is in the postgraduate study of international students at the Southern Institute of Technology, the methodology and results have a good level of transferability to other institutions. The quantitative questionnaire occurred first and informed the second stage qualitative focus group to provide a sequential legitimisation of the study.

### 3.3 Research approach

The focus of this study was to investigate which aspects of culture shock are experienced by International students studying at postgraduate level, with an aim to provide recommendations to the Institute on how to mitigate culture shock and the tension this causes between students and academic staff. The study used an interpretive stance, with a phenomenological philosophy to focus on the experiences of international students. It was based on research models related to Culture Shock (particularly Oberg, 1960 cited in Egenes, 2012; Lysgaard, 1955 cited in Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008; Anderson, 1994 cited in Lewthwaite, 1997) and theories of academic expectations proposed in Fanghanel (2012). The research investigated the student experiences grounded in current literature around culture shock. The flow chart following outlines the methodological approach used in this study.

**Figure 3. 1 Methodological Approach**



A questionnaire was conducted within the postgraduate international student population, and these results informed the direction and questions for the nested sample who took part in the focus group. According to researchers such as Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007) using a sequential approach may influence the research questions for the qualitative phase of the data analysis and gives legitimacy to the second phase. Because of the small size of the student population, the whole population was included in the sample in the quantitative phase where any postgraduate International student studying in the School of Business has an equal and independent chance of being chosen for the study. A nested sample was used for the qualitative phase, as this sampling method allows for further investigation and explanation of themes and concepts identified in the previous stage.

### 3.4 Mixed Method Approach

Although there is much discussion in the literature about the merits of a mixed method approach in research design (Feilzer, 2010), the overall aim of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods is to produce better results than a single method could (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The study used a mixed methods approach to gather data on the student group to identify themes and patterns within questionnaire responses, with the focus group adding *student voice* and a greater level of depth to the statistics. Using a focus group, themes in the statistics could be explained through content analysis, descriptive summaries and quotes. Gathering data to answer the research questions separately and then combine them to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of each type of data (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2010) was the aim of using a mixed method approach. The research questions for this study (noted earlier) were created to focus on the strengths of each method to investigate the same underlying phenomenon as suggested by Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2006).

The important part of analysis, relating to this study, included the use of words and narrative to add meaning to numbers; using sequential design where the quantitative results inform the

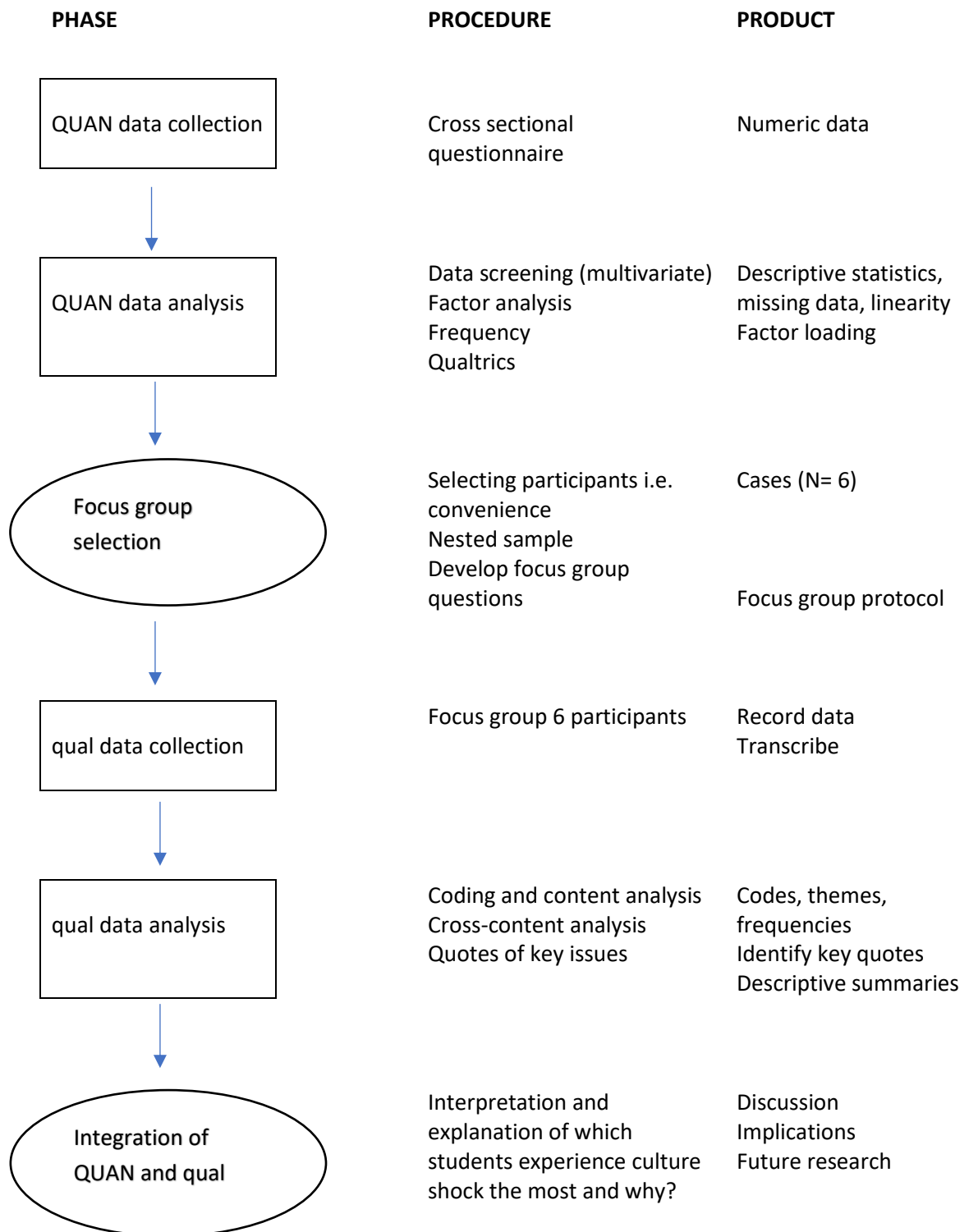
questions for the qualitative focus group; adding insights which might be missed using one approach; and increasing the generalisability of results. Weaknesses inherently occurred during this study through a lack of experience by the researcher, time constraints and expense. Measures were taken to reduce these weaknesses by the design and completion of this study.

#### 3.4.1 Reason for Mixing Methods

The procedural diagram presented by Ivankova & Stick (2001, p.9 cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.121) shows the integration and flow of each phase of research.

### 3.4.2 Procedural Diagram of Mixed Methods

**Figure 3. 2** Explanatory Design of Culture Shock Experienced by International



### 3.5 Research Design

The first stage of the study, the questionnaire, identified those students most affected by culture shock. Use of an explanatory sequential approach, as described by Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith (2010), the second phase incorporated a qualitative approach to gather rich data from questioning in the focus group. This two-phase approach further enhanced the reliability of both types of data, where multiple regression analysis was complemented with qualitative reviews of student perception to give a broader perspective of the topic (Topping, 1998).

The timing for the research was sequential, with the qualitative research taking place before the quantitative, rather than occurring concurrently.

### 3.6 Data collection and tools

The first phase of data collection was via a questionnaire with the total population of postgraduate international students studying in the School of Business at SIT. The second phase was a nested sample of volunteers from the questionnaire who were chosen based on when they responded, and to ensure an even mix of female and male participants, four female and two males were selected (N=6). The tools and process used are described in more detail below.

#### 3.6.1 Quantitative Research

The quantitative method was the main method used in this study, with a questionnaire instrument designed so that respondents answered questions in a predetermined order (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The questionnaire was appropriate to the research aims because it allowed the collection of a large variety of statistical data, that was analysed to identify which student groups were likely to suffer the most common aspects of culture shock (language, academic, social and cultural and finance) with the most frequency. The questions for the questionnaire were constructed from analysis of previous studies to meet the aims of this study, with ideas and themes taken from their instruments and adapted for relevance (see Cheung, 2013; Selvarajah, 2006; Soon, 2010; Generosa et al, 2013; Ward, 2001; Igraduate, 2011; Fanghanel, 2012; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005 cited in Egenes, 2012; Skyrme, 2005; Skyrme, 2007). Questionnaire participants were sent an information sheet explaining the research aims and information about the study (see Appendix 1).

**RQ1. What are the components of culture shock, and how does this affect the learning experience for international students?**

This descriptive question aimed at identifying the main drivers of culture shock within the student group - linguistic, academic, social and cultural, and financial (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Statistical analysis of variables, such as demographics, gave evidence of frequencies identifying differences in key components of culture shock for students.

**RQ2. What is the gap between student expectations and reality in the teaching and learning environment?**

The demographic data gathered in this question such as age, gender, how long they have been at SIT, what level they are studying at, home country and so forth allowed for cross referencing with aspects of culture. Descriptive statistics from these results informed the questions for the qualitative method in phase two of the research. This relationship question sought to compare demographics of participants to culture shock experiences.

3.6.2 Qualitative Research

The qualitative phase allows greater explanation of the quantitative data. A focus group was used as the qualitative research method, facilitated by the moderator, with an aim to encourage interactive discussion amongst participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The focus group gives a *voice* to participants about how a change of culture affects their learning experience and the challenges that they faced while away from their home country to study.

Strengths of this qualitative approach included a variety of aspects, but for this research using a focus group was designed to get an understanding and description of people's personal experiences of the phenomena (culture shock) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The use of a focus group in this way overcomes the weakness of the quantitative questionnaire which will show where a problem is, but not necessarily why there is a problem. In this study, the focus group is an effective means to articulate pre-held views about an issue or topic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The researcher acted as the moderator, asking questions and ensuring all members were able to share their views. Focus group participants registered their interest to be part of the focus group after completing the online questionnaire, resulting in a nested sample. Focus group participants were sent a Participant Information sheet after self-selecting to be part of the research (Appendix 2).

**RQ2. What is the gap between student expectations and reality in the teaching and learning environment?**

Participants were asked to share their experiences about their learning journey and what gaps were encountered in the period of their study. Recordings were analysed, and content analysis

used to identify themes and similarities / differences within the focus group experiences. This subjective information gives *voice* to the participants where expectations and realities can be measured and discussed in an objective manner.

### **RQ3. What are the tensions for academic and other key institutional staff in supporting international students?**

The focus group discussions gave context to Fanghanel's (2012) types of academics. The student experience and examples were filtered to see how these matched with the tensions noted by Skyrme & McGee (2016). Content analysis was used to distinguish the feelings and emotions expressed by participants to identify tensions between expectation and reality in their learning journey in the postgraduate programmes at SIT.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data allows for large volumes of data to be collected, and the use of the software programme Qualtrics, created basic graphical representations of data that was automatically presented in the form of tables and graphics (Qualtrics, 2019). The questionnaire followed a positivist approach with the use of mainly closed questions (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Because the quantitative data informed the second phase of the explanatory sequential process, it occurred first and was analysed first in the research design. The analysis of quantitative data showed relationships that were demonstrated in numeric data (where frequency and correlations are applied) and were key considerations to choosing a mixed methods approach (as discussed in Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2010).

Data analysis from the focus group was managed using content analysis, comparison of content, descriptive summaries and quotes from various participants 'voice' to strengthen and / or contrast the relationships shown in the quantitative data and demonstrate the mixed methodology (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The focus group session was audio recorded to ensure contextual information was not missed, and then transcribed. Although a time-consuming part of the analysis process, the level of detail is important to accurately present the rich data gathered (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Transcription of the focus group discussion allowed the researcher to identify important quotes that were used to give greater explanation to ideas presented in the data. Content analysis represents a formal approach to qualitative data analysis (Hussey & Hussey, 1997), and helps to code the data into coherent themes. Quantitative analysis of frequency of words, terms and concepts was also undertaken.

### 3.8 Sampling

The population of international students at SIT was approximately 800 full time equivalent students (2018 figures). A cluster sample was chosen to include the student population within the postgraduate programmes in the School of Business – Postgraduate Diploma in Business Enterprise (PGDBE), Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Management (PGDAM), Master of Applied Management (MAM). All students within this population were used in the quantitative phase. In total 49 PGDBE and 67 PGDAM / MAM students were invited to complete the questionnaire. The SIT student management system allowed the researcher to gain access to international Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS) figures enrolled in these programmes, totalling approximately 285 students. This is around 28.5% of the total international student population and the complete population of international postgraduate students within the School of Business, which is expected to generate data with a high level of accuracy (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

It was important to gather identifiable data, such as an email address for those who volunteered to be part of the focus group to be contacted. Once the analysis of quantitative data was completed, participants who indicated their permission via email to be contacted by the researcher for the focus group were sent an email with the Participant Information Sheet. Self-selection sampling of this nested group included seven respondents who replied to the researcher giving their consent, with four female and three males. They were sent details of the focus group session, and six consented to the time and day given (N=6). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) recommend the focus group size to be between 4 and 12 participants, depending on topic matter, skill of moderator and the topic. According to analysis completed by Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007) a nested sample design should be more than 3 participants per sub group. Both conditions were met in the focus group.

### 3.9 Pilot study

Pilot testing allowed the researcher to test research instruments and check for validity and reliability. The process that was followed for both methods is described in detail below.

#### 3.9.1 Quantitative – Questionnaire Pilot

The quantitative research instrument was created in Qualtrics and the ExpertReview function of the software was considered once the questions had been inputted. The questions were reviewed and approved by the researcher's supervisor and the SIT and Massey Research Ethics Committees. The questionnaire was piloted with a group of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Enterprise (PGDBE) and Master of Applied Management (MAM) international students who

were in their final paper for their qualification, this reduced any opportunity for them to be included in the main research questionnaire sample. Participants were given an Information Sheet and the link to Qualtrics questionnaire at the end of their class (Appendix 3).

Participation was voluntary, and student responses were anonymous.

Ten student participants were expected in class, but only seven were present in this session, and although a small sample of the total population, it is a complete response from this cohort of students. Five students chose to do the questionnaire using a hard copy, for a variety of reasons including: not having cell phone on their person, issues with a smashed screen and visibility, two were having problems with their SIT log in and couldn't access the free Wi-Fi, one didn't disclose the reason why and one student arrived late and was unsuccessful with typing in the link for the questionnaire and chose to do it on paper due to time constraints. Only one student successfully accessed the Qualtrics link and completed the questionnaire online. The pilot testing was successful with no queries about questions, and responses to questions were as expected. Average time to complete the questionnaire was around 14 minutes. No changes were made to the research instrument in Appendix 4.

### 3.9.2 Qualitative – Focus Group Pilot

The focus group questions were tested on four postgraduate students in their final paper on the PGBDE / MAM programmes. Students were asked to express interest in testing focus group questions at the end of one of their class sessions. Two male and two females were chosen randomly from those who expressed interest and contacted via email to arrange a time to meet on campus. Once timing was confirmed, students were sent the Participant Information Sheet for Focus Group and gave their final consent to be part of the pilot test. At the beginning of the pilot test, the Focus Group Confidentiality form (Appendix 5) and Focus Group Consent form (Appendix 6) were explained and signed by participants. The focus group questions were asked, and Participants responses recorded for later analysis. All questions flowed well, with just minor grammatical changes made. Questions can be found in Appendix 7.

### 3.10 Validity and Reliability

The mixed methods approach used in this study considers the reliability of any one research method or instrument. Measurement validity ensures that the research instrument measures what it is intended to (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Both research instruments were pilot tested to check that the research questions were adequately answered in the participant responses, and that responses were appropriate to make accurate predictions. Construct

validity was tested in the pilot, and Q16 (in particular) was designed to measure discriminant validity, measuring 'theoretically distinct constructs' proposed in Fanghanel's (2012) book.

Reliability of questions was also tested in the pilot to ensure that respondents consistently answered questions in the manner expected for the question. Question 10 and Question 13 were in part reframed in Question 16 and Question 17 to compare responses to similar questions asked in a different manner. The type and design of questions were carefully considered, taking direction from previous studies which have been completed in this research area, in particular: (Cheung, 2013; Igraduate, 2011; Fanghanel, 2012; Skyrme, 2005). The study was undertaken within a specific institution which reduces the overall ability to generalise findings. However, this single case study approach is in line with the current body of literature on culture shock in tertiary institutions, which is predominately within a single institution (see Selvarajah, 2006; Abdullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2014; Chong & Razek, 2014; Skyrme & McGee, 2016).

### 3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was gained from the SIT Ethics Committee on 17 September 2019 and provisional approval from the Massey University Research Ethics Committee on 23 September 2019, with final approval given on 14 January 2020.

Culture shock in the postgraduate international student population may be an emotive subject for some, and this was a key consideration in both the design of the research instruments and the method in which information was gathered. No participants under the age of 18 were invited to be part of the questionnaire or focus group. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time with no disadvantage. The questionnaire was administered via an electronic link (hard copy option given but not used), and completion was anonymous.

If a student wished to volunteer for the focus group, the researcher's contact details were at the bottom of the research questionnaire and students self-selected to be part of the process. The first three male and four female respondents were then emailed the Participant Information sheet so that they were fully aware of the research and the conditions of the focus group. This allowed potential participants an opportunity to choose to withdraw if they were not prepared to follow through with the focus group, without disadvantage. This was a key consideration in the creation of the focus group to ensure that ethical and cultural aspects of the study were managed appropriately. At the start of the focus group, consent and

confidentially documentation were read over and signed by participants, to meet ethical requirements of the study.

There is the potential in both the questionnaire and focus group for individual lecturers to be named, and during the processing of data any identifiable information was removed, and/or amended to be anonymous. If a lecturer was personally named, the researcher changed these details to 'Lecturer A' to maintain appropriate ethical considerations. There was an identified risk that this process may cause some students to feel uncomfortable with the content of their answers, and the researcher gave information of the support services available for international students at SIT to participants. During the focus group planning, it was acknowledged that if any of the participants showed signs of distress, the focus group would stop and manage the situation before continuing. Participants were able to leave at any time during the process without disadvantage. Participants were reminded of the support services available for international students in the Participant Information sheet also.

For data security purposes data is held in a password protected computer, which has regular virus protection software updates. Audio recordings were uploaded to this computer directly after the focus group and then deleted from the original recording device. All consent forms are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office, and all electronic documentation will be kept for the required timeframes. Original paperwork and / or documentation will be kept securely for a period of five years as per the SIT ethics policy. The contents of the study will be shared with the researcher's supervisor, but no research subjects will be identifiable within the results. Participants may request a copy of the final thesis on completion, and a copy will be available at the Massey Library.

### 3.12 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological process for the study; it explained the choice of a mixed method approach and the research instruments. The evidence of documentation can be found in the Appendices. Data collection was mapped out to show the entire process and sampling of respondents for questionnaire and focus group was explained. Validity, reliability and ethics procedures are described. The following chapter will review the data and discuss the results.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the results of the questionnaire and focus group. Results are presented in depth using content analysis and statistical evaluation in the form of graphics, tables and quotes. Research questions are used to frame the analysis of these results.

### 4.2 Quantitative Results

The questionnaire was conducted over a period from 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 until 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It was emailed to 116 postgraduate students in the School of Business, who were provided a link to the questionnaire. Participation in this questionnaire was voluntary for students, and responses were anonymous. Students were sent two follow up reminders by email to encourage completion of the questionnaire. All emails came from the School of Business administrators, not the researcher directly, so that participants did not feel pressured to respond. The results of this questionnaire are reported below.

#### 4.2.1 Demographic Information

A total of 59 responses were gathered from the students who met the criteria for the questionnaire sample (had completed one semester of postgraduate study and were international students), giving a response rate of 50.86%. There was an even split of students studying masters and postgraduate diploma programmes (29 in each group), with only one student studying a postgraduate certificate.

Feedback to questions 1 to 5 are reported here. Respondents were 42% male and 57% female, which is indicative of the gender demographic of the sample. The age range of the sample indicated 44.07% were between 25-31 years, 28.81% aged 32-38 years, and 20.34% 39-45 years, with 1.69% aged under 25 years (one respondent) and 5.08% over 45 years (three respondents). A third of respondents had an undergraduate degree (35.59%); a further third held a master's qualification (32.20%). The other third consisted of a postgraduate diploma (18.1%), diploma qualification (1.86%) and one respondent (1.69%) held a certificate level qualification. None of the sample possessed a doctoral qualification.

Respondents came from four main countries – Sri Lanka (30.50%); India (18.64%); Brazil (16.95%) and China (15.25%). The remaining students came from Philippines (three students 5.08%); two students from Germany (3.38%) and one each from Nepal, Indonesia, South Korea, Argentina, Pakistan and Vietnam (1.69%).

#### 4.2.2 Studying at SIT

In question 6 respondents reported that they chose to study at SIT in Invercargill for a variety of reasons, but cost was the most prevalent theme. Costs related to both study fees and the cost of living in Invercargill were the top reason recorded, then reputation and New Zealand as a destination featured alongside choices about course content, as shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4. 1: Tells us why you chose to study at SIT**

Theme	Evidence	Responses
Course costs	Cheaper compared to other institutions. Affordable. Cost effective. Competitive fees.	30
Living in Invercargill	Low cost of living in Invercargill. Quiet and peaceful. Established Brazilian community.	11
SIT Reputation	Best performing ITP. Reputation. Friends gave good review about SIT. Quality of education.	9
New Zealand as a location	New Zealand recommended. Location. Possibility to immigrate. Partner university. Aim to bring family over.	9
Course related	Interesting programme. Course suited study needs. Availability of course I planned to do. Course modules really nice. Career development.	9

#### 4.2.3 Preparation prior to leaving home

The data for question 8 showed that most students (91.52%) prepared for their study abroad before choosing to travel. Students prepared for their study abroad in a variety of ways, including talking to people who had been to New Zealand previously, or were currently studying here. Several students searched chat groups, blogs, YouTube videos, websites and social media about the life in New Zealand. One student mentioned that they had *searched some details about SIT, Invercargill and about people and their cultural backgrounds*, but generally students had a broader approach to researching New Zealand culture. Only one respondent said that they had done no preparation, and three others who had only prepared for IELTS, basic background check and only a little preparation. There was no relationship between study abroad preparations and lack of enjoyment in the programme of study, with those students who didn't prepare for their sojourn showing enjoyment of their course, and those who had prepared being amongst those who both enjoyed and didn't enjoy their course.

#### 4.2.4 Emotions experienced in first few weeks

When students first began their study, during the first few weeks, a range of emotions were felt by respondents in response to question 9. Table 4.2 over page represents the results for this data set.

**Table 4. 2 What emotions did you feel when you started your study?**

#	Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		N/A		Total
1	Excited about a new experience	62.71%	37	33.90%	20	1.69%	1	1.69%	1	0.00%	0	59
2	Apprehensive about the unknown	13.56%	8	62.71%	37	11.86%	7	8.47%	5	3.39%	2	59
3	Prepared for study abroad	45.76%	27	44.07%	26	8.47%	5	0.00%	0	1.69%	1	59
4	Stressed to move away from home	18.64%	11	23.73%	14	23.73%	14	23.73%	14	10.17%	6	59
5	Organised to leave home	27.12%	16	49.15%	29	13.56%	8	3.39%	2	6.78%	4	59
6	Lacking social skills of a new culture	10.17%	6	28.81%	17	27.12%	16	25.42%	15	8.47%	5	59
7	Curious about what the study might be like	35.59%	21	55.93%	33	3.39%	2	0.00%	0	5.08%	3	59
8	Nervous about using English language	15.25%	9	18.64%	11	22.03%	13	35.59%	21	8.47%	5	59
9	Previous experience abroad has helped to prepare me	42.37%	25	20.34%	12	13.56%	8	5.08%	3	18.64%	11	59
10	Cross cultural training before I left home shaped my expectations	11.86%	7	23.73%	14	15.25%	9	10.17%	6	38.98%	23	59
11	Good understanding of general knowledge of New Zealand	15.25%	9	55.93%	33	22.03%	13	3.39%	2	3.39%	2	59
12	Confident in English language ability	42.37%	25	42.37%	25	6.78%	4	8.47%	5	0.00%	0	59
13	Grief of leaving family behind	20.34%	12	40.68%	24	20.34%	12	10.17%	6	8.47%	5	59
14	Uncertain about academic requirements	11.86%	7	38.98%	23	38.98%	23	5.08%	3	5.08%	3	59
15	I had Kiwi friends before I arrived to New Zealand	6.78%	4	5.08%	3	25.42%	15	40.68%	24	22.03%	13	59
16	Someone in my family or a friend has studied in New Zealand and I knew what to expect	13.56%	8	35.59%	21	11.86%	7	27.12%	16	11.86%	7	59

Positive emotions that students felt strongly about in their first few weeks related to excitement about their new experience (62.71%); being prepared for study abroad (45.76%);

confident in English language ability (42.37%); feeling that previous experience abroad has helped prepare them (42.37%); curious about what the study might be like (35.59%) and organised to leave home (27.12%). When compared to a combination of Strongly Agree and Agree fields, these results changed slightly. Respondents were still most excited about their new experience (96.61%); and curiosity about study was felt by 91.52%; students still felt prepared for study abroad (89.83%) and agreed that they felt confident in their English language ability (84.74%). Using the combined positive response, students indicated they were organised to leave home (76.27%) and felt they had a good understanding and general knowledge of New Zealand (71.18%). These results show that generally students were excited about their study abroad experience and felt organised and competent in their language abilities.

On the other hand, there were some strong indicators of negative emotions felt by students in the first few weeks. Grief at leaving family behind was strongly felt by 20.34% of respondents, with double the number of female students (8) choosing strongly to agree than male (4). For the female students, there was a relatively even spread between the age groups, but for the male respondents 75% were aged 32-38 years. Almost a fifth of respondents strongly agreed that they experienced stress at moving away from home (18.64%). Fifteen percent of students felt strongly about their nervousness of English language requirements and experienced strong apprehension about the unknown (13.56%). After the first few weeks 11.86% of students strongly agreed that they were uncertain about academic requirements, and that they lack social skills (10.17%). When combined with the Agree rating, the results changed, showing apprehension about the unknown was the most common negative emotion at 76.27%, and this emotion was shown across both genders and all age ranges. This result was followed by grief at leaving family behind 61.02%.

Half of the student group showed agreement that they were uncertain of academic requirements (50.84%), and that they were experiencing stress at the move away from home (42.37%). Lack of social skills of the new culture (38.98%) and nervousness about using English language was felt by a third of the respondents (33.89%). These results indicate that some students experienced strong emotions related to grief, stress, nerves and uncertainty in the first few weeks of their study abroad experience.

#### 4.2.5 Enjoyment of study

Most students indicated in question 10 that they were enjoying their study at SIT, with 47 respondents (79.66%) scoring six or above on the Likert Scale (on a scale of 1-10). Students

noted their excitement about study and the study abroad experience. Students were happy to learn in a practical way with organised and knowledgeable lecturers. Studying with different students from diverse cultures was a source of enjoyment.

However, of the 11 respondents who chose a score of five or below in relation to enjoyment, most of these students were female 90.90% (10 out of 11). These students had previous educational backgrounds studying an undergraduate degree (5), Masters (3), and postgraduate (2) qualifications, and came from a variety of countries – Germany (2), Pakistan (1), India (1), Brazil (2), Sri Lanka (3) and China (2). Of these students, 36.36% had completed one semester, 54.54 were in their second semester of study, and one respondent in their third semester 9.09%. There was an even split of students studying master's and postgraduate Diploma programmes (29 in each group), with only one student studying a postgraduate Certificate.

One of the strongly dissatisfied students noted that *maybe my expectations were high*, and others indicated that *it is different from the way in my home country* and that *the style of teaching is totally different from my country*. Others noted dissatisfaction with the perceived level of experience of lecturers – *some tutors were not qualified in their professional field* and that the course *was not at master's level*. The inexperience of some lecturers was noted by those who were not enjoying the course. One respondent commented: *I was disappointed with the quality of teaching, and the lack of support of the tutors and (sic) responsible for the course*. Interestingly 8 of the 11 students (72.72%) indicating lower levels of enjoyment of their course, responded that they chose this course because of tuition fees were lower, or less expensive than other institutions. Although the level of overall enjoyment was high, the theme from the respondent comments suggested a gap in expectations about teaching style and lecturer experience on the postgraduate programmes.

#### 4.2.6 Source of enjoyment

Of the students who rated their enjoyment at points 6-10 on the Likert Scale, there was a range of reasons about why they felt this way, shown in question 11. Content analysis showed both positive and negative themes to this question which have been presented over the page in order of most frequent occurrence. The most frequent positive aspect of why students were enjoying their study was related to their internal motivations, passions and excitement of studying. Students also enjoyed learning in a practical manner and applying what they had learnt to a business context. Comments about academic standards and the course meeting respondent academic expectations was the next most common theme coded. The final theme

identified related to the students enjoying being part of an international cohort with diverse cultural learning opportunities.

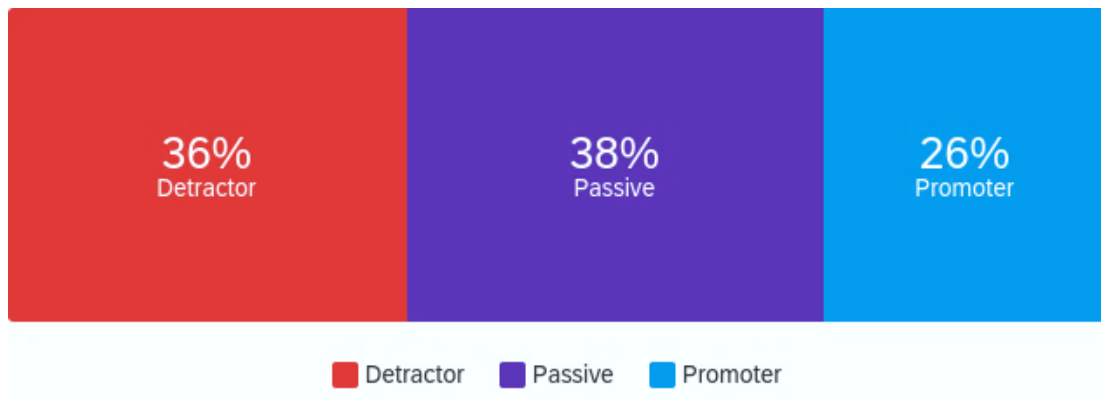
However, low quality teaching was the most dominant negative theme of all the content analysed, with almost three times as many comments about this over any other theme identified (positive or negative). Respondents expressed frustration at both teaching and delivery issues, and many gave their opinion that not all faculty were qualified to teach at postgraduate level. Although not necessarily related to the values informing lecturer teaching styles as proposed by Fanghanel, this information is important as part of the reflective process of course evaluation. Content and assessment also featured strongly in the negative comments, with issues around support services and information being coded as the third main theme. The final theme showed challenges experienced by students about the style of teaching being different from their previous educational experiences. See table below for themes.

**Table 4. 3 Content analysis themes why students are enjoying / not enjoying their study**

<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Enjoyment of studying:</b> Love of study, passion, excitement, challenge, interest	<b>Low quality of teaching:</b> Quality issues, lack of preparation for classes, inexperience of lecturers
<b>Learning in a practical way:</b> Relationship between education and business, practical learning, and application of knowledge, interaction in class, related to real world examples	<b>Content and assessment:</b> Too much assessment, not enough time to study, group work can be problematic, issues with curriculum and length of study
<b>Academic standards:</b> Standards are good, organised, tutors helpful, programme organised	<b>Support / Information:</b> Lack of support or not as good as expected, issues on arrival, disorganised information about course content, issues with information flow
<b>Diverse student cohort:</b> Learning about different cultures and perspectives in group assessments, enjoying interaction with other cultures, different way of learning of all cultures, gave different perspective to learning and life	<b>Differences in teaching styles:</b> Style of teaching very different from home, different teaching techniques used, new experience

The graphic below shows that most students were passive in their enjoyment of their study 38% (with neither a strongly positive or negative opinion), with 26% promoters (those who supported the aspect of enjoyment of study). However, the concerning aspect of this result is the group of detractors at 36%, who are not enjoying their academic study experience.

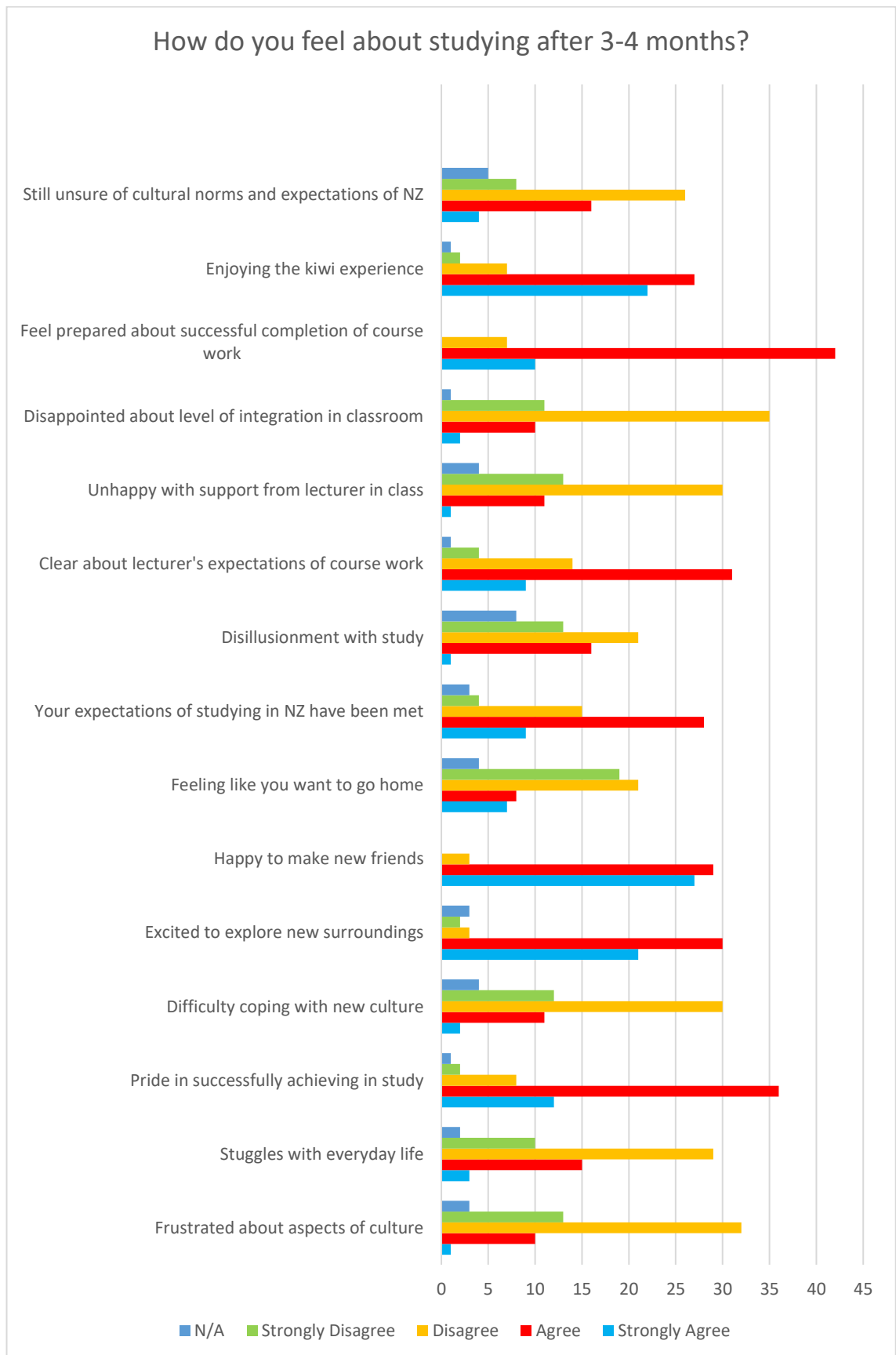
Figure 4. 1 Tell us about your academic study experience. Are you enjoying your study?



#### 4.2.7 Experiences after studying 3-4 months

When asked in question 12 about their experiences after a period of time studying, respondents were happy to make new friends (94.91%) and explore their new surroundings (86.44%). There was strong agreement that students were enjoying the kiwi experience (37.29%) with a combined total of 83.05% showing positive experiences. Student responses show that the majority were satisfied with the level of integration in the classroom (77.96%). Respondents were happy with the support provided by the lecturer (72.88%), and 88.14% of students felt prepared to achieve successful completion of course work. However, the results showed that a quarter of students (25.42%) indicated feeling like they want to go home, and that struggles with everyday living were experienced by 30.47%. Just over a quarter of students surveyed (28.81%) agreed that they felt disillusionment with study, and 22.03% agreed that they experienced difficulties coping with the new culture. These data show several culture shock indicators which will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter. The graphic on the following page shows the full data set.

Figure 4. 2 How do you feel about studying after 3-4 months?



#### 4.2.8 Recommending New Zealand as a good place to study abroad

When asked in question 13 whether they would recommend New Zealand as a good place to study abroad, almost three quarters (72.41%) of respondents agreed. Interestingly students who responded previously that they were not enjoying their studies did not necessarily think that New Zealand was a bad place to study abroad. Only three students who had previously expressed low levels of enjoyment indicated that New Zealand wasn't a good destination to study abroad, and interestingly the three other respondents who chose a negative response to this question had indicated good levels of satisfaction with scores of 7, 7 and 9. This result shows that enjoyment doesn't necessarily influence recommendation for New Zealand as a study abroad option for students.

**Table 4. 4 Would you recommend New Zealand as a good place to study abroad?**

#	Answer	%	Count
4	Yes	72.41%	42
5	No	10.34%	6
6	No strong opinion	17.24%	10
	Total	100%	58

Content analysis of question 14 shows that the New Zealand culture and friendliness of people were the main reasons to recommend New Zealand as a destination to study abroad, with over 60% of the responses mentioning one or both themes. *Welcoming culture with beautiful scenery* were noted by several respondents. Another respondent commented *the beauty of New Zealand has been astounding which gives me a reason to wake up every day and explore*. Likewise, there were numerous comments about friendly people, that *kiwi people are respectful* with one student commenting that *compared to Australia, the institution is more internationally friendly*. New Zealand was a good place to study, with a respondent commenting: *the education system is very logical and practical*, and that it was a *good education institution*, and that *SIT is highly supportive and has available lots of resources*. Safety was specifically mentioned by three respondents.

Negative comments were divided into three clusters: difficulties in finding part time employment; negative experiences with kiwi culture; and dissatisfaction with the institution and their study. Although there were not many negative comments, these tended to provide more context than the positive comments as they were more specific and detailed. Finding a

part time job was noted by four respondents as being a negative to the New Zealand environment, voicing frustration at *the sheer lack of support specially with finding part time work*. One student noted that Invercargill was not a good choice *because there is no part time work*. Another respondent noted that New Zealand was *too small, I used to live in a city with over 11 million people* and indicated that only certain people would want that kind of experience. Respondents talked about mixed reactions with kiwis, *while 45% are accepting and accomodating (sic) 55% have been less welcoming* and one stated *I did not feel welcomed by the people in the country* which were reasons not to recommend New Zealand as a study abroad country. The final cluster of comments related to a negative study experience personal to these students.

These results show that almost three quarters of students would recommend New Zealand, with around 17% having no strong opinion. The key themes were the friendly nature of the people, kiwi culture, scenery, safety and the education system. Negative comments focused around the difficulties of gaining employment, mixed reactions to being a member in the community, and specific comments related to their current study.

#### 4.2.9 The experience of tertiary study

Question 15 incorporated two types of questioning. The first was to gauge the needs and challenges of international students, where questions were devised from a review of the literature. The second type of question was designed to give context to Fanghanel's types of academics with questions related to the three ideologies discussed in her book – reproduction, production and transformation.

The results for this question showed that over a third of students (36.54%) strongly agreed that ESOL or other English language requirements were relevant to the study expectations (with a combined satisfaction total of 94.23% agreed), and this was supported with general disagreement that lecturers used language or terms that were difficult to understand at 84.21%; with less than a quarter (24.14%) finding it difficult to explain my point of view or ideas to my lecturer. There was considerable agreement that students were encouraged by their lecturers to interact with other students, with only 6.9% of responses disagreeing with this statement. Student responses showed they felt supported in their whole education experience by the institution (22.41% strongly agreeing), and that lecturers made a real effort to enhance my educational experience at a combined result of 83.63%. There was strong agreement that lecturers were available to students if they had questions (30.51%), with only 6.78% or four students expressing disagreement. Overall respondents agreed (77.97%) that

lecturers spent time going through academic expectations like referencing, formatting of assessments and academic writing. However, this result shows that over a fifth of students (22.03%) disagreed with this statement which is a concern. Just over half of respondents (53.85%) used the International department for support during their study. Students agreed with the statement that international students were treated the same as kiwi students (86%).

The following table of results show that students responded to characteristics of each of Fanghanel's three ideologies. The strongest response showed that the lecturer linked the study to the business context and what was happening in the current environment (Production) with 22.03% strongly agreeing with this statement, and when the next criteria (Agree) was added this statement it was still the top response with 86.44%. The second most favoured statement related to teachers' passion for their subject areas (Reproduction), with 19.30% strongly agreeing, and a total of 84.21% indicating agreement. This was followed by; my lecturers are experts in their field (Reproduction) at 18.97% strongly agreeing, and a further 63.79% agreeing. My lecturer puts the subject into a context where it related to other disciplines (Transformation) was the fourth most strongly agreed statement with 17.86% and an overall satisfaction of 80.36%. Interestingly, when an average was taken of respondent agreement of all statements the results showed that Reproduction received the highest average of 81.71, Production averaged 80.93% and Transformation was only slightly behind on 78.88%. This result was unexpected, with a greater spread of the three ideologies originally anticipated. It will be discussed further in the following chapter.

**Table 4. 5 Student experience of the teaching discipline using Fanghanel’s criteria**

<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>#</b>
<b>Reproduction</b>	My lecturers are passionate about the subject areas they teach	19.30%	64.91%	14.04%	1.75%	57
	My lecturers provide clear direction about academic standards expected	15.52%	63.79%	18.97%	1.72%	58
	My lecturers are experts in their field	18.97%	63.79%	17.24%	0	58
	My lecturers often refer back to theory and research in my field of study	8.93%	71.43%	16.07%	3.57%	56
<b>Production</b>	Lecturers linked the study to the business context and what was happening in the current environment	22.03%	64.41%	10.17%	3.39%	59
	Lecturers encouraged me to relate learning back to a business environment and think about my own skills	16.07%	66.07%	16.07%	1.79%	56
	The lecturers have prepared me with skills for a workplace environment	13.79%	62.07%	18.97%	5.17%	58
	Lecturers helped to teach me skills for learning and work	10.34%	68.97%	17.24%	3.45%	58
<b>Transformation</b>	Lecturers taught me to understand a wider world view of information	15.25%	61.02%	22.03%	1.69%	59
	My learning in class included transferable skills that I was able to use in work and life	16.07%	64.29%	14.29%	5.36%	56
	My lecturer puts the subject into a context where it relates to other disciplines	17.86%	62.50%	17.86%	1.79%	56
	I learnt about my subject through examples from business	12.50%	66.07%	17.86%	3.57%	56

#### 4.2.10 Feelings of culture shock

The elements of culture shock can be presented in several ways, as shown in the table below, representing the responses to question 16. These results indicate which aspects of culture shock were felt most acutely. Financial (16.95%) and English language challenges (16.95%) were the strongest felt aspects of culture shock, closely followed by loss of friends, and prized possession from home (15.25%). Financial challenge was the highest response with more than half (57.63) students agreeing with this statement. Half of all respondents (50.85%) expressed confusion over role in new culture, and a third expressed fear of rejection of the new culture

(37.28%). However, this did not seem to adversely increase stress levels as over half (55.93%) disagreed to feeling stressed and in their new environment, or feeling anxiety (52.54%), or helplessness (59.32%).

Cultural distance was a feeling experienced by almost half of respondents (49.15%), but this did not seem to cause difficult social interactions with peers, which were only felt by 15.25% of respondents. Half of respondents found it difficult to make kiwi friends (50.84%), which is not unexpected because of the high number of international students in these programmes.

Academic expectations were clear for 66.10% of the respondents. These results show that the range of emotions published in the literature are also experienced by this student group.

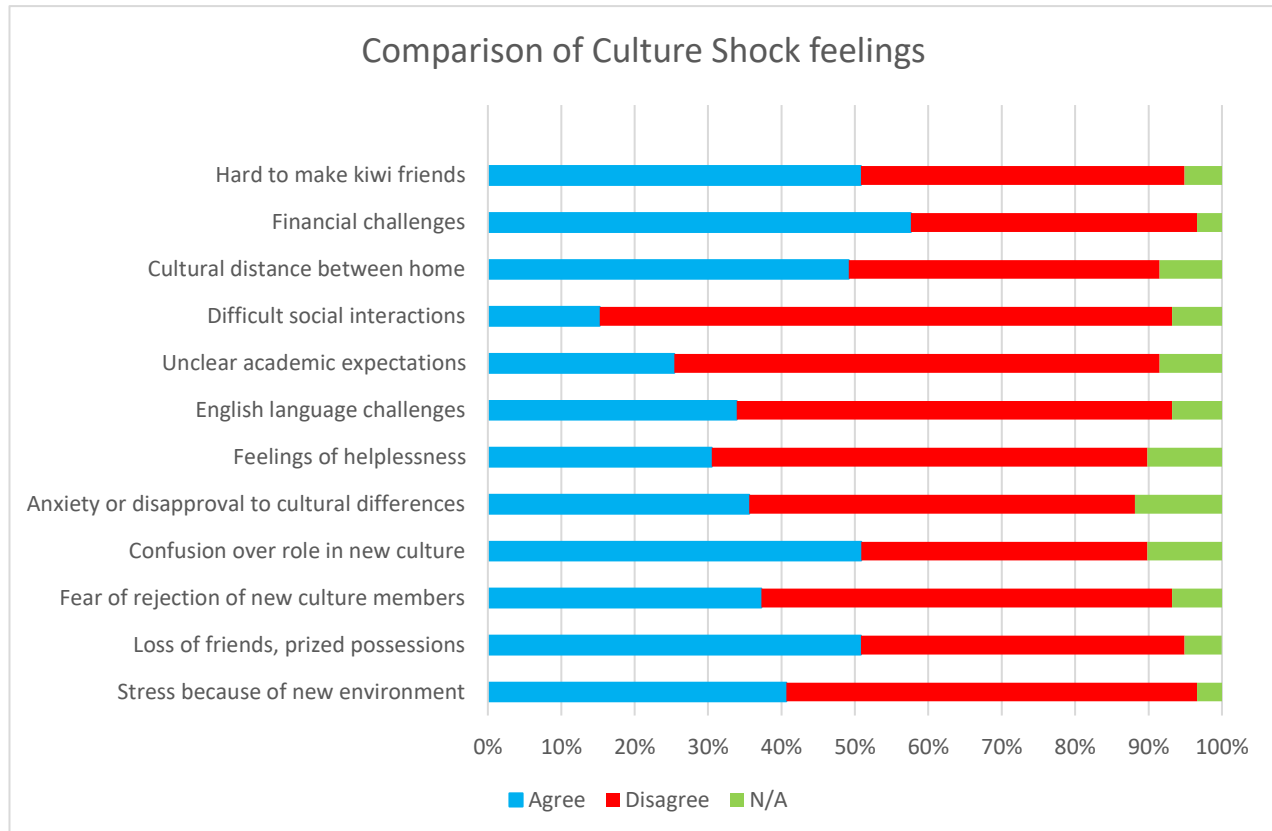
**Table 4. 6 What are some of the feelings of culture shock you have experienced since starting your study?**

#	Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		N/A		Total
1	Stress because of your new environment	10.17%	6	30.51%	18	49.15%	29	6.78%	4	3.39%	2	59
2	Loss of friends, prized possessions from home	15.25%	9	35.59%	21	38.98%	23	5.08%	3	5.08%	3	59
3	Fear of rejection of members of the new culture	5.08%	3	32.20%	19	49.15%	29	6.78%	4	6.78%	4	59
4	Confusion over role in new culture	10.17%	6	40.68%	24	35.59%	21	3.39%	2	10.17%	6	59
5	Anxiety or disapproval in response to culture differences	6.78%	4	28.81%	17	47.46%	28	5.08%	3	11.86%	7	59
6	Feelings of helplessness e.g. confusion, depression, frustration	10.17%	6	20.34%	12	45.76%	27	13.56%	8	10.17%	6	59
7	English language challenges	16.95%	10	16.95%	10	32.20%	19	27.12%	16	6.78%	4	59
8	Unclear academic expectations	5.08%	3	20.34%	12	57.63%	34	8.47%	5	8.47%	5	59
9	Difficult social interactions with peers	5.08%	3	10.17%	6	62.71%	37	15.25%	9	6.78%	4	59
10	Cultural distance between home and New Zealand cultures	6.78%	4	42.37%	25	30.51%	18	11.86%	7	8.47%	5	59
11	Financial challenges	16.95%	10	40.68%	24	35.59%	21	3.39%	2	3.39%	2	59
12	Hard to make kiwi friends	11.86%	7	38.98%	23	37.29%	22	6.78%	4	5.08%	3	59

These responses show an interesting mix of results, where the feelings of culture shock might be felt by half of the student group, but not the other. However, there is general agreement that the shock created by studying in a new culture is more positive than negative. Although there were challenges around making kiwi friends, financial challenges, confusion over role in new culture and loss of friends and prized possessions which were felt by at least half the

respondents. The other elements of culture shock were felt by less than half the group, and for many aspects less than a third which is a positive result. The graphic below shows this more clearly.

**Figure 4. 3 Comparison of culture shock experienced by students**



### 4.3 Qualitative Results

#### 4.3.1 How can international students better prepare for study abroad?

Content analysis of student responses to question 17 showed the following themes – Information, culture, accommodation, academic / institute expectations and the job market. Information was the most prevalent theme with more than half of the respondents noting improvements in this area. These results show that information about Invercargill, expectations of the environment – transportation, activities, living and so forth are valued by international students, setting expectations. Comments about culture focused on the differences experienced in New Zealand and how to set expectations of culture prior to arrival and give international students exposure to kiwi culture when they arrive. Drawing on the comments noted earlier by students about financial challenges, there were some specific recommendations by respondents about the importance of specific, clear information about the Invercargill job market expectations. There were also several specific recommendations

given by students about improvements that SIT could do to prepare international students – particularly around accommodation, academic expectations and getting a part time job. These results have been presented in the table below incorporating the respondents’ voice for context.

**Table 4. 7 How to better prepare international students before they leave home**

<b>Information</b>	<p>‘Give information about the school, location, where to go on arrival like groceries, restaurants etc’; ‘Consider a checklist of “Places to Visit” within a month to better immerse the international students in their new environment’; ‘Create more educational seminars that can help international students gain more knowledge and experience’; ‘More video instructions’; ‘Inform them about Invercargill as a city e.g. that there is basically no public transportation, no way to get to another city without a car, shops close early etc’; ‘I would like if SIT send the student handbook to the student before they come’; ‘By providing the student with the exact scenario which they are going to face after coming to SIT especially for Invercargill campus’; ‘Assign a buddy system and allocate a buddy from same country’</p>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>‘Learn about culture’; ‘Organise your lifestyle according to the New Zealand culture’; ‘Show how the Invercargill locals are’; ‘Be well prepared with English skill – however the accent and speech speed are the most challenge (sic) for international student’; ‘Clear cultural requirements and expectations’; ‘Create more events that can gather diversity’; ‘Give better exposure to kiwi culture’; ‘Better sent (sic) an agent from SIT to country wise and let the students know about their culture’</p>
<b>Jobs</b>	<p>‘Make some arrangements with the employers around the city to provide part time job opportunities and internship opportunities to international students because it will help to get an experience plus a solution to financial difficulties that students face’; ‘Information about job opportunities’; ‘Give them a realistic picture of the part time job market in Invercargill. It is the countryside and as such jobs are scarce. Jobs can only be got by references’; ‘The Employment Officers are not helpful at all finding part time work’</p>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<p>‘Accommodation. As it is hard for international students to find accomadation (sic) outside the SIT Apartments. I feel SIT should provide better accommodation’; ‘The apartments that u (sic) make students share are really not good, the small houses putting four people together is not really helpful and there are no other good accommodation outside to use too. Please inform students on the quality of</p>

	the apartments before they chose (sic) that option'; 'Better explanation regarding level of hygiene expected from students living at SIT Apartments'
<b>Study Expectations</b>	'SIT should be clear about the what is expected of the students and warn the students that they will have to cope with their studies by themselves'; 'Organise some better sequence of subjects. At the beginning is everything different to us, even students who are graduated or postgraduate'; 'The institute should deliver the students the timetable in advance, as well as more tips about what is expected from the students here, and what challenges students may face in class'; 'Clear expectations about course outcomes'; 'For English students: warning that passing English exams (sic) (PTE, IELTS etc) is not the main goal, because most of them get to the main course having trouble to understand and speak'

#### 4.3.2 Qualitative Results: Focus group

The focus group was conducted on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March. The seven participants who had indicated their willingness to be part of the focus group were contacted via email to ascertain a date that would suit. All except one were able to meet on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March, so this was chosen as the date and participants were contacted via telephone to confirm. The one male participant unable to attend was out of the city at that time. The six focus group participants were a nested sample of the questionnaire respondents, four female and two males from India, Brazil and Sri Lanka in a range of age groups. The focus group discussion was transcribed and is included in Appendix 8.

**Table 4. 8 Focus group details**

Participant #	Identifier	Gender	Home Country
1	U	Female	Brazil
2	V	Male	India
3	W	Female	Sri Lanka
4	X	Female	Sri Lanka
5	Y	Male	Sri Lanka
6	Z	Female	India

The following analysis represents the questions asked of these participants during the focus group.

#### 4.3.3 Why did you choose to study abroad?

New Zealand was a destination that was family friendly, and *a cool place to bring up kids* (Participant X), away from the unsafe environment back home in Sri Lanka, where parents

must be protective of their children. This was mirrored by a fellow Sri Lankan student who talked about *atrocities happening to small children that we cannot imagine* (Participant W). Participant Y followed her adult son to New Zealand to support him in his study abroad and chose to study herself as well to upskill. All the participants talked about a desire to study abroad, but also that New Zealand was not necessarily their first choice. Participant Z discussed the visa conflicts and barriers to study in her preferred choices of Canada, Australia and America. This was also the case for Participant V who would have preferred to study in Canada (but didn't have high enough GPA to gain entry) or Australia (which was too expensive), and Participant W who noted it *was very difficult to get into Australia*. Family connections were noted for two participants with siblings or in laws already currently studying or working at SIT (Participant V & W). The unstable political climate of her home country motivated Participant U, who chose New Zealand as her study abroad destination. Cost considerations were a key factor with affordability of study abroad destination mentioned by all participants.

#### 4.3.4 What have you found challenging in New Zealand?

Accommodation issues featured strongly in the discussions by the participants. They all started in the SIT Apartments on arrival, and then found their own living arrangements. Getting access to accommodation was particularly challenging for three of the participants (W, Y, U), with numerous viewings and applications, and a huge number of rejections. Participant U felt that this was related to landlords wanting proof that international students could afford the rent, as it was her experience as an individual that she was turned down, but when applying with her partner who was in full time employment *we got everything we applied for*.

However, Participant Y felt that *migrants don't get a chance*, and Participant W shared an experience where an agent told her *I don't think you will get this house, there is no point applying*. Participant U indicated that there were both *subtle prejudice and prejudism (sic) and straight up racism* and this was backed up by comments from Participants W and Y. Participant V, however, had no such issues gaining accommodation, - *there were two viewings, and I got the house*. Participants Z and X did not specifically share stories about issues with accommodation. Participant Z noted that the weather was challenging, as was the lack of public transport in the local area. Participant U also talked about the challenges she has faced as an international student in a small community and noted that *in certain situations I'm not welcome* feeling that she is seen as an outsider.

#### 4.3.5 Differences between education in home country and New Zealand

There were several differences noted by the participants between education at home and New Zealand. Education is highly valued in their home countries, but the delivery and expectations differ. Participant Z talked about the Indian education system is *not research based, it is not practical knowledge, more academic...more competition*, and that assessments were exam based, similar to the Sri Lankan education system noted by Participant W. Participant Y commented that *research-based problems are very limited*, and that the focus of students is on final exams, often not attending lectures *because they don't have to*. The mentality is to focus on summative examinations, rather than the process of study itself. She noted this is different to the expectations in New Zealand where *here it is more open, and research is very much in all the courses so like we feel free and... learning here is like interacting with other people and getting to know like our group*.

Working with students from other cultures was a novel difference between home countries and New Zealand, as participants noted that there were few international students and other cultures, and Participant Y observed *so it is actually quite boring learning there* (Sri Lanka). This sentiment was reinforced by Participant Z's comments about the freedoms she experienced studying in New Zealand and that *people enjoy studying with their colleagues, and that's the best part and that's what I want*. Differences in the Brazilian education system were around the concept of networking, connections and relationships that are developed whilst studying, which is not such a focus in New Zealand observed Participant U. She also felt that in Brazil people studied harder and were more stressed to try and be the top of their class. Her final observation was that the language barrier was the hardest thing.

#### 4.3.6 Role of the lecturer

Participants talked about the importance of support from lecturers, both with academic work, such as giving feedback on assignment drafts (Participant Y), but also recognising that English is their second language and that learning is different for them. Participant U gave the example of the way lecturers managed being asked the same questions, *because I felt like the class like sometimes I was asking questions, and then one minute later my colleague was asking the same question, and I was like 'what' I just asked that question*. In her experience one lecturer really stood out because she was happy to *tirelessly* answer the same question, where as other lecturers get angry with this - *I just told you that*. The participants talked about how they often translated material into their mother tongue, because it is *inbuilt* (Participant Y). English is their second language, causing them to almost *blank out* information that is in English, *it kind*

*of becomes the background tab, so you don't get it* (Participant U). But this lecturer was happy to spend the time with students going over the same questions, and Participant U observed:

*I think once you have that security of what you're teaching you become a little bit more like altruistic like you're I know what I'm doing so I can tell people over and over and over, like it's, it doesn't get, like you don't get angry, like all of the other ones I saw them get angry, getting frustrated about them, because everywhere and it kept happening all the time and I'm like it's the same question, it's the same question...*

Participant X noted that there were lots of different teaching styles of lecturers, and he felt that the role of the lecturer *is to interpret the subject for me, and as a student you'd have to expect different people to do it in different styles*. Participant V agreed, saying that all four of his current lecturers have different styles, and what he enjoyed most that they taught rather than reading bulk material (which was his educational experience in India). The practical element of how information related to the business environment was a key part of the lecturer role, rather than just putting up information and reading through it. Respondents noted that two lecturers didn't use PowerPoint, instead using practical methods and questioning to discuss information, and making connections to the business world. The role of the lecturer was seen as different from home, and Participant W observed that in Sri Lanka *the tutor is just a guide, but what we are used to is having like he will take the whole feed, he will spoon feed, he will take us from his hand and he will guide through the entire programme, that is what we are used to*.

#### 4.3.7 Surprising aspects of study

Two students from Sri Lanka noted that lecturers were at the same level as students, but in their home country lecturers are at a higher level, *there is a thing that we would say that it is God's word coming out of them* (Participant W). This observation was supported by Participant Y who commented *from the lower grades we have a culture like worshipping them*. It was a surprise for them, even simple things addressing the lecturer using their first name in New Zealand, was different from home. The more relaxed nature of the relationship with lecturers was a positive surprise for Participant X. He commented that *there was a dialogue and you could initiate it, and it would be kind of taken into consideration, and that was good with all the lecturers and the different styles*.

Participant Y talked about the surprise that people gave honest opinions, and didn't hold back, which was very different from her education experiences in Sri Lanka. The feeling that students can express themselves freely and have different perspectives was a new experience for her.

Participant U also commented on the richness of ideas in the student cohort, *actually this was a happy surprise for me, I thought that everyone was going to be the same, the same mindset, and then...the students are so rich, and everyone thinks differently*. However Participant U was also surprised at the lack of innovation and currency in teaching material, and the lack of connections, which was her expectation based on the Brazil education experience.

#### 4.3.8 Areas lacking from lecturing staff

Although participants had noted the practical element of their classes, this was something they were keen to have more of. Participant U noted: *we are thinking about businesses and we are thinking how this happens in businesses... and how things were I think connected to the real world of NZ, like how we can do this here*, which was like Participant X who was keen to see more 'real life current business situations' used in the classroom. Examples such as using more guest speakers to give a different point of view, and directing students to business people, such as the Chamber of Commerce were suggested by Participant W. This was reiterated by Participant U who talked about the connections SIT has with the local community and how these could be made available to students, with the suggestion of a business incubator or start up by Participant X. Participant W commented: *It's there, the complete puzzle is here but it has to be put together in a way. You have the facilities here much more than what we had in our institutes, much more than we are used to...but it has not connected*. The final theme to this question was about the opportunity to gain feedback from lecturers on assessments, only one lecturer seems to regularly do this, and it was valued by the participants. Participant Y noting *I think if all the lecturers can do that they would be different, we can do a better job in our assignments*, particularly because the academic expectations are so vastly different from their home countries.

#### 4.3.9 Preparation for students coming to SIT

There were numerous comments about the use of social media, Facebook, the SIT website and electronic sources for international students to more information, as many felt that they wanted to talk to people that were currently studying but couldn't access this group. The reality of living and studying in Invercargill was missing from the current information available. Participant U noted *like as honest as they can be, about what would the experiences with the course, specific with the course that they can also add something into the town and jobs and whatever... so like yeah, I understand that Invercargill is cold but it's also great place for the family (or whatever) and then like you can make a decision*. This was reiterated by Participant W who did quite a lot of research before arriving in New Zealand but said that *it was totally different from the minute I stepped out here*. Her overseas experiences meant living in large

cities with varied night life, she found the biggest challenge when coming to Invercargill that the town was closed, and everyone was at home indoors by 6pm, commenting *we came ready for a little bit of quietness, but we weren't ready for this much quiet.*

The role of the agent was a key part of preparing students, although Participant V noted that too much honesty can sometimes *back fire*. He gave the example of the weather in Invercargill, and that if agents told students that the weather was bad, then students trust the agent *like God's word* and students may choose other countries with bad weather such as Canada instead. Participant X also commented that the role of the agent is to give information about education and society, but it is also a business, *I understand that the agent makes money by getting students on board* so if they give more in-depth information, negative information, then some students might not choose to come here. Participant Y felt that the agent focused more on getting the visa, and didn't give any negative information, she was able to talk to personal contacts already in New Zealand to get an idea of what to expect.

Participant U suggested a place where prospective students can contact current students, a webpage, *if we have a page where we can find some video or things, but also like a way to connect to previous students...somehow that would be very helpful as well*. Participant Y talked about the value of gaining a position volunteering for a local business which helped her gain a reference and kiwi friends and relationships. The level of freedom that they felt in New Zealand and their ability to express themselves were noted by Participants X and Y, and these were unexpected bonuses in their move to New Zealand. These elements had not been discovered in their research into New Zealand but were very much valued.

#### 4.4 Research Questions

To summarise the results in connection with the research questions:

**RQ1. What are the components of culture shock, and how does this affect the learning experience for international students?** Students surveyed experienced a variety of culture shock components - linguistic, academic, social and cultural, and financial. These features were felt by all students in some manner. Finance and English language challenges were the most strongly felt components of culture shock, with financial challenges experienced by over half of the respondents. English language challenges were discussed in length in the focus group and the challenges this created in their learning – having to translate between mother tongue and English, and particularly around academic expectations with assessment. Cultural aspects, such as confusion over role and fear of rejection by those of the new culture were experienced by around a third of students. The focus group discussion also added some personal experiences

of prejudice and racism, and challenges in adjusting and fitting in with the new culture. Cultural distance was noted by a third of respondents, and differences in home education and their New Zealand experience created challenges for learning.

**RQ2. What is the gap between student expectations and reality in the teaching and learning environment?** Students were asked to share their experiences about their learning journey, whether they were enjoying their study, how capable they felt after studying for a length of time. Results showed that while students were enjoying their study, there were differences in their expectations and reality of the teaching and learning environment. The focus group participants expressed a level of freedom of expression that was new to them, and unexpected, as was the more casual relationship with their lecturer. A small number of vocal female respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the level of teaching on the programme (in the questionnaire results), feeling that it wasn't at the appropriate level or taught by lecturers with required knowledge or skills. The practical element of teaching was valued by students and the use of business examples, group work and participation in class exceeded expectations.

**RQ3. What are the tensions for academics and other key institutional support staff in supporting international students?** The results of the questionnaire showed that the characteristics of Fanghanel's three types of academics – productive, reproductive and transformative were all present in the minds of students. Students identified elements of the three ideologies with reproduction slightly higher than production, and transformation only three percent behind. Students talked about the issues of English language and how staff responded to questions being asked more than once, mostly in a negative fashion. Although students agreed that academic criteria were clear, there was a desire to have more opportunity to get feedback on assessment from lecturers before submission. There was dissatisfaction among students about the accommodation provided by SIT and how this process was managed by institution staff, and financial challenges for students and how these can be better supported by the institution was also noted as tensions affecting the educational experience for international students.

#### 4.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the data collection and analysis of the two data collection methods – questionnaire and focus group. The results have been presented in a variety of ways, including statistics, tables, graphics, themes and quotes to provide a rich and broad discussion of the

data. Results have been analysed in relation to the research questions, with a summary of key elements which will be discussed in the following discussion chapter.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of the questionnaire and focus group in relation to both the research questions and the literature. The results showed that International students at SIT experienced components of culture shock consistent with the body of research in this area. Culture shock is shown to affect the learning experience of international students in several ways, and the gaps between expectation and reality in the teaching and learning environment are discussed below. Fanghanel's framework is used to discuss the results related to the tensions for academic staff in supporting international students in their learning.

### 5.2 International student market in Invercargill

The reasons why students chose New Zealand for their sojourn were consistent with the research with price, reputation, personal contacts and the opportunity to study in a new culture all mentioned by students. The opportunity to gain a higher quality of education than that available in their home country as noted in the research by Darglish et al (2011) was expressed by both participants of the focus group and questionnaire, but this also was the source of a gap in expectations for a small group of students. Socio-economic, environmental and personal factors also influence intentions to study as noted by Kaur & Singh (2015). Focus group participants explained that in their experience New Zealand was an easier option to gain a visa than countries such as Canada, America and Australia, and less expensive than Australia. The SoRDS strategy to attract international students to complete post-graduate study and take up employment in Invercargill (SoRDS, 2015) is not without challenges for students arriving in the region. Lack of employment opportunities was a key theme in the way students can be better prepared before coming to New Zealand, and the rural location and the quietness of Invercargill were also noted. This gap in expectation is challenging both from a financial and personal perspective, *I could not find a part time job, yet which keep me stressed because I don't get a chance to get a professional experience while studying.*

**RQ1. What are the components of culture shock, and how does this affect the learning experience for international students?**

### 5.3 Culture shock for international students

The literature tells us that culture shock is the clash with a culture different from one's own (Murdoch & Kaciak, 2011), where the expectation and reality can be hard to cope with (Cumming et al, 2007). The results from the questionnaire showed that students experienced a wide variety of factors associated with culture shock, as expected from the literature, and

showed that culture shock doesn't affect everyone the same. This can be seen in the results by the variety of culture shock experiences recorded by students and the evidence that no one demographic group suffered more than others. The research by Araiza & Kutugata (2013) suggested that stressors for international students fell into two categories – those related to academic or education, and those related to socio cultural or personal experiences. The questionnaire combined these elements and found evidence that although these stressors were experienced by all students, none of the results showed that the stressors were in the majority negative for this student group. Their experience was positive in all variables. Socio-cultural aspects of making new friends and excitement about the new surroundings showed the highest result, followed by the educational stressor of feeling prepared for course work. When compared with all stressor categories, sociocultural aspects were slightly dominant in their occurrence.

Most students experienced the mismatch of expectations which was a key theme in the literature. The research by Daghli et al (2011) noted that students were often quite unprepared for the differences and in the results students expressed they were surprised at how *quiet* Invercargill was, particularly aspects such as how early the shops closed, that there were no evening activities, and how cold the weather was. Even though 91.5% of questionnaire respondents had prepared for their sojourn, searching websites and social media, asking friends and seeking recommendations this level of unpreparedness was still evident in the results. As noted in the literature adjustment to the new culture is experienced in different ways. In the first few weeks of study respondents felt strong feelings of excitement about their new experience (62.71%); prepared to study abroad (45.76%) and confident in their English language ability (42.37%). But, over half of the respondents felt uncertain about academic requirements (50.84%) and stressed about moving away from home (42.37%). This is consistent with the research by Berry (1998) which shows that often students are unsure about how to operate within the new culture, in this case torn between the excitement of the sojourn and the realities of leaving their country and culture behind.

Research also indicates that positive experiences for students often stems from social interactions with host nationals (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). Participant Y recounted her experiences volunteering at a local charity store and how much she valued the interactions and relationships with local people due to this role - *if you are friendly you get friendship in return*. Research by Chong and Razek (2104) suggests that positive peer interactions alleviate some of the negative aspects of culture, and this is consistent with the results from this study, with almost 95% expressing pleasure at making new friends. When asked whether New

Zealand was a good place to study, the most common theme was related to the culture and friendliness of people, with over 60% of respondents noting one or both themes. This is consistent with enjoyment of study, with almost 80% of students positive in this area. The literature suggests that matching the psychological contract between sojourners and institutions is important (Chavan et al, 2014) and this was mirrored in the comments by students who felt that pre-study information could be more specific to what they would find at SIT. Students indicated that specific information about the sojourn destination – weather, public transport, academic expectations, accommodation, the job market, culture, and the study culture would help reduce the gap in expectations and reduce elements of culture shock experienced.

#### 5.4 Components of culture shock

The components of culture shock as noted by Cheung (2013) were created from his review of previous studies which show international students have four main adjustments – language, academic, social and financial. English language requirements are a common example used by students in the questionnaire, most often in a positive context. Students were satisfied that English language requirements were relevant to their study expectations (94.23%), and general agreement that lecturers didn't use language or ideas that they couldn't understand (84.21%). Yet, when asked about the components of culture shock, English language challenges (and financial challenges) were the most acutely felt with 16.95% strongly agreeing. Skyrme & McGee (2016) noted that meeting English language tests (like IELTS) does not guarantee English language success for international students. Results showed that some students had trouble understanding and speaking English, even after passing these tests, which is consistent with Cheung's (2013) research suggesting the tests don't reflect their true abilities. Advice given for prospective students was that accent and speech speed are the most challenge for international student.

Academically, student responses were quite polarised. Some commented that the level of academic quality was high, most were satisfied, but a small, vocal group of students were very dissatisfied with their academic experiences. Results showed that students felt prepared about successful completion of course work at 88.14%, and 81.36% felt proud about their academic achievements. However, a quarter of students (20.69%) felt that they didn't have clear direction about academic standards expected, but these results didn't necessarily increase stress, with only 10.17% feeling stressed in their environment. Participant Y from the focus group talked about the need for more individual feedback on assessment drafts, and this was also noted in the research by Chavan et al (2014). The literature shows this is an area where

expectations often differ because of home education experiences (Daglish et al, 2011) and these results from this study are consistent with this.

Almost half of international students surveyed experienced cultural distancing, but this did not adversely affect social interactions with peers. As discussed in the literature by Greatrex-White (2008) respondents found it difficult to make kiwi friends (50.84%) but this is compounded by the high numbers of international students in the postgraduate programmes within the Business School. Social interactions between peers were cultivated in the classroom with orientation activities and group work. Respondents talked about mixed reactions with kiwis, *while 45% are accepting and accommodating (sic) 55% have been less welcoming* and one stated *I did not feel welcomed by the people in the country* which were reasons not to recommend New Zealand as a study abroad country. Participants U, Y and W from the focus group recounted stories of prejudice and racism in relation to accommodation, jobs and social situations, and although this was not their dominant experience, it has influenced the way they perceive their social situation in Invercargill.

The final component of culture shock outlined by Cheung (2013) is financial, and this was experienced by students surveyed. There were several comments about the lack of part time jobs in the Invercargill market, and that this should be explicitly communicated to student's pre-arrival so that informed decisions can be made. As noted in the literature, international students are acutely aware of the higher fees they pay (Chavan et al, 2014) and this frames expectations. SIT was chosen by many students because of its lower tuition fees, when compared to other tertiary institutions. Financial concerns are further exacerbated by difficulty in finding a job, with students suggesting that this is part of the institution's role, in supporting students. One student commented that SIT should *make some arrangements with the employers around the city to provide part time job opportunities and internship opportunities to international students*. Finances also affected finding appropriate accommodation, with the focus group participants sharing their challenges with housing and in their experience linking success to showing evidence of income (Participants U, Y & W).

The cultural learning theory discussed by Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman (2008) connects the theoretical framework of social skills with the conceptual framework that sojourners need to learn culturally relevant social skills. As noted in the results, factors affecting this adjustment such as cultural distance, understanding of cultural norms and expectations, language and communication have been experienced by this student group, but

the high levels of preparation prior to leaving and positive learning experiences have shown these participants to enjoy a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment from their study.

### 5.5 Learning Experience

Students noted a variety of learning experiences and that lecturers presented information in a variety of ways. Respondents expressed their enjoyment working in groups with students from different cultures, which is different to their home countries where there are very few international students. Group work is noted in the literature as an issue because of preconceived linguistic inadequacies (Lewthwaite, 1997), yet the diverse nature of the group surveyed suggests that the interaction with other ideas and opinions is more rewarding than the possible communication difficulties, which is supported by the Third Space concept by Kramsch & Uryu (2012). Participant U shared her experience of group work saying that working in groups with students from other cultures added a *richness and diversity to idea creation*. The other aspect of working together which students found unexpected, was the ability to express themselves freely in the learning environment. Research by Rienties, Heliot & Jindal-Snape (2013) found that Chinese students did not feel comfortable expressing their views because of cultural difference and *unspoken norms*, yet Participant Y and her colleagues from Sri Lanka, India and Brazil agreed they felt a sense of freedom to express their ideas in class, more so than in their home country – *it is from a different perspective and we can think freely*.

### **RQ2. What is the gap between student expectations and reality in the teaching and learning environment?**

#### 5.6 Gaps between expectation and reality

There was rich discussion in the focus group about the differences in education when comparing their home country to New Zealand. Both Indian and Sri Lankan education systems followed a lecturer focused model where students are spoon fed information, but one student noted that the lecturer in New Zealand was *just a guide* (Participant W). This was also noted in the comments by Participant V who wanted lecturers to give him a *summary of the content which will be useful for me in the future*, expressing the desire to be spoon fed key information. The lack of shared expectations is noted in the literature by Dalglish et al (2011), and their research suggests that it can add to culture shock for international students. This is also discussed in Skyrme (2005) who suggests that there is often conflict between student and academic expectations of roles. Yet, the varied role of the lecturer was also seen positively. Students expressed surprise at their relationship being more casual than in their home

countries, with the use of first names and the opportunity to discuss opinions with lecturers, impossible at home with lecturers who have 'God' like status. Research by Lewthwaite (1997) showed a positive relationship between academic staff and satisfaction of students, and this was evident in the high levels of enjoyment experience by students (at almost 80%).

The literature shows that there is a relationship between culture and different assessment methods (Selvarajah, 2006), and for many students (particularly from China, Sri Lanka and India) assessments were mainly exam based. Focus group participants shared that they were not required to attend classes, and their focus is on the final examinations. Yet their New Zealand experience has been quite different. At SIT their attendance is compulsory, and the focus is on the process of learning, as well as assessing what is learned. This can be seen in the negative comments by students on the number of assessments they needed to complete as part of their studies. Formative assessment was not expected and is very different to the summative assessment expectations in their home countries. Adjusting to a new education system is complex (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011).

Learning with a practical application of knowledge was valued by students, and for some the main reason why they chose their course (Participants V & Z). Yet, this was also an area of dissatisfaction among students who expressed that classes needed to be more innovative and current in their focus (Participant U), utilising better connections with the local business community to allow students real world experiences (Participant W). Students agreed (86.44%) that lecturers related their teaching to the business context and the current environment. This can be linked to the student's ability to adapt to the local environment, as the teaching and learning relates to the environment that students are operating in, an *incremental and reiterative process* as noted by Lewthwaite (1997).

### **RQ3. What are the tensions for academic and other key institutional staff in supporting international students?**

#### **5.7 Tensions for academic staff**

The role of the academic is complex and is discussed at length in the literature. Focus group participants indicated that their lecturers needed to have better understanding when teaching international students, that English is not their mother tongue and that they need to be *open in the international scenario* (Participant U). Students may ask the same question in different ways, numerous times, and in Participant U's experience, she found that some lecturers got angry when questioned by students, and others (one in particular) was happy to help students even if this meant answering the same question. This aspect reinforces the tensions discussed

by Skyrme & McGee (2016) where the need to scaffold and support students is often at odds with staff who want students to show autonomy and study independently.

The difference in lecturer styles was discussed in the results, with a wide variety of teaching methods – some with *colourful presentations for teaching*; some who *used questioning and cross questions to draw out discussion and ideas*, others who *discussed business cases*, some *without visual aids* encouraging students to create their own answers rather than *put answers in your heads*. Results showed the style of teaching was different from their home country. Students from Asian countries were used to the lecturer being authority figures in teaching, but Participant W commented that the New Zealand lecturer was more of a *guide*. This is consistent with the literature that shows Chinese students are more likely to *accept academic assertions without questioning them* (Zhou et al, 2008), and study using rote learning. The Chinese experience is similar in other Asian cultural education systems, where the teacher centred model is prominent (Cheung, 2013). The New Zealand education system is more aligned to American and British models where lecturers are the facilitator, organiser and friendly critic (Ward, 2001). However, this was seen as a positive by Participant X who was happy to initiate and engage in discussions with lecturers at an intellectual level.

Results showed dissatisfaction with the level of knowledge of some lecturers, expressing that the quality of teaching did not meet their expectations and noting the *lack of support of the tutors*, highlighting the expectations of this student that part of the lecturer's role is to scaffold and support learning. In the results, 20.33% of students indicated they were unhappy with the support from their lecturer in class. However, when asked whether lecturers made a real effort to enhance my educational experience 83.63% of students agreed and this suggests a tension between expectations of a lecturer's role by international students.

Soontiens et al (2016) noted that international students are expected to adapt to the norms of the host country, and this was reiterated in the results: *tutors in the course (who) does not give any consideration to the fact that we are studying here for the first time*. This is shown in the results also, with 62.71% indicating that their expectations of studying in New Zealand have been met, but 28.81% experiencing disillusionment with their study. One student noted that *SIT should be more clear about the what is expected of the students and warn the students that they will have to cope with their studies by themselves*, bridging the gap between New Zealand reality and home country expectations. Yet, the literature notes that mutual adjustments need to be made particularly due to different expectations between Western and Asian learning environments.

The work of Malaklunthu & Selan (2011) suggests that the way individual lecturers can understand these cultural factors and create strategies to improve learner adjustment to their new educational environment is challenging. It has also been suggested in the literature that academics need to be able to adapt their teaching to support international students (Araiza & Kutugata, 2013). SIT needs to provide support, training and policy guidelines for lecturers teaching on postgraduate programmes with high numbers of international students to work towards creating solutions to this problem.

### 5.8 Being an academic – evidence of Fanghanel’s framework

In Fanghanel’s framework, the teaching practices of an academic have been categorised into three areas – production, reproduction and transformation (Fanghanel, 2012). Because the postgraduate business programmes are largely focused around business enterprise and preparing students for business creation, it was expected that Production would be the dominant teaching practice. In the production category, the lecturer is a facilitator, focusing on professional practice and industry, developing aptitudes and skills relevant to the real world (Fanghanel, 2012). The strongest response (22.03% of respondents strongly agreeing) was the lecturer linked the study to the business context and what was happening in the current environment; a clear Production statement, particularly when combined with the Agree criteria, it was still the highest response at 86.44%. The framework proposed by Fanghanel suggests that academics operate largely based on their values about education (Callow, 2013). The results show that there was very little difference between the results for all three categories.

The lecturers’ passion for teaching came through strongly with 84.21% of students recognising this Reproduction trait in the classroom. In Reproduction, the lecturer encourages learning through the creation of curiosity, moving the onus onto the student to investigate knowledge (Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Members of the focus group specifically noted a particular lecturer who approaches teaching this way, encouraging students to find the answer for themselves, and this was a key aspect of his teaching method – no PowerPoint slides to put his answers in their heads. Participant Y explaining that he said, *I want your answers to be in the bold*. Another aspect of Reproduction is the understanding that lecturers are authoritative sources in imparting knowledge (Arunasalam & Burton, 2018), which also featured highly in these results with 82.76% of respondents agreeing that lecturers were experts in their specific field. However, this aspect was also one of the most prevalent sources of dissatisfaction for students who indicated that some lecturers were not capable or suitable for teaching on these programmes.

Opening minds to new ways of thinking is a key element of the Transformational category (Skyrme & McGee, 2016). Focus group Participant U shared her experiences of working in groups, where collaborating with students from different cultures in the learning environment gave her an opportunity to see different perspectives and ways of doing things that *I would never have thought of that*. Lecturers have quite a lot of freedom in the delivery method of their classroom material, and the use of group work by lecturers can give exposure to new ways of thinking. The literature shows group work can be an area of concern, creating anxiety for international students worried about their *linguistic inadequacies* (Lewthwaite, 1997). However, these who do not have English as their first language perhaps are able to share their different cultures, ideas and examples, particularly in group work, transforming their learning experience. As Dewey (1923) noted if lecturers can instil the love of thinking to students, then they are more likely to search for information and share this with their colleagues. Students had an overall satisfaction of 80.36% that their lecturer puts the subject into a context where it related to other disciplines, and at 17.86% this registered as the fourth highest result, showing evidence that Transformation was valued by students.

The research by Skyrme & McGee (2016) notes that where there is a “contrast in the role of the lecturer and the sojourner’s experience this can be very challenging, particularly between the categories of reproduction and transformation” (p.767). This may account for some of the students who are polarised in the results. As noted earlier, the results were somewhat surprising, as the results show evidence that each category is evenly represented, with no significant difference between the roles of the lecturer experienced by students. Showing that the student experience is influenced by lecturers who value all three of the categories in Fanghanel’s framework. Because of the applied nature of the business programmes, it was expected that Production would have dominated due to the vocational nature of the course. However, this is not represented in the results, instead showing evidence of all three categories, suggesting that individual lecturers teach in a manner that is consistent with their personal educational values, rather than adjusting these to the aims of the course.

### 5.9 Institutional support for international students

The literature reports a variety of support for international students, with the results of the questionnaire showed that 53.85% of students had used the International Department for support during their studies. Consistent with the research by I-graduate (2011) results showed the reputation of safety was important to international students on campus and an important consideration in recommending New Zealand to other students. Sherry, Thomas & Chui (2010) noted that institutions needed to pay attention to the specific needs of international students

to avoid a gap in expectations. The results from the study show dissatisfaction about the Accommodation and Employment Officers at the institution, reflecting the challenges that students experienced in finding adequate housing and part time jobs. This dissatisfaction is reflected in various studies indicating that accommodation is a critical element of the sojourner's satisfaction, that is not wholly met (see Inch & Sun, 2013; Cheung, 2013; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). In fact, the International Student Barometer indicated that international student satisfaction has reduced, with students less satisfied with accommodation and cost of living (I-graduate, 2011). However, positively, 75.86% of students felt supported by the institution.

Results showed agreement that lecturers spent time going through academic requirements - referencing, formatting of assessments and academic writing (77.97%), but discussions in the focus group suggested more could be done. Selvarajah (2006) proposed that it is the role of the institution to provide academic support, including study skills and English language expectations. Participant Y noted that only one of her lecturers looked at drafts and gave specific feedback, which was very helpful and valued, particularly because assessments were so different from her home country. It was her opinion that more staff should do this. The literature agrees that the onus is on the institution to look after academic needs of students (Lewthwaite, 1997), and understanding these needs must be researched by the institution to best meet the expectations of international students.

Pre-arrival information which is discussed in the literature, but mainly in relation to once students arrive in the country (Lewthwaite, 1997) came through strongly in the results in the context of advice for students preparing to come to New Zealand. The main theme from the results, was the lack of specific information about living in Invercargill. Students reported researching New Zealand before coming with 91.52% actively searching websites, blogs, social media, or talking to friends or colleagues who have experience in New Zealand. But it was clear in the suggestions for student's pre-arrival that the reality was different to expectations. Respondents gave a variety of recommendations including: *providing the student with the exact scenario which they are going to face after coming to SIT especially for Invercargill campus*; where to shop for groceries; the realities of public transport in Invercargill; accessing the student handbook before they leave home to understand academic expectations; a *Places to Visit* list to help explore their new surroundings; along with clear timetable and subject information so students can better understand what it will be like in class. These recommendations show a gap between expectations and reality.

Chung, Fam & Holdsworth (2009) discussed the importance of open days where institutions have a physical presence to manage expectations, and the role of the agent (who acts on behalf of the institution) was discussed at length in the focus group. Participant V (who acted as an agent) indicated that if he told prospective students about the cold weather or that *'Invercargill was bad'* the student would accept this and wouldn't study here, he would lose business. Participant X and Y found that the agent didn't go into much detail about the study and living in Invercargill but were very helpful with the visa application and this was the most important thing to them. There was an expectation of trust with the agent, and Participant V commented in his experience *whatever the agent speaks...is like 'Gods' word*. Accommodation and job information came through strongly in the questionnaire responses, as these are key issues that students have found in their sojourn. Better information about these areas' pre-arrival will help manage student expectations, and possibly influence international study destination decisions.

### 5.10 Summary

The components of culture shock noted in the literature were all experienced by this group of students, but the majority were still enjoying their studies. The results showed there is a gap between the expectations of international students and the reality of the teaching and learning environment at SIT. As reported in the literature, differences in expectations of the role of the lecturer is often at the heart of this frustration particularly between Asian (Sri Lanka, India and China) and Western perspectives. Some of this gap could be addressed with better pre-arrival information about the realities of living and studying in Invercargill, particularly academic expectations, accommodation and the job market.

Tensions around the role of the lecturer are reported, and this needs to be investigated further by the institution to collaborate with international students to reduce the gap between expectation and reality. Lecturers were shown to represent all three of the categories from Fanghanel's framework – Production, Reproduction and Transformation, suggesting an emphasis of individual values, and the way lecturers engage with their discipline, rather than teaching pedagogy consistent with the course content. Research from Australia by Volet, Rensha & Tietzels (1994) suggested that international students adapt to academic expectations over time, following the theory of Anderson's (1994) model, that this occurs incrementally. These results show both a gap in expectations, but also indicate evidence of positive changes over time in the educational journey of the international student.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of this study show that international students experience a variety of the culture shock components identified in the literature, particularly financial and language related challenges which affect the learning experience for these students. Providing clear, current information about employment opportunities and living costs pre-arrival would help alleviate the gaps in sojourners current experiences on arrival to Invercargill. English language is another component of culture shock evident in the study, which suggests that English language testing does not adequately prepare students for the speed and accent of communication by host natives, and that academic English language requirements could be better supported by both academics and institutional support staff. This finding provides SIT with an opportunity to work with international students on an intercultural-led programme, where English language requirements are complimented with intercultural skills. To reframe this challenge as an opportunity for students and academics to learn from each other in a diverse cultural environment.

Gaps in expectations between students and academics during their educational sojourn were also identified, particularly in expectations of the role of the lecturer. Students experienced a range of teaching styles and approaches in line with Fanghanel's categories – production, reproduction and transformation. This was both enlightening and confusing for students who were challenged by the diverse teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. More specific pre-arrival information about the educational expectations in New Zealand would help international students identify differences in the teaching and learning philosophies which underpin the education experience in New Zealand, particularly those students from Asian countries.

Cultural distance, although expected, also created some challenges. Aspects of culture such as the rural New Zealand lifestyle were significantly different from student's previous life experiences, and not immediately noticeable in their pre-sojourn research of blogs, social media and web searching.

Accommodation was a significant challenge for international students, and although accommodation provisions are made available to new arrivals by the institution, it is clear this needs to be addressed for the whole period of study, as it was identified as a key source of culture shock by sojourners.

Another challenge was the different teaching styles and educational philosophies of staff which was identified in the research as a source of confusion. Where some lecturers

encouraged students to send in draft work and discuss assessment requirements and concepts, often repeating themselves to different students, other staff were less inclined to include this as part of their teaching role. Because of the wide range of teaching experiences, students expressed disappointment that not all academic staff were so 'helpful', indicating tension and role ambiguity. Clear guidelines for students about academic support would help to provide clarity to the role of an academic on this programme, but this would need to be done as part of faculty consultation, because a change to the role of an academic is a deeply cultural consideration for the institution.

This study has confirmed that components of culture shock do adversely affect the learning experience for international students, and this is consistent with the current body of knowledge. However, for the student group studied, culture shock has not adversely affected their satisfaction with international study, which is a positive outcome. Gaps between educational expectations and reality are often related to different learning experiences in their home country, and this can be mitigated with specific pre-arrival information about classroom, study and assessment expectations. The role of the academic in teaching international students at postgraduate level is less clear. The range of student experience shows diversity within the academic staff, as shown in an even representation of Fanghanel's categories, creating both new experiences and challenges for international students unsure about the role of academic staff. There is no doubt that the role of an academic is complex, providing both content and context to student learning, alongside real-world examples and business experience. The tension for those in this academic role, is how to provide support and how much support is needed for international students in their academic journey, and this requires further research.

### 6.1 Future Research

To add value to the research undertaken, conducting a wider international student sample would allow for comparisons between different programmes of study within the institute to occur, or between other tertiary institutions. Incorporating a structured approach to gather academic staff voice about their role and how they manage their interactions with international students would contribute to the body of knowledge related to role complexity which was only briefly touched on in this study.

### 6.2 Research Limitations

The research is based on a study of a small campus, rural tertiary provider and this may affect the ability for these results to be generalised across the wider NZ tertiary environment. However, a wide cross section of students was included allowing data to be representative of

the sample from this organisation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Using a focus group allows for flexibility in the questions asked of participants but reduces the transferability of results to a wider context. However, the focus group results were not designed to provide generalisations, rather to include student *voice* and an individual's perspective in this matter. Due to the nature of this cross-sectional approach, the student semester was a key time consideration. The aim to capture international students who had completing one semester added some extra constraints to the research process. The relationship between academic staff and the tensions that exist in the complexity of their role was not explored from the perspective of staff, and this leaves limitations to the credibility of the coverage of this research question.

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## 8. Appendices

## Appendix 8. 1 Questionnaire Participant Information Sheet



## MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Kia ora, my name is Selena Coburn and I am studying towards a Master of Education through Massey University. As a lecturer at SIT I work with international students every day and am very interested in your educational journey, particularly the phenomenon of *'culture shock, its effect on international students and how this influences the complex role of academic staff'*. Culture shock is a term used to describe a variety of feelings and experiences that an international student may encounter when moving from their home culture to New Zealand.

I am looking for Post Graduate International students who have been studying at SIT for at least one semester to complete this questionnaire in order to better understand the student experience in education. It will only take a few minutes of your time, and your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. Your responses will not be identifiable as coming from you as an individual.

The results will be written up and presented in a written discussion, and the information will be used to better support international students at SIT in the future. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and destroyed after a period of 5 years.

If you would like to participate in this research, then please click on the link below. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability, and if you don't feel comfortable in answering some questions you may leave them blank. If you click on the link and complete the questionnaire, then you are giving your consent for data to be included in my research.

[https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9z4w589aTftOrGt](https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9z4w589aTftOrGt)

**This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 19/46.**

If you have concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers (Chair)  
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B  
[humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)  
Tel: 06 356 9099 ext 83657

Thank you so much for helping me with this research. Please remember that the International Department at SIT provides a variety of support and guidance to international students, and if any of these questions have helped you identify an area where you would like more support, please contact the team who are there to help.

If you have any questions, please contact me on [Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz](mailto:Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz). If you would like to contact my supervisor, Sally Hansen, her contact details are [S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz](mailto:S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz).

Nga mihi,

*Selena Coburn*

**Southern Institute of Technology**

## Appendix 8. 2 Focus Group Participant Information sheet



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***“An investigation into culture shock, its effect on international students, and how this influences the complex roles of academic staff”.***

## **Information Sheet for Focus Group Participants**

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering my request.

### **Introduction**

Kia ora, my name is Selena Coburn, lecturer in the School of Business at the Southern Institute of Technology. As a lecturer at SIT I work with international students every day and am very interested in your educational journey, particularly the phenomenon of culture shock.

### **What is the aim of the project?**

The project aims to explore the effect of culture shock on the international student community at the Southern Institute of Technology. This exploratory research will look at how culture shock (the feelings and experiences that an international student may encounter when moving from their home culture to New Zealand) affects international students and how this in turn influences the roles of academic staff at the institute. A questionnaire aimed at all international students will be the basis for capturing the overall student experience, with a smaller focus group aimed to provide a student ‘voice’ to your experiences. The aim of the project is to provide information which will help understand the international student experience in tertiary education and bridge the perceived gaps between expectation prior to arriving at SIT and once you have been studying for one semester or more. I would like to explore if there is a missed opportunity to better prepare international students for the teaching and learning environment at SIT.

### **What type of participants are being sought?**

My research will focus on international students, because I have noticed a gap in the expectations of international students around the teaching and learning environment when arriving on campus. International students are an important group of the SIT student campus, and a better understanding of your educational journey would be of benefit to all stakeholders.

### **What will participants be asked to do?**

If you agree to take part in this focus group, you will be asked to attend a one hour session at the SIT campus in Invercargill. I will have pre-prepared questions to help us explore the

concept of culture shock, your perceptions about preparedness in your journey to the SIT tertiary environment, and what you feel is the role of academic staff in your educational experience. Only issues related to this research project will be discussed. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the discussions at any time without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

### **Can participants change their minds and withdraw from the project?**

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time up until the point at which the data is anonymised and amalgamated into the report, without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

### **What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?**

In the focus group, the discussion will be recorded so that the dialogue can be later transcribed. The transcribed data will not include identifiable information, and participants will be recorded as Respondent 1 etc. Your name will not be used in the final report and you will not be able to be identified in any way. All information will be kept confidential.

### **What will happen to the results?**

The results of the project may be presented at conferences and / or published in an academic journal, and a copy of the report will be available through the Massey University library (Palmerston North, New Zealand). You may request a copy of the results of the project upon completion if you wish.

### **How will the data be stored?**

The data collected will be securely stored in a password protected computer. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by SIT's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depends on will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

### **What if you have any questions about the project?**

If you have any questions about the project, please contact:

Selena Coburn, Southern Institute of Technology, 03 2112699 ext. 8829,  
[Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz](mailto:Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz), or my supervisor Sally Hansen at [S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz](mailto:S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz).

**This research has been approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 19/46.**

If you have concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers (Chair)  
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B  
[humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)  
Tel: 06 356 9099 ext 83657

Please remember that the International Department at SIT provides a variety of support and guidance to international students, and if any of these questions has helped you identify an area where you would like more support, please contact the team who are there to help.

### **Appendix 8. 3 Questionnaire Pilot test Information for Participants**

Kia ora, my name is Selena Coburn and I am studying towards a Master of Education through Massey University, NZ.

***As a lecturer at SIT I work with international students every day and am very interested in your educational journey, particularly the phenomenon of 'culture shock, its effect on international students and how this influences the complex role of academic staff'. Culture shock is a term used to describe a variety of feelings and experiences that an international student may encounter when moving from their home culture to New Zealand.***

I am looking for Post Graduate International students who have been studying at SIT for at least one semester to complete this questionnaire in order to better understand the student experience in education. It will only take a few minutes of your time, and your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. Your responses will not be identifiable as coming from you as an individual.

*The results will be written up and presented in a written discussion, and the information will be used to better support international students at SIT in the future. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and destroyed after a period of 5 years.*

If you would like to participate in this research, ***then please click on the link below***. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability, and if you don't feel comfortable in answering some questions you may leave them blank. If you click on the link and complete the questionnaire, then you are giving your consent for data to be included in my research.

[https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5drBXpwypHiknJP](https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5drBXpwypHiknJP)

**If you would like to be involved in a focus group to discuss findings further, please email me directly on: [Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz](mailto:Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz) to register your interest.**

**This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 19/46.**

If you have concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers (Chair)

Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

[humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)

Tel: 06 356 9099 ext 83657

Thank you so much for helping me with this research. Please remember that the International Department at SIT provides a variety of support and guidance to international students, and if any of these questions have helped you identify an area where you would like more support, please contact the team who are there to help.

If you have any questions, please contact me on [Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz](mailto:Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz). If you would like to contact my supervisor, Sally Hansen, her contact details are [S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz](mailto:S.E.Hansen@massey.ac.nz).

## Appendix 8. 4 Questionnaire Instrument Pilot test

**Are you an International Student at SIT studying a Post Graduate Qualification? If YES, please proceed with the questions. Thank you for your time.**

1. Gender

Male	
Female	
Prefer not to say	

2. What is your age group?

18-24	
25-31	
32-38	
39-45	
45+	

3. What is your highest qualification?

School	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post Graduate	
Masters	

4. Please state your home country

---

5. How many semesters have you been studying at SIT?

One	
Two	
Three	
Four	
Five	
Six	

6. Tell us why you chose to study at SIT?

7. Which area are you studying at SIT?

Post Graduate Certificate	
Post Graduate Diploma	
Masters	

8. Did you do any preparation for your study in New Zealand before you left home? For example: read about New Zealand culture, talk to people who had been to New Zealand previously, look at blogs or other media about student life in New Zealand, investigate your proposed programme of study to see what the course content was etc.

9. What emotions did you feel when you **started** your study? The first few weeks.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	N/A (5)
--------------------	-----------	--------------	-----------------------	---------

Emotions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Excited about a new experience					
Apprehensive about the unknown					
Prepared for study abroad					
Stressed to move away from home					
Organised to leave home					
Lacking social skills of new culture					
Curious about what the study will be like					
Nervous about using English language					
Previous experience abroad has helped to prepare me					
Cross cultural training before I left home shaped my expectations					
Good understanding of general knowledge of New Zealand					
Confident in English language ability					
Grief of leaving family behind					
Uncertain about the academic requirements					
I had Kiwi friends before I arrived to New Zealand					
Someone in my family or a friend has studied in New Zealand and I knew what to expect					

10. Tell us about your academic study experience. Are you enjoying your study?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Please explain why you feel this way:

12. How did you feel about studying **after 3-4 months (or one semester)**?

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	N/A (5)
-----------------------	-----------	--------------	-----------------------	---------

Emotions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Frustrated about aspects of culture					
Struggles with day to day living					
Pride in successfully achieving in study					
Difficulty coping with new culture					
Excited to explore your new surroundings					
Happy to make new friends					
Feeling like you want to go home					
Your expectations of studying in New Zealand have been met					
Disillusionment with study					
Clear about your lecturer's expectations of course work					
Unhappy with support from lecturer in class					
Disappointed about level of integration in classroom					
Feel prepared about successful completion of course work					
Enjoying the kiwi experience					
Still unsure of cultural norms and expectations of New Zealand					

13. Would you recommend New Zealand to friends and family as a good place to study abroad?

Yes	
No	
No strong opinion	

14. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

15. How has your experience in tertiary study in New Zealand affected the following statements?

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	N/A (5)
-----------------------	-----------	--------------	--------------------------	---------

<b>Education Ideology</b> ( <i>Fanghanel, 2012</i> )	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
My lecturer puts the subject into a context where it relates to other disciplines					
I didn't feel comfortable approaching my lecturer with questions					
The lecturers have prepared me with skills for a workplace environment					
The lecturer actively encouraged all class members to interact with one another regularly					
My lecturers provide clear direction about academic standards expected					
My learning in class included transferable skills that I was able to use in work and life					
Sometimes I found it difficult to explain my point of view or ideas to my lecturer					
My lecturers are experts in their specific field					
Lecturers spent time going through academic expectations like referencing, formatting of assessments and academic writing					
Lecturers encouraged me to relate learning back to an industry environment and think about my own skills					
I learnt about my subject through examples from industry					
I used the International department to provide me with support during my study					
Lecturers linked the study to the business context and what was happening in the current environment					
My lecturers are passionate about the subject areas they teach					
My lecturers often refer back to theory and research in my field of study					
Lecturers helped to teach me skills for learning and work					
Lecturers taught me to understand a wider world view of information					
My lecturers were available if I wanted to ask questions					
I felt lecturers treated international students in the same way academically as kiwi students					
Lecturers often used language or terms that were difficult to understand					
I think the English language requirements (ESOL) are relevant to the English language expectations in academic work / study					
Lecturers made a real effort to enhance my educational experience					
I feel supported in my whole education experience by the institution					

16. What are some of the feelings of 'Culture Shock' you may have experienced since starting your study?

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	N/A (5)
-----------------------	-----------	--------------	--------------------------	---------

Factors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>Aspects of Culture Shock</b> (Pyvis & Chapman, 2005)					
Stress because of your new environment					
Loss of friends, prized possessions from home					
Fear of rejection of members of the new culture					
Confusion of role in new culture					
Anxiety or disapproval in response to culture differences					
Feelings of helplessness e.g. confusion, depression, frustration					
<b>Common Adjustments for International Students</b> (Cheung, 2013; Skyrme, 2005)					
English language challenges					
Unclear academic expectations					
Difficult social interactions with peers					
Cultural distance between home and NZ cultures					
Financial challenges					
Hard to make kiwi friends					

17. What advice can you give SIT on how to better prepare international students before you leave home to study?

Thank you so much for your participation in this research. Please remember that the International Department at SIT provides a variety of support and guidance to international students, and if any of these questions has helped you identify an area where you would like more support, please contact the team who are there to help.

**If you are interested in being part of a focus group to discuss this topic further, please contact me directly at [Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz](mailto:Selena.coburn@sit.ac.nz) to register your interest.**

## Appendix 8. 5 Focus Group Confidentiality Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Declaration of confidentiality as a participant in a focus group for the following research topic:

"An investigation into culture shock, its effect on international students, and how this influences the complex roles of academic staff"

I have had the scope and nature of the research project fully explained to me. Any questions about the research have been satisfactorily answered, and I understand that I may request further information at any stage. I accept and note that:

- 1. I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.
2. I understand that all the information I provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.
a. Note: There are limits on confidentiality as there are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identify or what you say to others in the focus group. There are risks in taking part in focus group research and taking part assumes that you are willing to assume those risks.
3. I agree to participate in the focus group under the conditions of the Declaration of Consent document.

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the information set out on this form and give my informed consent to be a participant in this focus group in accordance with the stated terms and conditions.

Name of Participant:

Name of Researcher/Interviewer:

.....

.....

Signature .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Date .....

## Appendix 8. 6 Focus Group Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Declaration of consent to be a participant in a focus group for the following research topic:

“An investigation into culture shock, its effect on international students, and how this influences the complex roles of academic staff”

I have had the scope and nature of the research project fully explained to me. Any questions about the research have been satisfactorily answered, and I understand that I may request further information at any stage. I accept and note that:

- 1. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
2. I may withdraw from participation in the research at any time up to when the data is anonymised and amalgamated without explanation, disadvantage or disincentive.
3. The information given during the focus group is being used to inform the research on international student experiences at SIT and will not be disclosed to any other persons or agency where individual participants are identifiable.
4. The focus group will be recorded for later transcription.
5. This information may be incorporated in the research but actual names or other characteristics that may lead to identification of individuals will not be disclosed.
6. This research data may be used to inform a research publication or conference paper in the future. Participant data will remain anonymous.
7. A copy of the completed research report will be made available to me, on request, at the conclusion of the research.

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the information set out on this form and give my informed consent to be part of this focus group in accordance with the stated terms and conditions.

Name of Participant: Name of Researcher/Interviewer:
Signature ..... Date .....
Signature ..... Date .....

## Appendix 8. 7 Focus Group Questions

**Focus Group questions:**

*Participant Demographic information*

Participant	Programme of study (PG/M)	Length of time at SIT: semesters	Gender: M/F	Country of origin
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

1. Tell me about what influenced your decision to come to SIT and study abroad?
2. What are some of the things that you did before you left your home country that helped you prepare for being a student at SIT?
3. Can you give some examples of things that you found challenging when you arrived to Invercargill or SIT?
4. What are some of the aspects about education that are different in New Zealand from your home country?
5. What do you think is the role of the 'lecturer'? What is their job?
6. Can you think about some specific examples of how your lecturers helped you to understand the content of your subjects?
7. What is the hardest thing about studying at SIT/ New Zealand?
8. Tell me, what is the most surprising aspect of studying at SIT?
9. Describe some of the difference between your lecturers at SIT and lecturers in your home country.
10. What are some of the things that you want from your lecturers, but don't feel that you currently get now?
11. How do you think SIT could better prepare students for studying in Invercargill prior to leaving your home country?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add to this discussion?