

# **INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**



**REPORT PREPARED FOR EDUCATION NEW ZEALAND**

**By Fellows and Associates of the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural  
Research, Victoria University of Wellington**

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## FOREWARD

This document presents the findings of five inter-related studies on perceptions of and interactions with international students in New Zealand. The research was contracted by Education New Zealand and funded by the Export Education Levy.

The inter-disciplinary project brings together seven scholars from two universities and with diverse backgrounds in psychology, communication, and applied linguistics. The team includes: Colleen Ward, Anne-Marie Masgoret, Elsie Ho, Prue Holmes, Jenine Cooper, Jonathan Newton and David Crabbe.

The report is divided into two parts and five chapters. The first part is composed of three studies that examine interactions with international students in educational institutions. The studies include a survey of New Zealand students in secondary and tertiary institutions, a survey of teachers in secondary and tertiary institutions and in language schools, and focus group work with teachers across these sectors. The second part is made up of two community-based studies. The first reports the results of a national household survey, and the second describes the findings of field work and interviews with key stakeholders in four New Zealand locations, varying in high, medium and low concentrations of international students. In each case, the findings are discussed in terms of their implications for the export education industry, and recommendations are made for improving the social and educational integration of international students. In this way, the research and its applications make a significant contribution to the future of the export education industry in New Zealand.

Colleen Ward  
Director  
Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

There have been as many as 110,000 international students enrolled annually in New Zealand educational institutions. National research has revealed that these students expect and desire more contact with their New Zealand peers and that increased intercultural interaction is associated with positive psychological, social and academic outcomes. Anecdotal and limited research evidence has further suggested that the integration of international students into our educational institutions and the wider society is a matter of concern expressed by students, teachers and members of the host communities in New Zealand.

In response to these issues and concerns, a project was commissioned by Education New Zealand. This report summarises the major findings of the A6- Interactions with International Students project funded by the Export Education Levy.

The project includes five studies undertaken in the classroom and/or the community.

- A survey of domestic students in secondary and tertiary institutions across New Zealand (12 institutions, n = 543)
- A survey of teachers in the secondary, tertiary and language school sectors across New Zealand (25 institutions, n = 223)
- Focus group research with teachers in the secondary, tertiary and language school sectors (6-8 group participants from eight institutions in Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch and Tauranga)
- A national telephone survey of New Zealand households (n = 526)
- Interviews with key stakeholders in four (Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch, Tauranga) communities (n = 37).

The objectives of the research are:

- To assess attitudes toward, perceptions of, and patterns of interaction with international students in the classroom and the community
- To examine variations in attitudes, perceptions and interactions as a function of low, medium and high densities of international enrolments
- To identify any key areas of concern
- To consider the implications of the findings for the classroom and the community.

### KEY FINDINGS

The key findings are organized according to the first three objectives, with examples drawn from across the five studies.

**Objective 1:** To assess attitudes toward, perceptions of, and patterns of interaction with international students in the classroom and the community.

#### *Perceptions and attitudes*

- Attitudes toward international students are moderately positive: 56% of students, 80% of teachers and 69% of community members agree that

- international students have qualities they admire
- Stereotypes of international students are neutral to moderately positive; they are seen as intelligent and hard-working by both New Zealand students and members of the community
- Perceptions of threat are low: Only 15% of New Zealand students agree that international students have a negative effect on the quality of education and 16% agree international students bring crime to New Zealand
- Perceptions of competition are low: Most disagree that gains for international students (e.g., awards, feedback, resources) are at the expense of New Zealand students
- Students from Europe and North America are perceived significantly more favourably by New Zealanders than those from any other regions; Middle Eastern students are perceived less favourably than any other; Asian, Pacific, and African students occupy an intermediate position
- Most agree that the number of international students in New Zealand is about right: 66% of community members, 51% of New Zealand students, 56% of teachers
- The economic benefits of international students are acknowledged by community stakeholders.

#### *Interactions in the classroom and the community*

- The amount of contact and number of intercultural friendships between New Zealand and international students are low: 41% New Zealand students have no international friends
- The frequency of interaction is rare: 32% of New Zealand students never interact with international students outside of classes; 45% never work with them in a study group
- Assistance to international students by New Zealand students is infrequent: 55% never help them with oral presentations; 61% never help them use the library
- The interaction between international students and members of the community is infrequent: 28% of community members are not personally acquainted with an international student; 34% of community members never or hardly ever have contact with international students
- Key stakeholders observed a lack of social integration of international students in their communities.

But

- Barriers to intercultural interaction are not seen as great
- The willingness to interact with international students is moderately high: 58% of New Zealand students are glad to interact with international students in free time, 79% of community members are willing to help an international student learn more about New Zealand
- The quality of intercultural contact is positive (e.g., pleasant, cooperative, equal status): 69% of community members say contact is positive or very positive
- Anxiety about intercultural interactions is low in both New Zealand students and members of the wider community

- New Zealand students desire more contact with international students than they actually have

### *Teacher-student relations*

Teachers tend to see international students as individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses.

- “People have different strengths and weaknesses, and it is up to us to help them consolidate their strengths.”
- “I don’t think that because somebody’s an international student that there should be different standards for them.”

Teachers appear motivated, supportive and culturally inclusive in their classes. They also widely believe that international students enrich their classes.

- 85% report that they encourage intercultural contact in the classrooms
- 79% agree that teaching international students is a positive challenge
- “Most people in the industry are really positive about the students...”
- 75% say they are willing to volunteer extra time for international students
- “It’s a matter of being supportive and trying to build a sense of trust or relationship...”

But teachers are only moderately confident about their skills to teach international students.

- 55% believe that they can determine students’ academic needs
- 42% believe that they can relate classroom content to experiences
- “It’s collective learning for me so I am not going to pretend that I know everything.”

There is also a wide range in the extent to which teachers use accommodative behaviours in the classroom to assist and support international students. They often speak more clearly and provide extra visual support for international students, but they rarely hold additional classes or provide alternative materials.

**Objective 2:** To examine variations in attitudes, perceptions and interactions as a function of low, medium and high densities of international enrolments.

In educational institutions a curvi-linear relationship was observed between the proportion of international enrolments and attitudes and interactions. For students, attitudes became more positive and intercultural interactions more frequent with increasing enrolments when these enrolments were less than 9% of the total. Between 9-14% the attitudes became more negative and the interactions less frequent with increasing enrolments. The trend was similar for teachers where the attitudes toward international students became more negative when enrolments reached 12-14%. This appears to converge to some extent with focus group findings where teachers discussed the pressures of dealing with rapid increases in international enrolments.

Although strong trends were observed at the institutional level, the national survey did not reveal any significant differences in attitudes, perceptions and interactions

amongst those resident in Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, the rest of the North Island and the rest of the South Island. Qualitative responses from key informants across Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga and Christchurch, however, did reveal noticeable differences. Specifically, in Auckland and Christchurch, high density centres for international students, informants held less positive perceptions, particularly of the “visibly different” students. Furthermore, Tauranga informants placed less emphasis on the financial benefits of international students for their region compared to the three other centres.

**Objective 3:** To identify any key areas of concern.

Overall, survey, interview and focus group data demonstrated moderately positive responses to international students. Nonetheless, there were also concerns expressed about international students. The main areas of concern in the classroom were:

- The low level of interaction between New Zealand and international students
- Possible “backlash” against international students in institutions with high international enrolments
- The level of language proficiency of international students which often hindered students and created additional pressures for teachers
- Issues pertaining to teacher confidence, skills and resources, including the opportunities for professional development
- High demands on teachers and resultant burn-out.

The main areas of concern in the community were:

- Lack of integration of international students in the wider community
- Differential perceptions of different groups of international students
- Student issues such as health, gambling, and accommodation
- Media portrayal of international students
- Meeting the informational needs of international students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations were generated in connection with Objective 4: To consider the implications of the findings for the classroom and the community.

Selected recommendations for the classroom are to:

- Promote cultural inclusiveness and intercultural interaction in the classroom through cooperative learning, buddy systems, intercultural simulation exercises, etc.
- Provide institutional support for teachers, such as professional development, and for international students, such as pastoral care
- Ensure English language requirements are set to an appropriate level
- Implement classroom strategies for more effective communication
- Foster links between the classroom and the community.

Selected recommendations for the community are to:

- Increase face to face contact between international students and members of the community through home-stays, peer mentoring, campus-community links, clubs, etc.
- Provide accurate information to international students about cost of living, home-stays, etc., before students leave their home countries
- Provide training to service providers in the community to bridge language and cultural barriers
- Foster collaboration within cities across community leaders, educational institutions and community groups to develop strategies for the integration of international students
- Use the media to present positive images of international students.

For more detailed information on recommendations, see the Executive Summaries for each of the five studies.

**PART I: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE  
CLASSROOM**

# **NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Colleen Ward, Anne-Marie Masgoret, Jonathan Newton & David Crabbe  
School of Psychology, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and  
Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research  
Victoria University of Wellington

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The report summarises the major findings of the A6- Interactions with International Students project funded by the Export Education Levy and administered by Education New Zealand. This component covers the survey research undertaken with New Zealand students. The objectives of the research are:

1. to assess the attitudes toward and perceptions of international students in New Zealand;
2. to examine domestic students' exposure to and/or interactions with international students;
3. to examine how attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with varying concentrations of international students and as a function of demographic characteristics of New Zealanders;
4. to assess the communication practices used by New Zealanders in interacting with international students and the value of such practices for effective communication and language learning; and
5. to identify any areas of concern for international-domestic student relations.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research participants included 543 New Zealand students drawn in roughly equal proportions from secondary and tertiary institutions. Students from 12 institutions across New Zealand were included in the study. The percentage of enrolments of international students ranged from 2-7% in secondary schools and from 8-23% in tertiary institutions.

Participants completed an anonymous survey that examined: personal background information; cultural inclusiveness in the classroom; perceptions of international students (including threat, competition and stereotypes); interactions with international students (actual and desired, academic and social interaction, assistance to international students, barriers to interaction, quality of intercultural contact, intergroup anxiety, and willingness to interact with international students); and attitudes toward international students (including opinions about the number of international students in New Zealand).

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

New Zealand students reported a moderate level of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom. On the positive end 72% agreed that cultural differences are respected at their institutions, and 55% said that classmates are accepting of cultural differences; however, less than half believed that there is an opportunity to learn about other cultures or that students from different cultural groups work well together. When domestic students' views are compared to the findings from the national survey of international students in New Zealand, the latter are less likely to agree (47%) that cultural differences are respected in the classroom but seem somewhat more likely to believe (55%) that students from different cultural groups work well together.

Overall, New Zealand students hold neutral to moderately positive perceptions of international students.

- Stereotypes largely fell in the neutral range although international students were positively viewed as intelligent and hard-working.
- Perceptions of threat were generally low, particularly in areas relating to health, crime, and safety. Issues of language and culture were somewhat more contentious with between 42% and 49% of students, respectively, agreeing that international students speak their own language when they should be speaking English and that they stick to their own customs when they should be behaving like New Zealanders.
- International students were not seen as significant sources of competition by domestic students, and there was little support for the idea that New Zealand students are educationally or economically disadvantaged by international students.

In the main, the extent of contact between domestic and international students was low.

- 41% reported having no international friends.
- Frequency of contact largely fell into the “rare” range, and 36% of New Zealand students reported that they never share class notes, 45% never work in a study group, 32% never interact outside of class and 29% never do group assignments with international students.
- Similarly, New Zealand students rarely assist their international peers. A large percentage of students never assist with proof-reading (49%), or presentations (55%) or library usage (61%). If assistance occurred, it was most likely to be in the domain of explaining material to international students.

Despite the relatively low level of contact, findings suggest that domestic students are receptive to increasing their interactions with international students.

- New Zealand students desire greater contact with international students in both academic and social domains.
- They see relatively few barriers to contact; the greatest among these, however, is different interests.
- New Zealand students express a moderate level of willingness to interact with international students. For example, 47% indicate that they would be glad to interact with international students during school holidays, and 49% are glad to do group assignments together.
- They believe that they have adequate skills to engage in these interactions. Specifically, the level of negative emotions associated with intercultural interactions (e.g., anxiety, irritation, impatience) is not high.

In addition, the actual quality of contact with international students is viewed moderately favourably, leaning towards being voluntary, equal status, cooperative and pleasant. In fact, New Zealand students appear to view intercultural interactions more favourably than do international students, as reported in the national survey.

Overall, attitudes toward international students are in the moderately positive range. Most New Zealand students (56%) agree that international students have qualities that they admire, and almost half (48%) agree that they like having international students in their class. However, 29% maintain that international students do not get on well

with New Zealand students. Most (51%) domestic students agree that the number of international students in the country is about right, but 43% believe the numbers are too high or much too high.

The proportion of international students enrolled in New Zealand institutions demonstrated a curvi-linear relationship with many of the behavioural and perceptual outcomes. In secondary schools, where international enrolments were no greater than 7%, increasing proportions were linked to more positive outcomes, including lower perceptions of threat and competition, more frequent interactions with international students, more frequent contact desired, and greater willingness to interact with international students. In contrast, in the tertiary sector, where the enrolment percentages ranged from 8.4-23.2%, a higher proportion of international enrolments was linked to:

- stronger perceptions of threat and competition,
- more negative stereotypes,
- less cultural inclusiveness in the classroom,
- decrements in intercultural interaction, including less frequent real and desired contact, less academic assistance, less willingness for interaction, and greater perceived barriers to contact,
- more negative experiences of intercultural contact,
- higher intergroup anxiety, and
- more negative attitudes.

A causal model identified two paths leading to the prediction of attitudes toward and interactions with international students. In the first path, cultural inclusiveness in the classroom leads to a reduction in intergroup anxiety, which predicts more frequent and more satisfying contact and, in turn, more positive attitudes toward international students. In the second path, positive stereotypes of international students likewise decrease intergroup anxiety, but also lead directly to diminished perceptions of threat and, in turn, to more positive attitudes toward international students. The model combines behavioural and cognitive dimensions of intercultural relations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research findings, a number of recommendations were made to nurture mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between international and domestic students, create an infrastructure that encourages more frequent intercultural interaction in both academic and extra-curricula domains, and promote cultural inclusiveness in the classroom. Inside the classroom, the recommendations emphasise the effectiveness of international content, collaborative learning, and the use of intercultural training tools. In extra-curricula domains, the role of clubs, associations, festivals, and residence halls programmes are discussed. In terms of policy, planning and development, emphasis is placed on the finding that attitudes toward international students become more negative and interactions with them less frequent and satisfying as international enrolments hit the 9-14% range, highlighting the importance of social and psychological considerations as well as economic ones for the future of the export education industry in New Zealand.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **BACKGROUND**

Export education has been a rapidly growing industry in New Zealand. The sustainability of this industry rests on a number of economic, educational and social factors, including institutional capacity, market receptiveness to internationalisation, and client satisfaction. Consequently, the proportion of international students enrolled in New Zealand institutions and the quality of their experiences inside and outside of the classroom are core issues for the export education industry. This research approaches these issues from a new perspective and examines New Zealand students' perceptions of and interactions with their international peers.

These perceptions and interactions are important for a number of reasons. First, research has clearly shown that international students in New Zealand expect and desire to have local friends and that their intercultural interactions are an important component of their satisfaction with their educational experiences in New Zealand more broadly (Berno & Ward, 2003; Ward, 2001; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Second, the same research indicates that international students desire more contact with New Zealanders than they actually have, but that they believe local students are largely indifferent to intercultural contact and to developing international friendships. Third, we know that frequent and more satisfying intercultural contact is associated with a number of positive outcomes for international students, including enhanced psychological well-being, better social adaptation and fewer academic difficulties (also see Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Finally, it has been suggested that the perceived receptiveness of New Zealanders towards international students, including their perceptions of and interactions with the newcomers, may directly affect the viability of the export education industry (Infometrics, 2003). In this regard, it is important to note that 66% of the international students in the national survey maintained that they experience unfair treatment from New Zealand students, and 9% said that this was "often" or "very often" (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Despite research and analyses on international education, however, we know relatively little about the attitudes of New Zealand students toward international students or their interactions with them.

The relationships between New Zealand and international students occur against a backdrop of institutional capacity, identified as a major challenge for the export education industry in Asia 2000's (2003) recent report. While there is no convincing evidence that the increasing numbers of international students are having detrimental effects on the education of domestic students, there is research that indicates increasing numbers are associated with a heightened sense of threat and competition in domestic students and decreased willingness to interact with or assist international students (Gezentsvey, 2003). This theme receives particular attention in this research.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In addition to assessing the overall pattern of intercultural perceptions and interactions, the report considers the implications of the findings in relation to the experiences and satisfaction of international students in New Zealand and the implications for their language learning. The research objectives are:

1. to assess the attitudes toward and perceptions of international students in New Zealand;
2. to examine domestic students' exposure to and/or interactions with international students;
3. to examine how attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with varying concentrations of international students and as a function of demographic characteristics of New Zealanders;
4. to assess the communication practices used by New Zealanders in interacting with international students and the value of such practices for effective communication and language learning; and
5. to identify any areas of concern for international-domestic student relations.

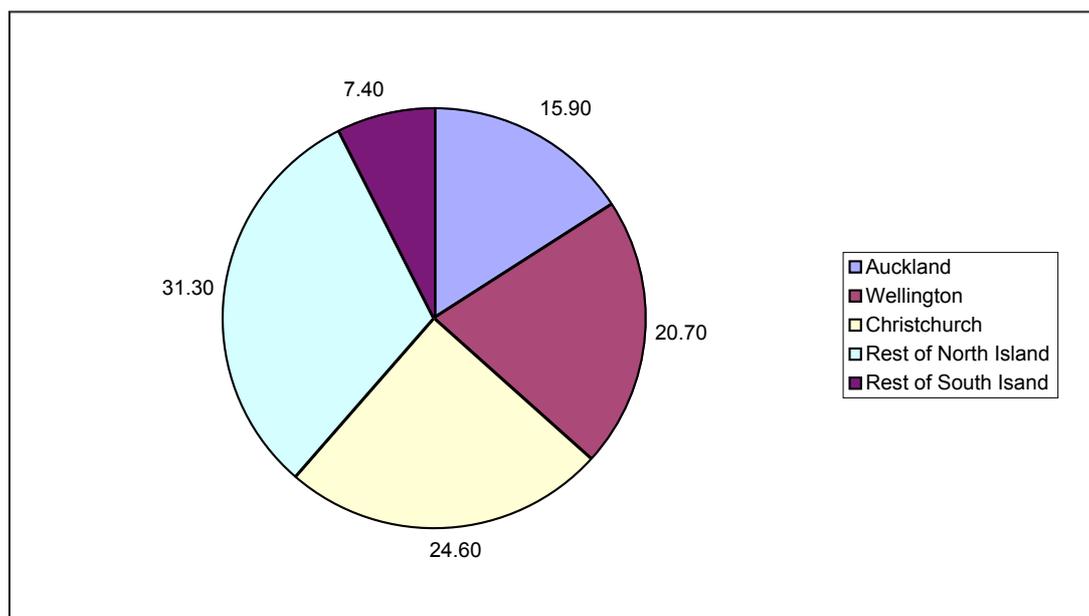
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research participants were drawn from secondary and tertiary institutions (including universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) across New Zealand. The sample included 543 New Zealand students. Of these 275 (51%) were enrolled in secondary schools and 266 (49%) in tertiary institutions.<sup>1</sup>

There were 305 females (56%) and 236 (44%) males who completed the survey. The majority of students were under 20 years old (77%) with a further 17% between 21 and 30 years. Most students (87%) were New Zealand citizens with the remainder permanent residents in the country. The majority of students who provided information about ethnicity described themselves as New Zealand European/Pakeha (76%). Maori represented 4% of the sample, Pasifika 3% and Asian 9%.

*Figure 1. Participants by Region*



Students generally had exposure to other countries or cultures either by studying a foreign language (76%) or by studying overseas (26%). Almost a third of the respondents (32.4%) were fluent in a language other than English or Maori.

Students from 12 educational institutions participated in the research. The regional representation of research participants is presented in Figure 1, and Table 1 describes the location and type of institutions whose students participated in the research. As can be seen from the figure, Auckland is under-represented in terms of the New Zealand population distribution and the concentration of international students in that region.

*Table 1. Sector by Region*

Location	Type of Institution	
	Secondary	Tertiary*
Auckland	1	1
Wellington	1	1
Christchurch	1	3
Hamilton	1	1
Tauranga	1	-
Wanaka	1	-
Total	6	6

\* Tertiary institutions include four universities, one polytechnic and one college of education.

The proportion of international student enrolment across educational institutions ranged from 2.1% to 23.2%. However, tertiary institutions had higher proportions of international enrolments (8.4-23.2%) compared to secondary schools (2.1-6.9%).<sup>2</sup>

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The instrument was developed by the research team with reference to the Ministry of Education's national survey of international students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004) and Berno and Ward's (2003) Asia 2000 report on the educational and cross-cultural adaptation of Asian students in New Zealand.

The major components of the survey (see Appendix A) are described in Table 2.

*Table 2. Survey of Domestic Students in New Zealand*

Section 1: Background Information
Section 2: Cultural Inclusiveness in the Classroom
Section 3: Perceptions of International Students
Section 4: Interactions with International Students
Section 5: Positive and Negative Attitudes toward International Students

Section 1 includes demographic descriptors (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, type and location of educational institution) and information about exposure to other cultures (e.g., experience studying abroad).

Section 2 is an assessment of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom, modified from the measure used in the national survey of international students.

Section 3 broadly examines perceptions of international students, including perceptions of threat and competition as well as stereotypes.<sup>3</sup> The items examining threat include both realistic threat (e.g., international students bring crime to New Zealand) and symbolic threat, that is, threat to New Zealand lifestyle and values (e.g., international students do not appreciate the New Zealand way of life). Perceptions of competition (sometimes referred to as “zero sum” beliefs) are grounded in the belief that the more resources or benefits that international students get, the less New Zealand students receive. Stereotypes are consensual beliefs about groups of people and are measured by 15 pairs of bipolar adjectives, which can be classified as positive or negative. All of these factors have been shown to be important predictors of attitudes (including prejudice) toward and interactions (including discrimination) with members of different cultural and linguistic groups.<sup>4</sup>

Section 4 broadly examines interactions between domestic and international students including friendships, amount of interaction, desired interaction, and helping behaviours. It also assesses the perceived quality of these interactions across six pairs of bipolar adjectives (e.g., pleasant-unpleasant; cooperative competitive).<sup>5</sup> As some of the participants in the study may have few realistic opportunities to interact with international students, Section 4 also includes a scale to measure overall willingness to interact across national and cultural lines. Finally, the section examines the feelings associated with interactions with international students (referred to as intergroup anxiety). A number of these measures (e.g., number of friends, amount and desired interactions, and quality of interactions) were used in the national survey or the Asia 2000 study of international students. Interaction in both social and transactional domains has been shown to be a key ingredient for language learning as well as intergroup relations more broadly, and the quality of interactions is known to affect both language acquisition and intergroup perceptions.<sup>6</sup>

The final section is concerned with attitudes toward international students. In addition to a standard attitude scale, Section 5 includes a thermometer measure, which is commonly used in research on intergroup attitudes, and an item about the number of international students in New Zealand.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data are analysed both at the item and scale levels. For item level analysis, frequency breakdowns are generally reported (e.g., % agreement) although mean scores are reported where more appropriate (e.g., stereotype measures). When scales based on aggregated items are used, they are first subjected to psychometric analysis to ensure reliability (internal consistency). The results of these analyses are reported in Appendix B.

Scales are then subjected to analysis by gender, sector (secondary/tertiary) and geographical region (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, rest of North Island and rest of South Island) using either t-tests or analyses of variance or co-variance. Where possible, comparisons are made with the responses of international students in either the Ministry of Education or Asia 2000 studies.

The regional analyses is consistent with the comparisons in the national survey of international students; however, it is important to note that the relative weighted means of the proportion of international enrolments in the institutions for each region are not in line with the national distributions. More specifically, in this sample the mean weighted proportion of international enrolments by region was 9% in Auckland, 12.5% in Wellington, 8.6% in Christchurch, 11.1% for the rest of the North Island and 4.6% for the rest of the South Island.

Following the descriptive information, the relationships amongst the research variables are examined by correlational analyses. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the proportion of international student enrolments and the attitudinal and interaction variables. Finally, structural equation modelling is used to test a causal model of interactions with and attitudes toward international students.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are organized and presented in line with the layout of the survey; therefore, readers may find it useful to refer to Appendix A in conjunction with the following material.

### CULTURAL INCLUSIVENESS

*Table 3. Cultural Inclusiveness*

	% agreement
Teachers encourage contact between international and local students.	35
Teachers make special efforts to help international students.	45
Cultural differences are respected in my institution.	72
Teachers understand the problems of international students.	48
There is an opportunity to learn about different cultures.	41
Classmates are accepting of cultural differences.	55
Students from different cultural groups work well together.	46

Overall it appears that New Zealand students experience the classroom as somewhat to moderately inclusive. The mean item response is 3.4, slightly above the scalar midpoint of 3. On the positive end, almost three-quarters agree that cultural differences are respected at their institutions. On the other hand, only about one-third see teachers as encouraging interactions between international and domestic students, and only two of the seven items in this scale received endorsement from over half of the New Zealand respondents. It appears that attitudes of acceptance and respect are more strongly endorsed than behaviours such as increasing contact, working well in groups, or learning about new cultures.

Interestingly, international students themselves appear more likely to experience a sense of cultural inclusiveness with respect to teachers encouraging intercultural contact (47%), and they are inclined to think that intercultural groups work well together (55%); however, they are much more critical of cultural differences being respected at their institutions (47%) than are New Zealand students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

Secondary students reported their classrooms as being more inclusive than did tertiary students, although this difference was a function of the lower proportion of international enrolments in the secondary institutions. Along similar lines, a higher proportion of international enrolments was associated with a diminished sense of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom for tertiary students. There were regional differences with students from the South Island (excluding Christchurch) endorsing greater inclusiveness than students from Auckland and the rest of the North Island (excluding Wellington). In contrast, international students from tertiary institutions felt more included than did secondary students in the national survey, but there was no variation across geographical regions in that research (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

## PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This section examines stereotypes, that is, consensual beliefs about international students, as well as perceptions of threat and competition.

### Stereotypes

*Table 4. Stereotypes of International Students: Mean Ratings*

Friendly	1-----2-----3--◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Unfriendly
Lazy	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-◆-----6-----7	Hard-working
Responsible	1-----2-----3-----◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Irresponsible
Efficient	1-----2-----3-----◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Inefficient
Tense	1-----2-----3-----◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Easy-going
Open-minded	1-----2-----3-----4◆-----5-----6-----7	Close-minded
Cold	1-----2-----3-----4-----◆-----5-----6-----7	Warm
Kind	1-----2-----3--◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Unkind
Intelligent	1-----2-----◆-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7	Unintelligent
Unhelpful	1-----2-----3-----4◆-----5-----6-----7	Helpful
Conscientious	1-----2-----3-----◆-----4-----5-----6-----7	Careless

Thoughtless	1-----2-----3-----4---◆---5-----6-----7	Thoughtful
Sociable	1-----2-----3-----4---◆---5-----6-----7	Unsociable
Accepting	1-----2-----3-----◆-4-----5-----6-----7	Rejecting
Rude	1-----2-----3-----4---◆---5-----6-----7	Courteous

As can be seen from the table, stereotypes of international students are neutral to positive. Most mean ratings fall near the scalar mid-point, and the average item score is 4.4 of 7, when 7 represents the positive end. The traits most strongly ascribed to international students are intelligent and hard-working.

Secondary students had more positive stereotypes of international students than tertiary students, but this was due to the lower proportion of enrolments in the secondary schools. Students in Wellington viewed international students more favourably than students in Auckland, Christchurch and the rest of the North Island. South Island students who live outside of the main centres also saw international students in a more positive light than their North Island peers.

Students in institutions with a higher proportion of international enrolments held more negative stereotypes of international students, but when this was analysed across sectors, the relationship held only for tertiary students.

### **Threat**

Table 5 describes perceived threats arising from the presence of international students in New Zealand. As can be seen, in no case are international students viewed as threatening by the majority of their local peers. In most instances, perception of threat is relatively low, particularly in areas that may be defined as realistic threat, that is, tangible threat to existing resources, such as health, education, crime prevention and safety. The most negative responses to international students relate to what is referred to as symbolic threat, or perceived threat to the New Zealand world-view, values or way of life. In particular, the sense of threat is strongest in relation to language and culture, with 42% and 49% of students, respectively, agreeing that international students speak their own language when they should be speaking English and that they stick to their own customs when they should be behaving like New Zealanders.

There were no differences in perceived threat between males and females, but secondary students perceived greater threat than their tertiary counterparts. Students from Wellington were significantly less likely than those from any other region to view international students as a source of threat.

The relationship between perceived threat and the proportion of international enrolments differed in secondary and tertiary institutions. In secondary schools, where international enrolments did not exceed 7%, a higher proportion of enrolments was associated with a lower sense of threat. In tertiary institutions, however, where

enrolments ranged from 8.4-23.2%, a higher proportion of enrolment was associated with greater perceived threat.

*Table 5. Perception of Threat*

Percentage of agreement that international students....	
Have too much money to spend	39
Bring crime to New Zealand	16
Work too hard	24
Get too much attention	16
Speak their own language when they should speak English	49
Stick to their own customs instead of adopting local customs	42
Have a negative effect on the quality education	15
Do not appreciate the New Zealand way of life	24
Put pressure on health care facilities	13
Negatively affect students' social environment	13
Bring diseases that would otherwise not be here	14

### **Competition**

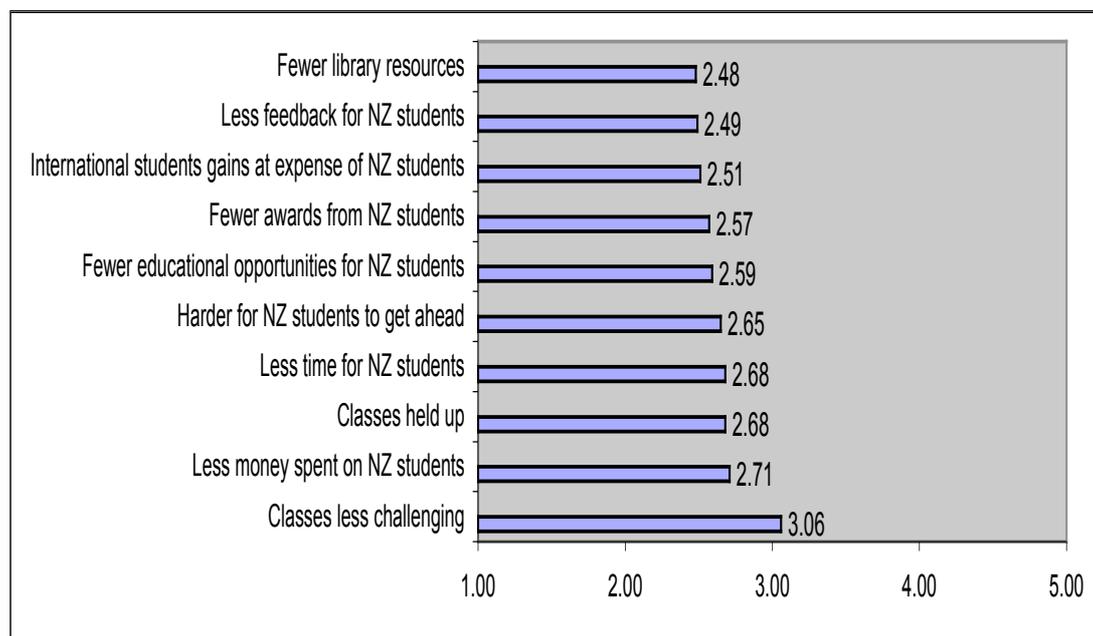
Feelings of competition were assessed by measures of “zero-sum” beliefs, or the notion that the more benefits or resources that international students receive, the less are available for New Zealand students. “Zero-sum” beliefs are based on the assumption that there are finite resources available for everyone, so competition arises with one group “winning” and the other “losing.” Findings indicate that New Zealand students do not view their international peers as threatening competitors, and the mean ratings are below the scalar mid-point of 3 in all but one instance.

The perceived negative outcomes of competition are shown in Figure 2. Note that in no instance did the majority of students agree that these outcomes resulted from the presence of international students.

There were no differences in perceived competition between males and females, but secondary students perceived greater competition than their tertiary counterparts. Those who studied a foreign language were less likely to see international students as a source of competition. There were also regional variations. Students from the North Island were most likely to see students as a source of competition, and significantly more likely to hold this view than students from Auckland and Wellington. In addition, students from Christchurch viewed international students as a significantly greater source of competition than students from Wellington.

The relationship between perceived competition and the proportion of international enrolments mirrored the findings on perceived threat. In secondary schools a higher proportion of enrolments was associated with a lower sense of competition. In tertiary institutions, however, a higher proportion of international enrolments was associated with greater perceived competition.

Figure 2. Perceived Negative Outcomes arising from Competition with International Students



Note: 1= disagree strongly and 5 = agree strongly.

## INTERCULTURAL CONTACT AND INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### Friendships

Forty-one per cent of New Zealand students reported that they have NO international friends. This compares with 35% of international students with no New Zealand friends in the national survey (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

Table 6. Close Friendships

Number of friends	% breakdown
0	41
1-2	29
3-5	20
6-10	6
over 10	4

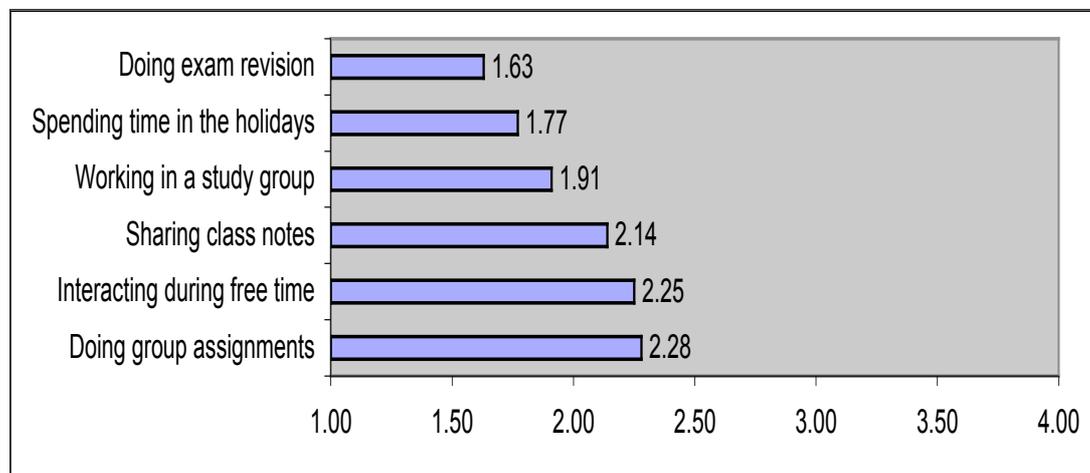
Males were more likely to have a close friend who is an international student than females. Bi-lingual students, those who studied foreign languages and those who had studied overseas themselves were more likely to have a close international friend.

## Interacting with International Students

### *Interaction in Academic and Social Domains*

New Zealand students report little interaction with international students with their mean ratings falling in the never to rarely range. Fewer than half of New Zealand students have ever spent time in the holidays with international students or revised for exams. In addition 36% never share class notes, 45% never work in a study group, 32% never interact outside of class and 29% never do group assignments with international students. Overall the frequency of interactions with international students was fairly low. Indeed, the mean item score for this scale was 2.0, which equates to a response of “rarely.”

Figure 3. Interactions with International Students



Note: 1 = never and 4 = often.

On the whole, secondary students interacted with international students more frequently than tertiary students; however, domain specific differences emerged. Secondary students spent more time in the holidays, interacted more outside of class and shared class notes more frequently with international students; however, tertiary students were involved in more group work projects with them. Regional differences indicated that those outside the main urban centres of the North Island had less intercultural interaction than those from Christchurch or those from the rest of the South Island.

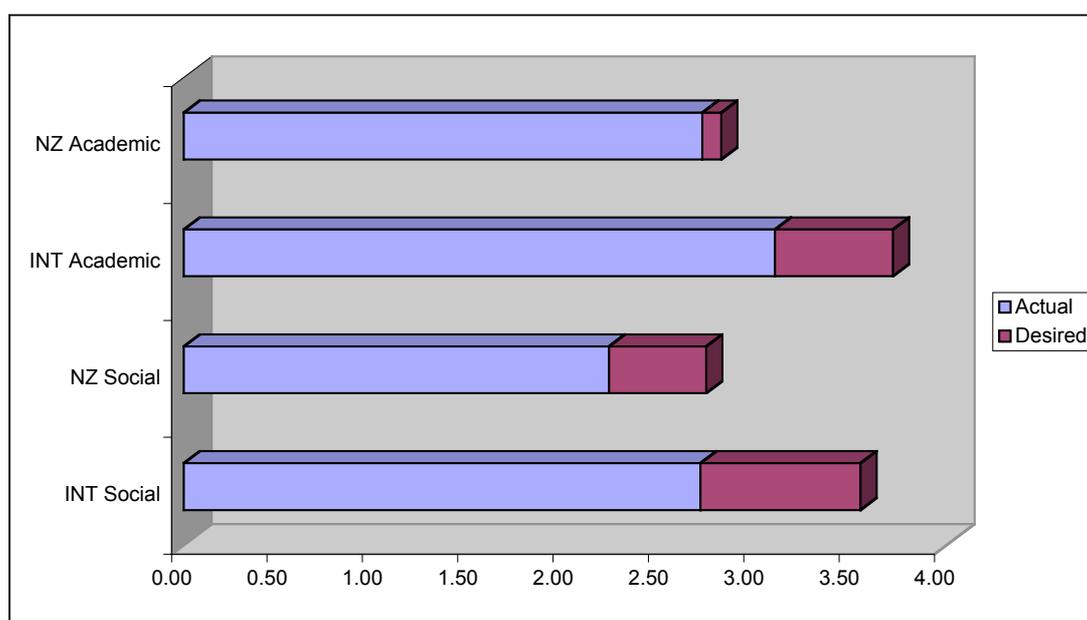
As might be expected, students exposed to other cultures, by studying a foreign language, being bi-lingual or having studied abroad themselves had more frequent interaction with international students.

In secondary schools a higher proportion of international students was associated with more frequent interaction between New Zealand and international students, but the reverse was true for tertiary institutions.

### *Actual and Desired Contact*

Figure 4 presents the data from this study of New Zealand students in comparison with Berno and Ward's (2003) findings drawn from a sample of 176 international students at a New Zealand university. As can be seen from the figure, international students report more actual and desired interaction with New Zealand students in both academic and social domains. Both groups of students indicate that they would like significantly more intercultural interaction.

*Figure 4. Actual and Desired Contact between International and Domestic Students*



Note. 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes and 4 = often.

It is important to note, however, that New Zealand students' overall amount of real and desired contact with international students is in the "rarely" to "sometimes" range. While international students describe real contact in that range, desired interaction more closely approximates "often."

Students who have studied a foreign language and are bi-lingual have more intercultural contact than those without such language skills. Similarly, those who are bi-lingual and have studied abroad desire more contact with international students.

Further analysis of the New Zealand data indicates that there were some significant differences in actual and desired contact with international students in secondary and tertiary institutions. Secondary students reported more frequent social contact and desired greater academic contact than tertiary students. In secondary schools, the desire for intercultural contact increased with higher international enrolments. In tertiary institutions, however, less frequent actual and desired contact was linked to a higher proportion of international enrolments.

Regional variations occur in the patterns of both real and desired contact. Students in the South Island reported the greatest amount of contact, and this was significantly

greater than for the students in Auckland and the rest of the North Island. Students in Christchurch also interacted more with international students than those on the rest of the North Island. The patterns of desired contact show that students on the North Island who are outside of the major urban areas were less interested in interacting with international students than all others.

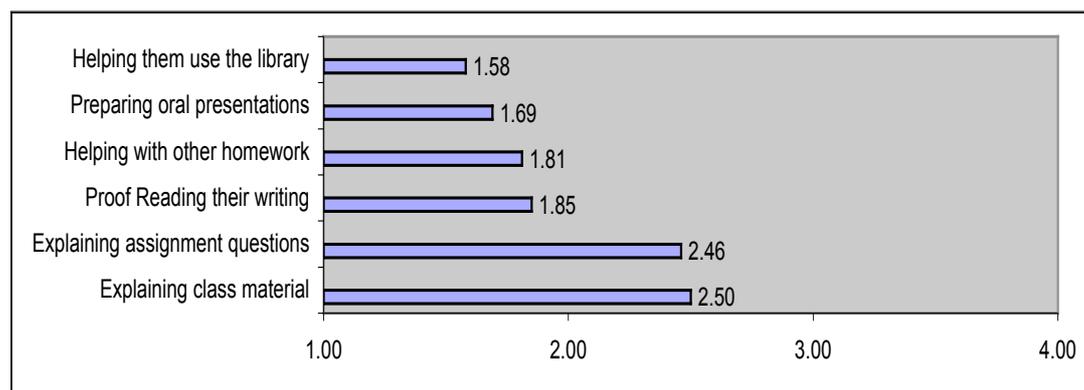
### Helping International Students

On the whole New Zealand students spend very little time assisting international students with academic tasks. A large percentage of students NEVER assist with the following tasks:

- Proof-reading (49%),
- Help use the library (61%), and
- Help with oral presentations (55%).

And one in five have never helped explain class material or assignment questions. If help is rendered, it is most likely to be by way of explanations, either for class material or assignments. The mean helping score was 1.98, reflecting “rare” assistance to international students.

*Figure 5. Frequency of Assisting International Students*



Note: 1 = never and 4 = often.

Overall helping behaviours did not differ between secondary and tertiary students; however, female students were more helpful than males, and regional variations were reported. Specifically, New Zealand students in Christchurch described themselves as more helpful than those in Wellington and those from the rest of the North Island. Students in tertiary institutions were less likely to help international students when international enrolments were high.

Students who have multicultural exposure themselves are more likely to help international students. New Zealand students who have studied a foreign language, can converse in a foreign language and who have studied abroad are more helpful.

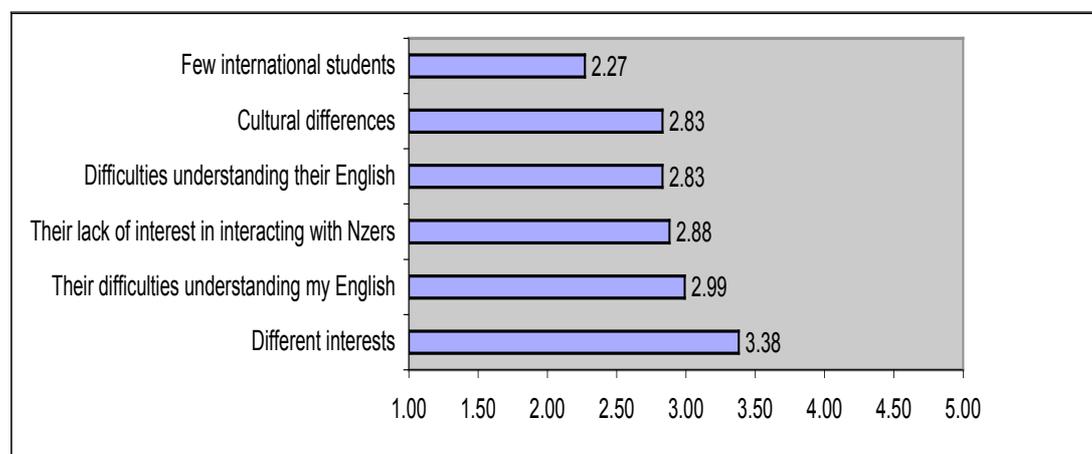
### Barriers

Results indicate that the greatest barrier to interaction with international students is different interests, and this is seen as a significantly greater impediment than any other. This is also the only barrier that received a rating of greater than 3.0, the scalar

midpoint, indicating that on the whole, there are not major barriers to interactions between New Zealand and international students. It is also worth noting, however, that after different interests, barriers are commonly attributed to the international students, i.e, their difficulties and lack of interest.

Overall, perceived barriers to interaction were greater for tertiary students; however, there were domain specific variations. For example, secondary students were more likely to cite lack of international students as a barrier. As the actual enrolment proportion of international students was lower in secondary schools, this appears to be an accurate perception. Tertiary students, in contrast, were more likely to blame international students for lack of interest in intercultural interactions.

*Figure 6. Mean Ratings of Barriers to Interactions with International Students*



Note: 1 = not at all and 5 = very much.

Students who live out of the major urban areas on the North Island perceived greater barriers than students in Wellington and Christchurch, but students who were bi-lingual saw fewer barriers. Larger proportions of international students within tertiary institutions were associated with greater perceived barriers to interaction.

### **Willingness to Interact with International Students**

Given the possibility that some students would realistically have limited opportunity for interaction with international students, the willingness to interact across national and cultural lines was also examined. Table 7 reports on student willingness.

*Table 7. Willingness to Interact with International Students*

	% of agreement
Glad to interact during school holidays	47
Not be willing to get to know	14
Glad to do group assignments	49
Not be interested in establishing close friendships	16
Not be interested in being part of a study group	19
Be willing to do exam revision	49

Be willing to share class notes	62
Be glad to interact during free time	58

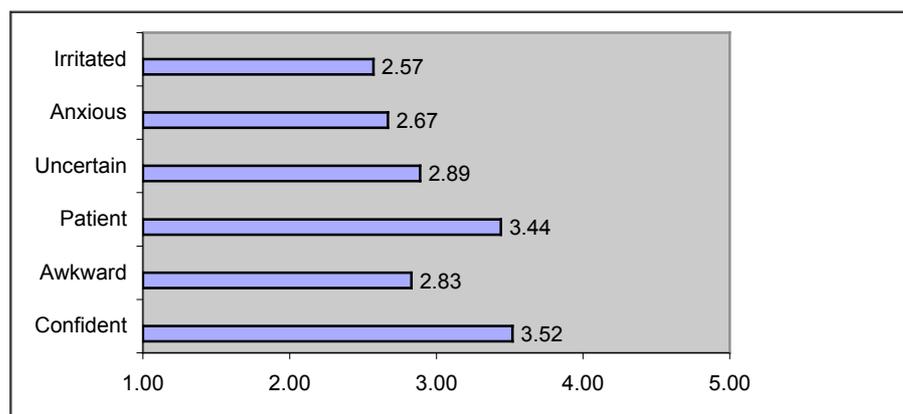
New Zealand students report a moderate to strong willingness to interact with international students, and analyses indicate that the willingness is significantly higher in social than in academic domains. Secondary students are more willing to interact with international students than are tertiary students.

Interest in intercultural interactions varied across regions. Students in the North Island outside of the major urban centres were less willing to interact in both academic and social settings than any of the other groups. Wellington students were more willing to interact with international students in social settings than students from Auckland and Christchurch. Exposure to other cultures, however, did not affect reported willingness to interact.

Secondary students were more willing and tertiary students less willing to interact with international students as the percentage of international enrolments increased in their institutions.

### Intergroup Anxiety

*Figure 7. Mean Ratings of Intergroup Anxiety*



Note: 1 = not at all and 5 = extremely.

Willingness to interact with international students is coupled with a moderately low level of anxiety about these interactions. Mean ratings of negative feelings (awkward, uncertain, anxious, irritated) associated with intercultural interactions are below the scalar midpoint of 3.0 as can be seen in Figure 7.

Secondary reported more intergroup anxiety than did tertiary students, and those who had exposure to other languages (studying or speaking) and cultures (study abroad) had more positive feelings about interacting with international students. Negative feelings were more pronounced in students who reside outside of the urban centres on the North Island. Their intergroup anxiety scores were significantly higher than all other groups with the exception of rural South Islanders.

A greater proportion of international students within tertiary institutions was associated with heightened intergroup anxiety.

### Quality of Interactions between New Zealand and International Students

On the whole, New Zealand students view the quality of contact with international students in a moderately favourable light. With the exception of the superficial-intimate dimension, all mean ratings are situated on the positive end of the continuum.

Table 8 contrasts the descriptions of contact as perceived by the New Zealand students in this study and 176 international university students in Berno and Ward's (2003) study. The students' responses converge with respect to contact being more towards the voluntary end of the scale and in the neutral region with respect to the superficial-intimate dimension. There are wide discrepancies, however, across the other dimensions, with the international students reporting more negative experiences of the contact. Specifically, international students see the contact as being more unequal, more competitive and more unpleasant than New Zealand students. This is somewhat surprising in that as mentioned in the previous section, international students desire more intercultural contact than do local students.

*Table 8. Mean Ratings of the Quality of Contact between New Zealand and International Students*

Equal	1-----2-----◆-----4-■-----5-----6	Unequal
Involuntary	1-----2-----3-----4-◆-■-----5-----6	Voluntary
Superficial	1-----2-----3-◆■-----4-----5-----6	Intimate
Pleasant	1-----2-◆-----3-----4-----■-5-----6	Unpleasant
Cooperative	1-----2-◆-----3-----4-■-----5-----6	Competitive
Positive	1-----2-◆-----3-----4-----5-----6	Negative

Legend: ◆ - New Zealand Students    ■ - International Students

Note: There are no ratings on the positive-negative dimension from the international student sample.

The ratings may be aggregated to score for positive contact; that is, contact which is equal status, voluntary, intimate, pleasant, cooperative and positive. Analyses show that secondary students found intercultural contact more positive than did tertiary students. The same is true for students who had more multicultural exposure through studying or speaking a foreign language. Regional variations were also apparent with students from the North Island having the least favourable encounters. Students in Wellington had more positive contact than students from Auckland and Christchurch.

For tertiary students, intercultural contact was described as more negative with increasing proportions of international students.

### ATTITUDES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## Number of Students in New Zealand

Students were provided with information on the number of international students in New Zealand (approximately 110,000 per annum) and were asked if the number was too low, too high or about right. Table 9 presents the distribution of responses.

*Table 9. Opinions about the Number of International Students in New Zealand*

Percentage of students who agree that the number is:	
Much too low	2
Too low	5
About right	51
Too high	29
Much too high	14

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Just over half of New Zealand students believe that the number of international students in the country is about right; however, 43% believe the numbers are too high or much too high.

Females were more likely than males to see the numbers as too high. Wellington students were the least likely to see the numbers as too high, but the differences were only significant in comparison to students from Auckland and the rest of the North Island.

## Attitudes

In response to the thermometer overall students gave a mean rating of 87.3 out of 100, indicating a very positive response to international students.

Secondary students gave higher ratings. Students from the outside of the urban centres on the North Island had the lowest ratings, and these were significantly lower than students from all other regions. Wellington had the highest ratings, but these differed significantly only from Christchurch and the rest of the North Island.

*Table 10. Attitudes toward International Students: % Agreement*

International students have many qualities I admire.	56
International students have made an important contribution to my school.	43
I like having international students in my class.	48
International students are good classmates.	47
International students have a positive influence in my class.	37
International students are boring.	13
International students are good role models.	27
International students don't get along well with NZ students.	29
I don't like international students.	9
International students are not interested in being friends with NZ students.	28
There should be fewer international students in the country.	25
We should make an extra effort to welcome international students.	48

Table 10 summarizes attitudes toward international students as assessed by 12 attitudinal statements. Overall, it appears that attitudes toward international students are in the neutral to somewhat positive range, and indeed the average item score was 3.41 with a scalar midpoint of 3. More than half of the respondents indicated that international students have qualities that they admire and less than one in ten said that they do not like international students. Almost half (48%) agreed that they like having international students in their classes.

Secondary students had more positive attitudes toward their international peers. Students who had studied foreign languages and could speak languages other than English and Maori had more positive attitudes toward international students. There were regional variations with Wellington students having the most positive attitudes and these being significantly more favourable than students from Auckland, Christchurch and the rest of the North Island. Students on the South Island also had more positive attitudes than those on the rest of the North Island. Attitudes were less positive in tertiary institutions as the percentage of international students increased.

### **RELATIONSHIPS AMONGST FACTORS**

As would be expected, cultural inclusiveness in the classroom is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including greater willingness to interact with international students, fewer perceived barriers to intercultural interaction, spending more time with and offering more help to international students, having more international friends, lower anxiety about intercultural interactions, a desire for more interaction with international students, a diminished sense of threat and competition and more positive attitudes toward international students.

Feelings of threat and competition, however, are linked to negative outcomes, including less willingness to assist international students, less actual and desired contact, more perceived barriers to intercultural interaction, higher intergroup anxiety, fewer international friends, and more negative stereotypes and attitudes.

Increased frequency of contact and more positive perceptions of the quality of this contact are linked to a diminished sense of threat and competition, lowered intergroup anxiety, fewer perceived barriers to intercultural interaction, and more positive stereotypes and attitudes toward international students.

The relationship between percentage of international student enrolments and other factors appears to follow a curvi-linear trend. In the secondary sector where the enrolments were between 2-7%, increasing numbers of enrolments were either unrelated to perceptual and behavioural outcomes, or they were related in a positive fashion. Specifically, a higher proportion of international students was associated with lower perceptions of threat and competition, more frequent interactions with international students, more frequent contact desired, and greater willingness to interact with international students. In contrast, in the tertiary sector, where the enrolment percentages ranged from 8.4-23.2%, a higher proportion of international enrolments was linked to stronger perceptions of threat and competition, more negative stereotypes, less cultural inclusiveness in the classroom, less interaction with international students, less academic assistance given to international students, less

frequent contact desired with international students, more negative quality of intercultural contact, higher intergroup anxiety, less willingness to interact with international students, greater perceived barriers and more negative attitudes.

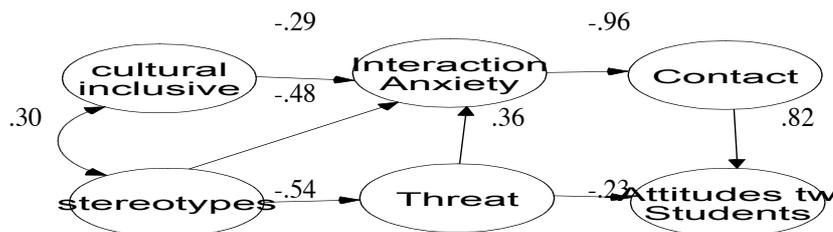
## A MODEL OF ATTITUDES AND INTERACTIONS

The causal model of attitudes and interactions shows two core strands of relationships. One commences with stereotypes, that is, consensual beliefs about international students. Negative views of international students precipitate a heightened sense of threat and more anxiety about interacting with international students. Perception of threat, in turn, results in negative attitudes toward international students.

The second strand of the causal model commences with cultural inclusiveness in the classroom. More inclusiveness leads to a decrease in intergroup anxiety, which, in turn, predicts more frequent and more satisfying contact with international students, and consequently, more positive attitudes. As can also be seen in the model, there is a moderately strong relationship between stereotypes and cultural inclusiveness.

Although structural equation modelling is referred to as causal modelling and the statistics show that our data fit this model very well, it must be remembered that these are essentially correlational analyses and causality cannot strictly be inferred.

*Figure 8. A Model of Attitudes and Interactions*



$$\chi^2(96) = 310.89, p < .001, \text{GFI} = .91, \text{AGFI} = .87, \text{IFI} = .94, \text{TLI} = .93, \text{CFI} = .94, \text{RMSEA} = .075$$

## **DISCUSSION**

### **OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS**

A major objective of this research was to obtain baseline, descriptive data about New Zealand students' perceptions of international students and their relationships with their international peers. Associated with this was the task of identifying any areas of concern in domestic-international relations.

The research commenced with the examination of perceptual domains, in particular, stereotypes, threat and competition, all of which have been shown in international research to affect prejudice and discrimination. The results indicated, that on the whole, stereotypes of international students were neutral to slightly positive. Perceptions of threat were generally low, with the exception of some symbolic domains pertaining to language and culture. Perceptions of competition were also in the low range. The findings raise no major cause for concern about the general perceptions of international students. In fact, the fairly neutral position largely adopted by New Zealand students is an adequate starting point for domestic-international relations.

A similar trend was found for students' perceptions of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom. New Zealand students reported a moderate level of inclusiveness as did international students in the earlier national survey; however, it appears that New Zealand students were more likely to perceive inclusiveness in general attitudes, such as respect for cultural differences, whereas international students seemed more likely to experience inclusiveness in behavioural domains, such as working well in intercultural groups. The moderate, as opposed to strong, perceptions of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom leaves substantial room for the development of more inclusive attitudes and behaviours.

On the whole, interactions with international students appear infrequent, and close relationships with them are not common. Forty-one per cent of New Zealand students had no international friends, and, on average, the interaction between New Zealand and international students was described as "rare." The same was true for the frequency of assistance rendered to international students. Fortunately, however, New Zealand students desire more interaction with international students in both academic and social domains. Although the extent of the desired interaction is still lower than that favoured by international students, the findings indicate that the frequency of interaction can likely be increased. Indeed, this was supported by the willingness of New Zealand students to engage in intercultural interactions (between 47 and 62% across a range of activities), the relatively low levels of rejecting behaviours (14-19%) and the moderately low magnitude of perceived barriers.

Despite the low incidence of actual interaction with international students, New Zealand students evaluate the quality of their contact experiences as moderately

positive. They tend to see the intercultural interactions as relatively cooperative, equal status, voluntary, and pleasant encounters. Indeed, the intercultural interactions tend to be viewed more favourably by New Zealand students than their international peers. Furthermore, New Zealand students anticipate that they can effectively manage intercultural encounters and demonstrate only a moderately weak tendency towards intergroup anxiety. Both the perceived quality of intercultural interactions and the diminished sense of intergroup anxiety are likely to pave the way for increased contact with international students in response to planned interventions. Interestingly, the cross-cultural experiences of New Zealand students also lay the foundation for intercultural interactions, as students who have studied foreign languages, are bi-lingual and who have studied abroad appear more skilled and willing to interact across cultural boundaries.

With respect to broader attitudes, the majority of New Zealand students think that the number of international students in the country is about right; however, a substantial proportion believe the number is too high. Despite these reservations, students describe their attitudes as very positive towards international students (with a mean of 87/100). Their agreement and disagreement in response to a range of statements about international students do not match this extremely favourable view, but their responses still fall in the somewhat positive range. Again, while there is considerable room for improvement, the attitudes are not a cause for alarm.

A further objective of the research was to examine the consequences of domestic-international interactions for language learning. The data collected in this project can give insight into whether the interaction reported by local students with international students is likely to support language proficiency development. A number of observations in this regard can be made.

- The teacher's role in fostering interaction is a potential model for interaction with international students. Only a third of student respondents perceive that teachers encourage contact between international and local students. Of course the actual level of encouragement may be higher, but the fact that it is not perceived as such means that any modelling of inclusiveness by the teacher is not evident to the majority of local students.
- The extent of social interaction between local and international students is variable. Although 41% of New Zealand students have no close international companions, half have somewhere between 1 and 5 international friends. The latter is an encouraging overall figure with regard to exposure of local students to cultural difference. On the other hand, one cannot assume that this will serve the social or language development needs of all international students. In fact 35% of international students in the earlier survey said they had no local friend.
- There seems to be a limited amount of transactional classroom communication. A number of students report that they sometimes explain class material and assignments to international students: This is an expected form of discourse amongst all students in classrooms when the students are engaged on a common task. However, the majority of students report that they do not provide help such as proof reading or assisting with oral presentations.

This sort of help might not happen because it needs to be planned or more deliberate. It may also be that international students are supporting *each other* and in more collaborative ways than is found among local students in the same settings. Assistance may lead to useful interaction in English (as a common language amongst international students) and would be worth further investigation.

- The main perceived barriers to interaction with international students were largely to do with different interests and English language ability and a perceived lack of interest in communicating with locals. There was no strong agreement with any of these statements indicating that the barriers are not perceived as large ones. Nor would intermediate level English normally be a barrier to comprehensibility although it is likely to add to the sense of strangeness and being outside the normal comfortable peer space where interaction draws on shared routines and in-jokes. Nonetheless, the data show a general willingness to interact with international students, a positive prerequisite for fostering more of it.

One of the most important aspects of this research concerned the examination of attitudes and interactions as a function of the concentration of international students in a given area. This was approached in two ways. First, regional analyses were conducted in a way that mirrored the organisation of the national survey of international students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Attitudes and interactions were compared across students from Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, the rest of the North Island and the rest of the South Island. In this regard we know that Auckland and Christchurch tend to be popular destinations for international students, and we might expect, on the whole, for the ratio of international to domestic students to be highest in those regions. Indeed, there was some suggestion from the national survey of international students that those in Auckland and Christchurch were less satisfied with their New Zealand experiences and that they had less contact and fewer local friends than students in other regions.

Regional analyses confirmed some differences in attitudes and interactions, but when these emerged, the most common outcome was that students from the rest of the North Island, rather than Auckland or Christchurch, assumed the most negative position. For example, North Island students rendered less help to their international peers, had higher intergroup anxiety and showed less interest in interacting with international students than other groups. Further inspection of our data revealed that the regional distributions of our sample did not match the national distribution patterns, and that Wellington and the rest of the North Island had the highest concentration of international students across the five regions. These discrepancies suggest that the regional approach is not the most effective means of examining the issue of international student proportions in this study.

Consequently, we relied upon a complementary approach to this issue and examined attitudes and interactions as a function of the proportion of international enrolments within each participating institution. A series of analyses revealed that in secondary schools, where international enrolments were no more than 7%, the proportion of international student enrolments was either unrelated to perceptual and behavioural outcomes or higher concentrations were associated with more positive outcomes.

Examples of the latter include a lowered sense of threat and competition, more actual and desired interaction and greater willingness to interact with international students as their numbers increase.

In stark contrast, in tertiary institutions, where international enrolments ranged from 8-23%, a higher concentration of international students was associated with less cultural inclusiveness, a sense of heightened threat and competition, more negative stereotypes, less assistance to international students, less frequent actual and desired contact, more negative quality of contact, higher intergroup anxiety, less willingness to interact with international students, more perceived barriers to interaction and more negative attitudes toward international students.

The results converge to support a curvilinear relationship between perceptual and behavioural indicators and the proportion of international enrolments. In the simplest terms, the findings suggest that increasing numbers of international students are associated with more positive perceptions and interactions until the proportion hits the 9 to 14% range then further increases are associated with more negative reactions from domestic students. This trend, however, should be viewed with caution, as the lowest proportions of international student enrolments are confined to secondary schools and the highest are restricted to tertiary institutions. These sectors differ on a number of dimensions, and the final results may be influenced by some of these extraneous factors.

Finally, the research examined the inter-relationships amongst perceptual and behavioural factors and proposed a causal model of attitudes toward international students. As would be expected, cultural inclusiveness in the classroom is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including more positive stereotypes, diminished threat and competition, more frequent and more satisfying intercultural interactions, and more positive attitudes toward international students. The reverse is true for perceived threat and competition. These are linked to less actual and desired contact, more perceived barriers, higher intergroup anxiety, more negative stereotypes and less favourable attitudes to international students.

These links are borne out in the causal model, which posits that cultural inclusiveness in the classroom leads to decrements in intergroup anxiety and, in turn, to more frequent and satisfying intercultural interactions and consequently to more positive attitudes to international students. At the same time, positive stereotypes not only affect intergroup anxiety, but also reduce perceived threat and competition, which, in turn, results in more positive attitudes toward international students.

## **LIMITATIONS**

As with all survey research, this study is affected by a number of limitations. The most obvious of these is the possibility of response distortion due to social desirability influences. More specifically, it may be the case that students reported more positive responses to international students in an effort to appear politically correct. While this is an issue in all survey research, anonymity was assured in this study, and this procedure is known to diminish the probability of social desirability distortions.

A more serious issue relates to limitations of the sample. While a variety of institutions across a range of regions were sampled in this study, the proportions of international enrolments by region did not conform to the national distribution patterns. Furthermore, secondary schools had lower international enrolments than tertiary institutions, confounding enrolment proportion with sector. This could be remedied by an extension of this study which would tap a wider range of international enrolment proportions in both sectors and ensure that the final sample includes secondary schools with relatively high proportions and tertiary institutions with relatively lower concentrations of international students. This extension is strongly recommended.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are a number of recommendations that can be made in response to the picture presented by this research. Underpinning these recommendations are the goals of nurturing mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between international and domestic students; creating an infrastructure that encourages more frequent intercultural interaction in both academic and extra-curricula domains; promoting cultural inclusiveness in the classroom; and supporting an environment of collaborative learning in New Zealand educational institutions. The research indicates that New Zealand students hold neutral to moderately positive perceptions of international students and that they desire greater contact with their international peers. On the whole, New Zealanders appear receptive to enhancing intercultural relations as evidenced by weak perceptions of threat and competition, reported willingness to engage in contact with international students and apparent skills to do so. More frequent and more satisfying interactions between international and local students lead to a number of positive outcomes for international students. Overseas evidence indicates that there are also positive results for domestic students (Nesdale & Todd, 1993).

To build internationalisation as a core skill component in the school and tertiary curriculum and learning experience, effort and innovation are required at all levels of the industry from the classroom to the school to the international student industry as a whole. Innovation leading to greater internationalism is therefore both a top-down and bottom-up process emerging through policy and through individual action. The following recommendations focus on the classroom and school.

### **THE CLASSROOM**

A sense of cultural inclusiveness leads to a host of positive outcomes, and instructional modes that include regular group work, collaborative tasks and projects, and encourage active learner involvement through discussion and exploratory, problem-based strategies all foster this quality. Collaborative learning has cognitive advantages for all students and at the same time is conducive to language learning and to greater social cohesion because of the strong emphasis on interaction. The intended outcome, then, of the following teaching recommendations is interaction of a type that fosters positive social relations, supports effective transactions around classroom tasks and benefits general and language learning. Greater collaboration in the classroom can be achieved in the following ways:

- Provide for positive social experiences, for example by ensuring mixed groups, using ‘ice-breaker’ activities, provide opportunities to explore common interests.
- Provide for full participation in classroom activities, for example through ‘buddy’ systems, seating arrangements that are conducive to intergroup communication, time for peer clarification of tasks and peer editing of work.
- Employ strategies to mix up who students sit and interact with. When facilitating group work, assign students to groups randomly and regularly rotate groupings. Alternatively ask students to make groups with students they don’t know.
- Use cooperative learning tasks where possible in the classroom. The transactional nature of such tasks requires negotiation and exploration of ideas in English. They also have an important social dimension.
- Ensure international students work with domestic students on pair or group-based projects.
- Where possible, model interaction with international students in order to demonstrate full participation in the classroom community.
- Be prepared to scaffold communication and to encourage local students to do the same where it would be helpful, for example by rephrasing, summarising, repeating, pausing, using visual support for the spoken word, employing teaching assistants to provide rehearsal and feedback for specific bits of communicative performance.
- Where appropriate, set up opportunities for interaction between domestic students and international students whose language they are learning as a school subject.
- Monitor on a regular basis the quantity of interaction experienced by each international student. Take remedial steps if necessary.

This list of strategies for encouraging interaction among cultural groups highlights the active role that teachers need to play in shaping the participation patterns in their classrooms in order to overcome a natural tendency for different groups to remain separate.

In addition to encouraging interaction, teachers can also play an important role in raising awareness of internationalism. The following practices offer options for carrying out this role:

- Draw on the experiences of international students to enhance the learning experiences of domestic students. Similarly, draw on the international experiences of domestic students to promote a sense of camaraderie.
- Introduce explicit and relevant content and materials to classes that pertain to internationalisation. Discuss such topics as stereotypes or mutual perceptions of in-groups and out-groups. These strategies and topics are particularly congruent with aspects of the social studies and geography curricula.
- Make use of intercultural training and simulations exercises in the classroom to raise intercultural awareness, improve intercultural communication, and promote positive intergroup relations.<sup>7</sup>
- Build empathy for the language learning task by giving all learners experience of communicating in a second language.

- Encourage domestic students to compare their experience of learning a second language at school with the linguistic accomplishments of international students.

Institutions need to support staff efforts towards internationalism by disseminating models of classroom policies and practices that encourage and facilitate interaction between international and domestic students. Internationalism can also be promoted through school assemblies by inviting guest speakers from various communities represented in the school, acknowledging important cultural or religious festivals, encouraging performances from cultural groups, and using greetings from various languages represented in the school.

## **THE INSTITUTION**

Contact between international and domestic students is not confined to the classroom, and institutions should also create opportunities for interactions in extra-curricular areas. School projects (such as fund-raising) and festivals that bring together a range of students can provide structured and semi-structured opportunities to work together in cooperative and meaningful ways for mutual benefits. Clubs and associations may also be used effectively to promote intercultural interactions and to identify points of common interest between international and domestic students. “Cultural diversity” days can also be employed to enhance intercultural awareness. Programmes introduced in residence halls have proven very effective in overseas studies. It is not likely, however, that any of these options will be effective unless they are strongly supported, systematically managed, monitored and evaluated for these purposes within the educational institutions.

Perhaps one of the strongest signals that an institution is committed to cultural inclusiveness is seen in the recruitment of staff from the cultural groups in the student population, both as teachers and in various support roles. Bilingual learning support and ESOL staff provide an invaluable resource both as models of successful bilingual achievement and as empathetic guides to academic study in a second language. Equally, every effort should be made to encourage representation of the cultures in a school on boards of trustees and in voluntary parent bodies.

Finally, the findings from this study provide some valuable information for policy, planning and development with regards to the optimal proportion of international students within educational institutions. The results suggest that attitudes toward international students become more negative and interactions with them less frequent and satisfying as international enrolments hit the 9-14% range. This highlights the importance of social considerations as well as economic ones in the recruitment and acceptance of international students into New Zealand institutions and for the future of the export education industry in this country.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Total numbers may not add up to 543 as some demographic data are missing. Percentages are calculated on available data.

<sup>2</sup>As secondary schools had significantly lower percentages of international enrolments than tertiary institutions, and there were robust differences between the two sectors on many of the outcomes, the subsequent correlational analyses pertaining to % of enrolment were undertaken on the total sample as well as for secondary and tertiary institutions, separately. There are limitations to both sets of analyses. The total sample analyses confound % enrolment with sector, but the more constricted range of enrolment for the secondary sector reduces the likelihood of obtaining statistically significant results for that sector.

<sup>3</sup> The original survey also included a measure of social dominance orientation, which is viewed as an individual difference (personality-type) measure, but this is not included in the current report.

<sup>4</sup> This is elaborated in research based on Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (Esses, Jackson & Armstrong, 1998). These theories are well established in social psychological studies of intergroup relations and were used to guide the design and development of this project. Realistic and symbolic threat, stereotypes and intergroup anxiety (described in the following section) are all important predictors of intergroup outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> Positive characteristics (equal status, intimate, cooperative, voluntary, pleasant) of intercultural contact have been identified as necessary prerequisites for improving intergroup relations (e.g., Shachar & Amir, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> See Pica (2002) and Storch (2002) for discussions of intercultural interaction and language learning.

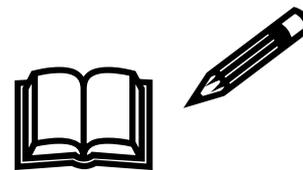
<sup>7</sup> There are many sources for these materials, and the Intercultural Press publishes a range of training guides. The Excell programme, recently introduced in some New Zealand institutions, is an excellent tool for promoting better intercultural communication and more satisfying intercultural relations.

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## APPENDIX A- RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

**Section 1: Information about You**

- 1) Are you... (tick one)?     Female     Male
- 2) What is your age?    \_\_\_\_\_ years
- 3) Are you...(tick one)?  
 an international student     a New Zealand resident     a New Zealand citizen
- 4) In which city are you studying (tick one)?  
 Hamilton  
 Tauranga  
 Auckland  
 Christchurch  
 Wellington  
 Other
- 5) Are you studying at... (tick one)?  
 Secondary school  
 Polytechnic  
 University  
 Other
- 6) What is your ethnic background (tick one)?  
 Maori  
 New Zealand European  
 Samoan  
 Other Pasifika  
 Indian  
 Chinese  
 Other Asian  
 Mixed ethnicity  
 Other
- 7) Can you hold a conversation in a language other than English or Maori (tick one)?  
 Yes     No
- 8) Have you studied a foreign language? (tick one)  
 Yes     No
- 9) Have you ever studied in another country (tick one)?  
 Yes     No



### Section 3: Your Views about International Students

1. Please circle the number which best represents your views, using the scale below.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
 strongly disagree      disagree              neutral/ neither      agree                  strongly agree

1. When international students make academic gains, it is at the expense of New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Less money is spent on New Zealand students when more money is spent on international students.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When teachers make their classes simpler so international students can understand, classes are not challenging for New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Fewer educational opportunities are available for New Zealand students when more educational opportunities are available for international students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. New Zealand students lose out when international students hold up the class by asking questions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. More school awards for international students mean fewer awards for New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
7. New Zealand students get less feedback on assignments when teachers put more effort into correcting the assignments of international students.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Academic success for international students means that it will be harder for New Zealand students to get ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
9. When teachers spend more time answering questions from international students, they spend less time answering questions from New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. More library resources used by international students mean less library resources available for New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. International students have too much money to spend.	1	2	3	4	5
12. International students bring crime to New Zealand.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Because international students work so hard, New Zealand students feel pressured to change their study habits.	1	2	3	4	5
14. International students get too much attention from teachers in New Zealand.	1	2	3	4	5
15. International students speak their own language when they should be speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
16. International students stick to their own customs instead of adopting New Zealand customs.	1	2	3	4	5
17. International students have a negative effect on the quality of New Zealand education.	1	2	3	4	5
18. International students do not appreciate the New Zealand way of life.	1	2	3	4	5
19. International students put pressure on health care facilities in New Zealand.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Students' social environment has been negatively affected by international students.	1	2	3	4	5
21. International students bring new diseases to New Zealand that would not otherwise be here.	1	2	3	4	5
22. International students are changing the standards of academic success in New Zealand.	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Below are some characteristics that may be used to describe people. In this section we are interested in your perceptions of international students. Please circle the number (1-7) that best describes your impressions of international students.**

friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unfriendly
lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	hard working
responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	irresponsible
efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	inefficient
tense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	easy going
open minded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	closed minded
cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	warm
kind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unkind
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unintelligent
unhelpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	helpful
conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	careless
thoughtless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	thoughtful
sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unsociable
accepting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	rejecting
rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	courteous

**3. Below are a series of statements with which you may either agree or disagree. Please circle the number which best represents your views, using the scale below.**

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
 strongly disagree    disagree            neutral/ neither    agree                strongly agree

<b>1.</b> If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2.</b> No one group should dominate society.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3.</b> All groups should be given an equal chance in life.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4.</b> We must increase social equality.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5.</b> It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6.</b> Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7.</b> It would be good if all groups could be equal.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 4: Your Interactions with International Students

*This section deals with your interactions with international students.*

1. How many different international students have you interacted with in the past 2 months? (please indicate a number)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many close friends do you have that are international students? (please indicate a number) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please use the following scale to indicate how often you **help** international students with the following tasks.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**  
Never                      Rarely                      Sometimes                      Often

Proof-reading their writing for language mistakes	1	2	3	4
Explaining class material they might have missed	1	2	3	4
Explaining assignment questions	1	2	3	4
Helping them with using the library	1	2	3	4
Preparing oral presentations	1	2	3	4
Helping with other homework	1	2	3	4

4. How often do you take part in the following activities with international students?

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**  
Never                      Rarely                      Sometimes                      Often

Spending time together in the holidays	1	2	3	4
Interacting during free time outside of class	1	2	3	4
Doing group assignments	1	2	3	4
Working in a study group	1	2	3	4
Doing exam revision	1	2	3	4
Sharing class notes	1	2	3	4

5. How much do the following factors prevent you from interacting with international students? Please circle the number that best represents your views using the scale below.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**  
Not at all                                                                                                          Very much

Few international students where I study	1	2	3	4	5
Different interests	1	2	3	4	5
My difficulties understanding their English	1	2	3	4	5
Their difficulties understanding my English	1	2	3	4	5
Their lack of interest in interacting with New Zealand students.	1	2	3	4	5
Culture differences	1	2	3	4	5

6. Overall, is your contact with international students: (please circle the number that best describes your contact):

equal status	1	2	3	4	5	6	unequal status
involuntary	1	2	3	4	5	6	voluntary
superficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	intimate
pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	unpleasant
cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	competitive
positive	1	2	3	4	5	6	negative

7. In this part of the questionnaire, we would like a general picture of how much contact *you actually have* with international students in your community and how much contact *you would like to have*.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**  
Never                      Rarely                      Sometimes                      Often

<b>1.</b> <i>I interact</i> with international students in my academic activities (e.g., studying, in classes, etc.)	1	2	3	4
<b>2.</b> <i>I would like to interact</i> with international students in my academic activities (e.g., studying, in classes, etc.)	1	2	3	4
<b>3.</b> <i>I interact</i> with international students in my social activities (e.g., spending time with friends, sports, eating out, etc.)	1	2	3	4
<b>4.</b> <i>I would like to interact</i> with international students in my social activities (e.g., spending time with friends, sports, eating out, etc.)	1	2	3	4





**APPENDIX B- SCALAR RELIABILITIES**

Cultural Inclusiveness	.74
Competition ('Zero Sum' Beliefs)	.90
Threat	.91
Realistic	.86
Symbolic	.81
Stereotypes	.89
Social Dominance Orientation	.78
Academic Assistance	.85
Intercultural Activities	.80
Quality of contact with international students	.80
Actual contact	.54
Desired contact	.80
Barriers	.73
Willingness to Interact	.86
Intergroup Anxiety	.78
Attitudes toward international students	.90

Cronbach alpha is used as a measure of scalar reliability (internal consistency).

Note. The alpha of .54 for actual contact is below the expected level of .70 for internal consistency; however, as this is two item scale, the figure is in an acceptable range.

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND INTERACTIONS WITH  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Colleen Ward, Anne-Marie Masgoret, Jonathan Newton & David Crabbe  
School of Psychology, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and  
Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research  
Victoria University of Wellington

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The report summarises the major findings of the A6- Interactions with International Students- project funded by the Export Education Levy and administered by Education New Zealand. This component covers the survey research undertaken with New Zealand teachers. The objectives of the research are:

1. To explore the perceptions, attitudes and communication experiences of staff who teach in multicultural classrooms,
2. To examine how staff attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students in classrooms,
3. To assess the communication practices used by New Zealand staff in interacting with international students and the value of such practices for effective communication and language learning, and
4. To identify issues of concern for staff-international student interactions.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research participants included 223 New Zealand teachers drawn from secondary and tertiary institutions and language schools. Staff from 25 institutions across New Zealand were included in the study. The percentage of enrolments of international students ranged from 2-7% in secondary schools and from 3-23% in tertiary institutions.

Participants completed an anonymous survey that examined: personal background information; perceptions of international students; teaching international students (cultural inclusiveness, teacher motivation and confidence, intergroup anxiety, accommodative behaviours, facilitation of community contact, perceived barriers to teaching effectiveness and teaching performance) and attitudes toward international students and international education policy.

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

Teachers reported a high level of cultural inclusiveness in their classes. Eighty-five per cent agreed that they encourage contact amongst students of different cultures and that cultural differences enrich their classes. However, teachers' reports were considerably more positive than the perceptions reported by international and domestic students in related research. Language teachers reported more inclusiveness than secondary and tertiary instructors, but inclusiveness was unrelated to teaching experience.

Motivation for teaching international students was high across the sectors, but greatest amongst language teachers. Confidence appeared somewhat lower. Only about half of the teachers believed that they could determine students' academic needs or assist with language difficulties. Tertiary teachers expressed the highest level of confidence. Anxiety and other negative feelings about interacting with international students were very low and lowest amongst language teachers.

There was considerable variation in accommodative behaviours in the classroom. Instructors rarely held additional classes for international students and only slightly more often provided them with alternative materials or encouraged intercultural interaction through seating arrangements. On the other hand, they often engaged in effective communication strategies such as repeating key points, speaking slowly and providing extra visual support. There were no differences between secondary and tertiary instructors in terms of accommodative classroom behaviours.

There was also considerable variation in the frequency with which language teachers undertook activities to provide pathways for international students to interact with the wider community. They rarely set up social contacts through clubs or community groups, and they rarely invited guest speakers into their classes to talk about their life or work. On the other hand, they often provided information to students, both about New Zealand society and culture in general as well as about current events in the community. The use of these strategies was unrelated to teaching experience.

Perceived barriers to effective teaching performance with international students were not great, the most significant one amongst these being differences in student ability. Fewer barriers were seen by language teachers, but barriers were unrelated to estimated proportion of international student enrolments in secondary and tertiary institutions. Conversely, self-reported teaching performance was in the good to excellent range with language teachers reporting the highest level of performance.

Attitudes toward international students were in the neutral to moderately positive range and had a curvi-linear relationship with the proportion of international students in institutional enrolments. Specifically, attitudes became more positive with a rising proportion of international enrolments until the 12-14% range where attitudes turned more negative with increased enrolments.

With respect to policy items, most teachers (56%) thought the number of international students in New Zealand was about right, but 43% thought the budget for international education was too low.

Finally, a causal model of teacher performance identified two paths leading to the outcome. The first commenced with general attitudes toward international students. Teachers who had more positive attitudes had greater confidence and higher motivation to deal with international students; in turn, teacher confidence and motivation led directly to good performance outcomes. There was also a direct path from perceived barriers to lower teaching effectiveness

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Teachers displayed a strong commitment to cultural inclusiveness and a high motivation to teach international students; however, their confidence in dealing with international students in general and issues of language proficiency in

particular was relatively low. The latter concern underpinned a number of our recommendations, including:

- Ensuring that students meet appropriate pre-entry language levels
- Providing additional support through ancillary staff and
- Encouraging teachers to adjust their communicative responses to suit the needs of a linguistically diverse student population by employing such strategies as more use of stress and pauses, more careful articulation, less complex utterances, more questions, fewer idioms and topic restatements.

Additional areas that prompted recommendations were critical thinking skills and managing cultural diversity in the classroom. With respect to the former, it was suggested that the following approaches may be useful:

- Making students aware of expectations concerning critical thinking
- Explaining learning practices with specific examples of critical thinking applied to course content
- Making an effort to understand the learning styles of international students as learners and to seek to reconcile differences in teaching and learning practices (i.e., becoming more interculturally competent)
- Identifying the value of the cultural competencies that international students bring to educational institutions.

With respect to diversity issues it was recommended that teachers make use of opportunities for learning through interactions, including working with culturally mixed groups and demonstrating an interest in the cultural perspectives that international students bring to the classroom. Web-sites that offer pedagogical approaches to dealing with cultural diversity were also noted.

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

Qualitative research on domestic and international students' interactions at the University of Waikato suggests that both groups of students experience benefits in the multicultural classroom, but these benefits are not sufficiently realised (Ho, Holmes & Cooper, 2004; Holmes, 2003; and Holmes & Bird, 2002). Deficit language was often cited as a reason underlying communication difficulties and attendant problems. Yet, deeper influences pertaining to cultural differences and a lack of intercultural understanding also appeared to impact on classroom dynamics and educational outcomes.

Although Aston's (1996) research cited teachers' views about the advantages and disadvantages of international students in the classroom, little is known about their overall attitudes toward international students or their effectiveness in managing multicultural classrooms. There is clearly a need for an understanding of the role taken by teaching staff in facilitating intercultural interactions and meeting educational objectives. In relation to this, there is a requirement for the development of guidelines that foster a positive and welcoming learning and social environment (Asia 2000, 2003). As Chen and Starosta (1998) argue: "the more fully [students and staff] learn to recognize and to respect differences in the beliefs, values, and worldviews of people of varying cultural extraction, the more effectively will they promote a multicultural society beyond the classroom" (p. 226).

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research examines the overall pattern of teacher characteristics, such as confidence and motivation, classroom practices, perceptions of and interactions with international students, and teacher performance. The report considers the findings in relation to the results of research with both international and domestic students (e.g., Ward & Masgoret, 2004). It also discusses the implications of the findings for language learning.

The research objectives are:

1. To explore the perceptions, attitudes and communication experiences of staff who teach in multicultural classrooms,
2. To examine how staff attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students in classrooms,
3. To assess the communication practices used by New Zealand staff in interacting with international students and the value of such practices for effective communication and language learning, and
4. To identify issues of concern for staff-international student interactions.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

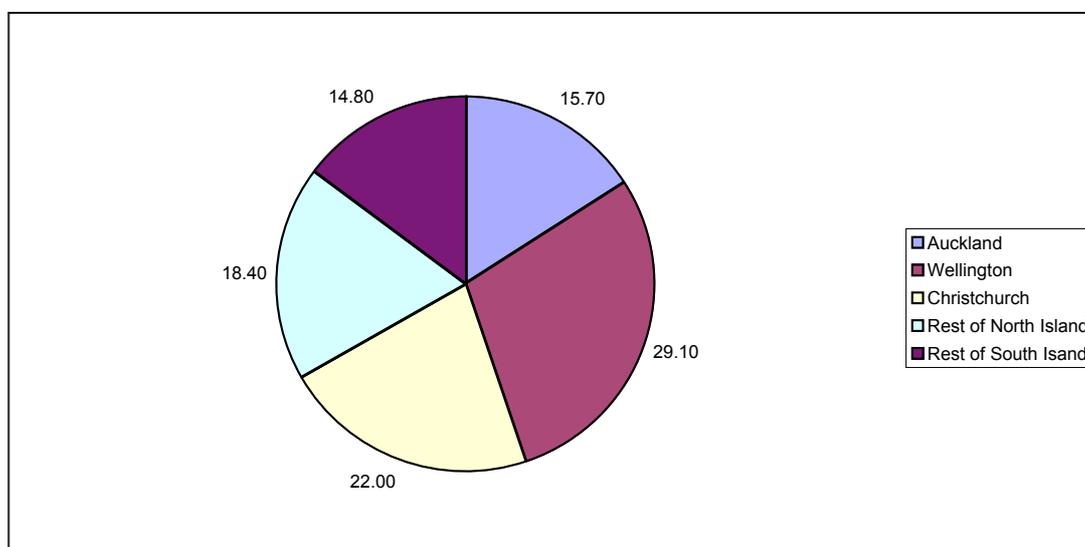
Research participants were drawn from language schools and secondary and tertiary institutions across New Zealand. The sample included 223 teaching staff. Of these 70 (31%) were employed in secondary schools, 43 (19%) in universities, 23 (10%) in polytechnics, 5 (2%) in a college of education, and 82 (37%) in language schools.<sup>1</sup>

There were 109 females (52%) and 99 (44%) males who completed the survey; 15 respondents did not indicate gender. Respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 76 with a mean of 42.6 years. Most staff (61%) had New Zealand citizenship, and 19% had citizenship of another country. The majority of respondents who provided information about ethnicity described themselves as New Zealand European/Pakeha (72%). Maori represented 1.4% of the sample and Asians 3%.

Staff had a high level of cross-cultural exposure to other countries or cultures either by studying a foreign language (87%), speaking a foreign language (46%) or by studying or working in another country (77%).

There was considerable variation in teachers' experience with international students, ranging from 0-30 years, with an average of 8.2 years. General teaching experience ranged from 0.5 to 42 years, with an average of 13.2 years. As a group, then, respondents could be seen as moderately to highly experienced.

*Figure 1. Participants by Region*



Staff from 25 educational institutions participated in the research. Their regional representation is presented in Figure 1, and Table 1 describes the location and type of institutions whose staff participated in the research. As can be seen from the figure, Auckland is under-represented in terms of the New Zealand population distribution and the concentration of international students and institutions in that region.

*Table 1. Sector by Region*

Location	Type of Institution		
	Secondary	Tertiary	Language School
Auckland	1	1	2
Wellington	1	1	4
Christchurch	2	3	1
Rest of North Island	1	1	5
Rest of South Island	1	1	0
Total	6	7	12

Note. One of the language programmes was associated with a university; all other language schools were private establishments.

The proportion of international student enrolment across secondary and tertiary educational institutions ranged from 2.1% to 23.2%. However, tertiary institutions had higher proportions of international enrolments (2.5-23.2%) compared to secondary schools (2.1-6.9%).

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument was developed by the research team with reference to the international literature on teacher effectiveness, multi-cultural classrooms, language learning and intergroup perceptions and relations.

Two versions of the survey were developed, one for teachers in language schools and the other for teachers in secondary and tertiary institutions. The major components of the surveys are described in Table 2 (see Appendix A for full surveys).

*Table 2. Teacher Surveys*

Section 1: Background Information
Section 2: Perceptions of International Students
Section 3: Teaching International Students
Section 4: Attitudes toward International Students

Section 1 includes demographic descriptors (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, type and location of educational institution) and information about exposure to other cultures (e.g., experience working or studying abroad).

Section 2 begins with items on exposure to and experience with international students. The section also includes four scenarios that describe positive and negative academic and social behaviours demonstrated by New Zealand or international students (e.g., Pat Brown, Xiao-Rong Chen). Each scenario is followed by six bipolar pairs of adjectives (e.g., cold-warm, intelligent-unintelligent) that assess impressions of students. This technique permits us to examine teacher responses as a function of students' domestic versus international status. Note that the section on perceptions of

international students is not included in the survey for teaching staff in language schools.

Section 3 broadly examines aspects of interacting with and teaching international students. This includes teacher motivation, teacher confidence, accommodative teaching behaviours (for secondary and tertiary staff) or facilitation of community contact (for language school staff), barriers to teaching effectiveness, and self-reported teaching performance. The section also includes an assessment of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom, modified from the measure used in the national survey of international students and the companion survey of domestic students, and a measure of intergroup anxiety, also used in the domestic student research.

The final section examines general attitudes toward international students, including specific attitudes about responsibility for the adjustment of international students. Section 4 also taps attitudes toward export education policy, i.e, the number of international students in New Zealand and recent budget initiatives.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data are analysed both at the item and scale levels. For item level analysis, frequency breakdowns are generally reported (e.g., % agreement) although mean scores are reported where more appropriate (e.g., level of intergroup anxiety). When scales based on aggregated items are used, they are first subjected to psychometric analysis to ensure reliability (internal consistency). The results of these analyses are reported in Appendix B.

Scales are analysed by gender and sector (secondary/tertiary/language school) using either t-tests or analyses of variance. Where possible, comparisons are made with the national survey of international students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004) and the companion study of domestic students.

Following the descriptive information, the relationships amongst the research variables are examined by correlational analyses. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the proportion of international student enrolments and the attitudinal and interaction variables. Finally, structural equation modelling is used to test a causal model of teacher performance.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Although enrolments in secondary and tertiary institutions ranged from 2—23% , teachers in these institutions estimated that the percentage of international students ranged from 0-98% with an average of 27%.

Analyses were conducted for each of the four scenarios to determine if there were differences in impressions of domestic and international students after they performed well or poorly in academic or interpersonal domains. There were no significant differences in the perceptions of domestic and international students within academic domains. With respect to interpersonal activities, negative impressions of both

domestic and international students were formed in response to the scenario about disruptive behaviour in the classroom; however, the perceptions of the domestic students were significantly more negative. With respect to positive social behaviour, being popular and helpful, secondary teachers viewed the domestic student more favourably, but tertiary instructors had a more positive perception of the international student. These analyses suggest that there are no systematic biases in impression formation.

## TEACHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This section includes measurements of cultural inclusiveness, teacher motivation and confidence, intergroup anxiety, accommodative behaviours, facilitation of community contact, perceived barriers to teaching effectiveness and teaching performance.

Table 3 presents teachers' descriptions of cultural inclusiveness in their classrooms. As can be seen from the table, their reports are overwhelmingly positive, particularly for teaching behaviours, such as encouraging intercultural contact (85%) and trying to understand the problems of international students (89%). These self-reports appear to differ markedly, however, from the perceptions of students. For example, only 52% of international students and 48% of domestic students agree that teachers understand the problems of international students. Similarly, only 47% of international and 35% of domestic students believe that teachers encourage intercultural contact (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

With respect to the issue of students from different cultural groups working well with each other, the majority of teachers (61%) agree that this is the case. Fifty-five percent of international students agree, but only 46% of domestic students do so.

*Table 3. Cultural Inclusiveness in the Classroom: % of agreement*

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
I encourage contact among students of different cultures	84	73	96	85
Students from different cultural groups work well together in my classes.	44	51	85	61
I think cultural differences enrich my classes.	80	79	94	85
I try to understand the problems of international students.	81	87	98	89
In my classes there is an opportunity to learn about different cultures.	42	49	94	63
I encourage my students to be accepting of cultural differences	93	76	95	78

Teachers in language schools reported more cultural inclusiveness in their classrooms than secondary and tertiary instructors, and women reported more inclusiveness than men. Cultural inclusiveness was unrelated to either total teaching experience or

experience with international students; it was also unrelated to the estimated proportion of international students in classes.

Table 4 summarises the findings on teacher motivation. Motivation for teaching international students appears to be high in general with at least three-quarters of the respondents endorsing positive responses. Teachers in language schools reported higher motivation than either secondary or tertiary instructors. Teacher motivation did not vary between secondary and tertiary instructors or men and women, and it was unrelated to either total teaching experience or experience with international students. It was also unrelated to the estimated proportion of international students in classes.

*Table 4. Teacher Motivation: % of agreement*

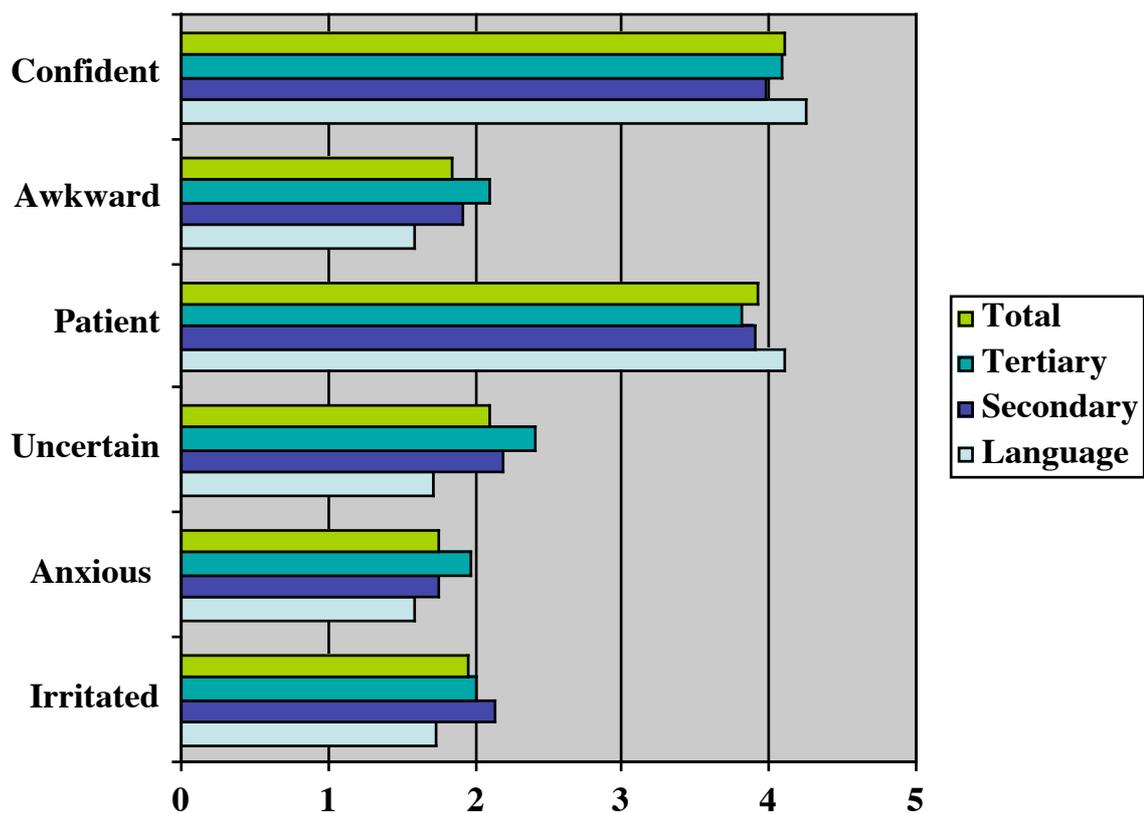
	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
I am willing to volunteer extra time to international students	70	70	84	75
Teaching international students has helped me become a better teacher.	64	69	93	77
Teaching international students is a positive challenge	71	68	95	79
I can make a positive difference in the lives of international students.	63	66	92	75
I am reluctant to put extra effort into teaching international students.	5	13	8	9
I enjoy teaching international students.	84	73	96	85

The findings on teacher confidence are presented in Table 5. On the whole, confidence appears lower than motivation with between 42 and 76% of respondents expressing confidence in various activities. Teachers express less confidence in relating classroom content to the experiences of international students and assisting with language needs. On the other hand, a large majority (76%) are confident about evaluating the work of international students. Tertiary teachers reported the highest level of confidence in teaching international students; however, this was significantly different from language school instructors, but not secondary teachers. Confidence was unrelated to teaching experience. For secondary and tertiary teachers it was also unrelated to the estimated proportion of international students in their classes.

Table 5. Teacher Confidence: % of agreement

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
Determine their academic needs	53	62	49	55
Assist with language difficulties	43	55	57	52
Manage their participation in class	70	61	54	61
Involve them in class discussions	64	70	52	62
Establish a feeling of community in my classes	71	69	52	63
Communicate new concepts effectively	59	72	54	62
Relate classroom content to experiences	29	49	46	42
Implement a variety of teaching styles	55	64	48	56
Adjust my teaching to their language ability	52	60	56	56
Evaluate their work	86	93	56	76

Figure 2. Mean Ratings of Intergroup Anxiety



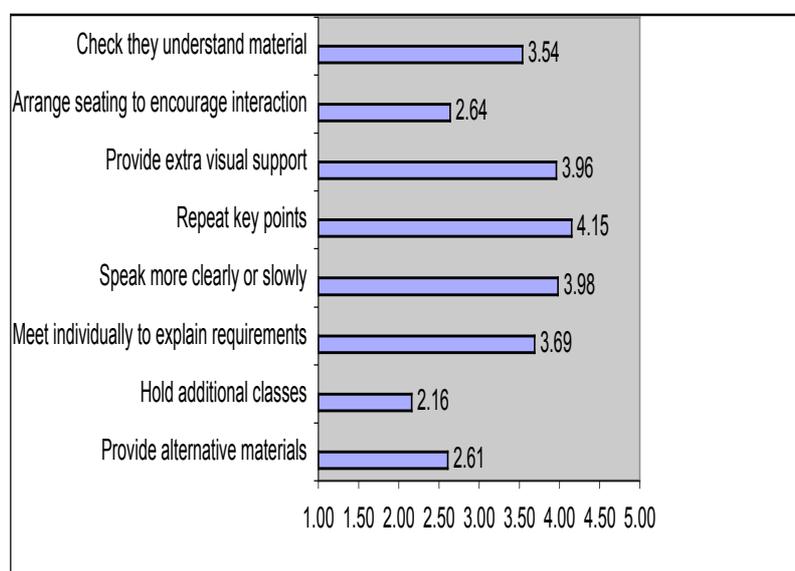
Note: 1 = not at all and 5 = extremely.

Related to teacher confidence in working with international students are general feelings about intercultural interaction. As can be seen in Figure 2, the level of intergroup anxiety about intercultural interaction is very low amongst teachers.

Language school instructors reported lower levels of than teachers in secondary and tertiary institutions, but there were no differences between secondary and tertiary sectors. Intergroup anxiety did not vary by gender, as a function of teachers' experience, or in relation to estimated proportion of international students.

In addition to teacher confidence and motivation, specific classroom and extra-classroom behaviours were examined with a view to their implications for the learning experiences of international students. For "subject" teachers, accommodative behaviours were assessed as these are known to facilitate generic learning objectives. For language teachers, initiatives that facilitate community contact were assessed as these are known to support language learning specifically. The results of these components of the survey are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

*Figure 3. Accommodative Behaviours in the Classroom (Secondary and Tertiary Instructors)*



Note. 1 = never and 5 = very often.

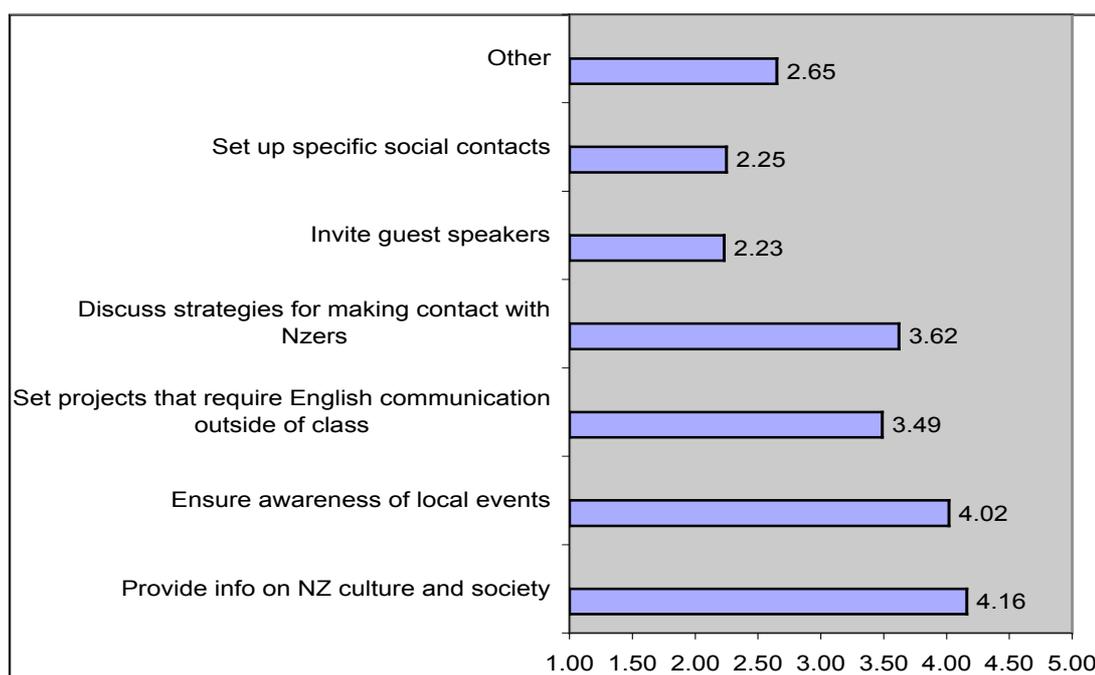
There was considerable variation in accommodative behaviours in the classroom. Instructors rarely held additional classes for international students and only slightly more often provided them with alternative materials or encouraged intercultural interaction through seating arrangements. On the other hand, they often engaged in effective communication strategies such as repeating key points, speaking slowly and providing extra visual support.

There were no differences between secondary and tertiary instructors in terms of accommodative classroom behaviours. Accommodation was unrelated to teaching experience or estimated proportion of international enrolments; however, women reported more accommodative behaviours than men.

As shown in Figure 4, there was also considerable variation in the frequency with which language teachers undertook activities to provide pathways for international students to interact with the wider community. They rarely set up social contacts

through clubs or community groups, and they rarely invited guest speakers into their classes to talk about their life or work. On the other hand, they often provided information to students, both about New Zealand society and culture in general as well as about current events in the community. They sometimes set up projects that required communication outside of the classroom. The use of these strategies was unrelated to teaching experience. Female instructors reported facilitating community contact more frequently than males.

*Figure 4. Facilitating Community Contact*



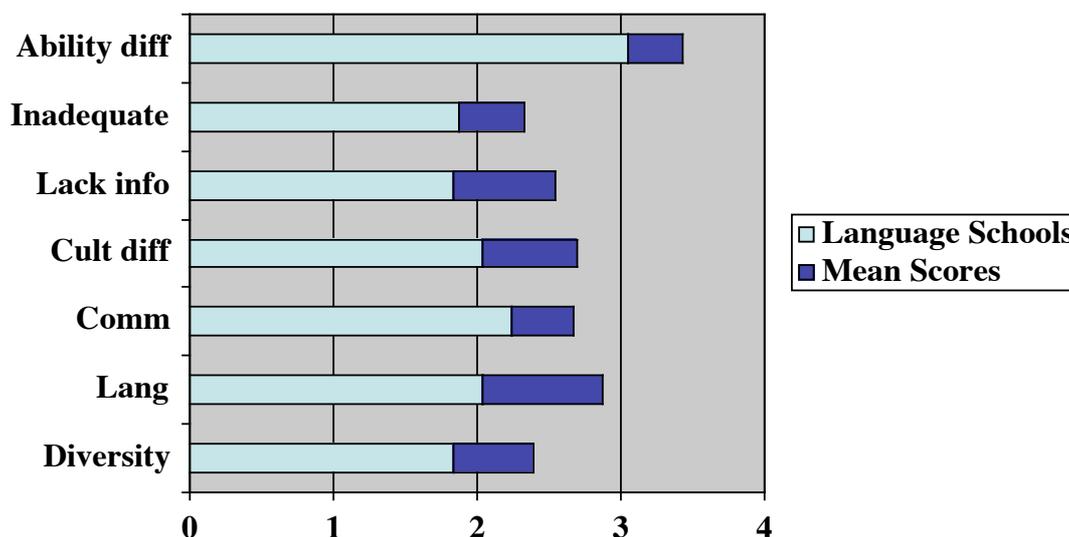
Note. 1= never and 5 = very often.

The perceived barriers to effective teaching are presented in Figure 5. These include: amount of diversity in the student population, language difficulties, quality of student-teacher communication, lack of information about cultural differences, lack of information about teaching in multicultural classrooms, inadequate teaching resources and classes with large differences in student ability. Note that the figure provides the average (mean) response across all three sectors, but as the language school teachers saw significantly fewer barriers than did secondary and tertiary instructors in all areas, their responses are identified within the bar graph. There were no significant differences between secondary and tertiary instructors.

Women and those who had more experience teaching international students perceived fewer barriers, but in the secondary and tertiary sectors, perceived barriers were unrelated to estimated proportion of international student enrolments.

On the whole, the barriers to effective teaching were not perceived as great. Only differences in ability, which is perceived as the greatest barrier to teaching effectiveness, falls above the scalar mid-point of 3 on a 5-point scale.

Figure 5. Perceived Barriers to Teaching Effectiveness

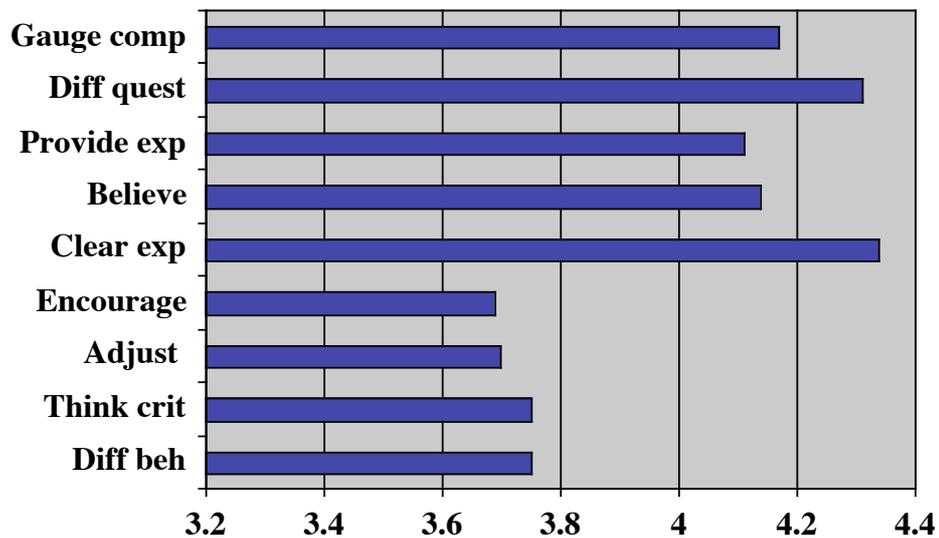


Note. 1 = not at all and 5 = extremely.

Figure 6 displays self-reported teaching performance. The performance areas include: dealing with difficult behaviour, helping students think critically, adjusting classes to the proper level, encouraging students who show interest in studies, making behavioural expectations clear, getting students to believe that they can do well in their studies, providing alternative explanations when students are confused, responding to difficult questions, and gauging comprehension of what has been taught. Language teachers reported better performance than either secondary or tertiary instructors overall, but this was not true in every domain. There were no significant differences between secondary and tertiary instructors or between men and women.

As can be seen in the figure, teachers perceived their performance to be in the good to excellent range; however, self-reported performance was unrelated to teaching experience, and for secondary and tertiary instructors it was unrelated to the estimated proportion of international enrolments.

Figure 6. Teaching Performance



Note. 1 = poor and 5 = excellent.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This section considers attitudes toward international students as well as international education policy.

First, teachers' perspectives about international student adaptation are considered with emphasis on the locus of responsibility. More specifically, the research examined support for the notions that international students are responsible for their own adaptation and that institutions, including teaching staff, are responsible for their adaptation. The findings on locus of responsibility are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Locus of responsibility: % of agreement

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
<i>Student-centred</i>				
International students are responsible for their own academic performance.	49	70	61	60
International students should make more effort to adapt.	23	39	32	32
International students should work harder to fit in.	16	33	21	23
International students should take advantage of resources to help them adapt.	65	86	73	75
<i>Institution-centred</i>				
International students should receive academic advice for their courses.	90	94	97	94

There should be more specialised services to assist international students.	70	78	78	76
Staff should help international students learn more about life in NZ.	48	51	74	59
Teachers should be trained about cultural differences in learning styles to assist international students to reach their full potential.	69	80	84	78

As can be seen in the Table there is relatively little support for the propositions that international students should work harder and make more effort, perhaps implicitly acknowledging that hard work and effort are usually forthcoming. However, the majority of teachers agree that international students are responsible for their academic performance and that they should take advantage of available resources.

On the other hand, staff strongly support the provision of institutional services to assist international students and to empower them in their academic pursuits. This ranges from 59% agreement that staff should help students learn more about New Zealand to 94% support for the provision of academic advice. On average, teachers were more likely to endorse institutional responsibility as empowering strategies than individual responsibility. Both domains, however, received endorsements greater than the scalar midpoint of 3 indicating that both the individual and the institution are perceived as having a significant role to play in the adjustment process.

Female instructors more strongly endorsed institutional responsibility than males. Secondary school teachers were less likely to place the locus of responsibility on students themselves than either tertiary or language teachers while language teachers were more likely to see the institutions as responsible for international student adjustment than either secondary or tertiary instructors. Those with more extensive teaching experience in general were inclined to place less responsibility on international students themselves. Attitudes about the responsibility for adaptation were unrelated to the proportion of international enrolments.

As can be seen in Table 7, attitudes toward international students are neutral to moderately positive. A strong majority of teachers agree that international students have admirable qualities and that they have made a positive contribution to New Zealand. On the other hand, less than half agree that international students are good role models.

Language teachers had the most positive attitudes toward international students, followed by secondary teachers then tertiary instructors. Women had more positive attitudes than men. Attitudes were unrelated to teaching experience or estimated students enrolments.

*Table 7. Attitudes toward international students: % of agreement*

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
International students have many qualities I admire.	86	70	83	80
International students have made an important contribution to NZ.	86	70	92	83
International students are good role models for NZ students.	52	23	43	39
International students have a positive influence on NZ education.	65	41	46	51
International students are too demanding.	9	17	6	12
There should be fewer international students in the country.	11	9	3	7

Tables 8 and 9 present the findings on attitudes toward government policy. Language teachers are most likely to see the number of international students and the budget for international education as too low; however, in the latter case, the difference is statistically significant only in the comparison with tertiary instructors.

*Table 8. Opinions about the number of international students: % of agreement*

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
Much too low	2	2	8	4
Too low	18	10	42	25
About right	61	62	47	56
Too high	18	19	3	12
Much too high	2	7	1	4

Note. May not add up to 100% due to rounding.

*Table 9. Opinions about the budget for international education: % of agreement*

	Secondary	Tertiary	Language	Total
Much too low	10	7	15	11
Too low	35	23	38	32
About right	39	52	38	43
Too high	10	11	8	10
Much too high	6	8	1	5

Note. May not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## **RELATIONSHIPS AMONGST FACTORS**

Teachers who have more positive attitudes toward international students have higher motivation, lower intergroup anxiety, see fewer barriers, practice more accommodative behaviours, are less likely to hold international students responsible

for their adaptation and more likely to recommend empowerment through institutional strategies, report better teaching performance and are less likely to see the student numbers and the international education budget as too high.

Those teachers who report a better performance in teaching international students have higher motivation and greater confidence, practice more cultural inclusiveness, have lower intergroup anxiety, perceive fewer barriers, practice more accommodative behaviours, have more positive attitudes, recommend empowerment via institutional strategies and are less likely to see the numbers as too high or the budget as too great.

Remarkably, teaching experience, both in general, and with international students in particular, is largely unrelated to other factors. The two exceptions are: greater experience with international students is weakly related to fewer perceived barriers and greater teaching experience in general is weakly related to the tendency to hold international students less responsible for their own adjustment.

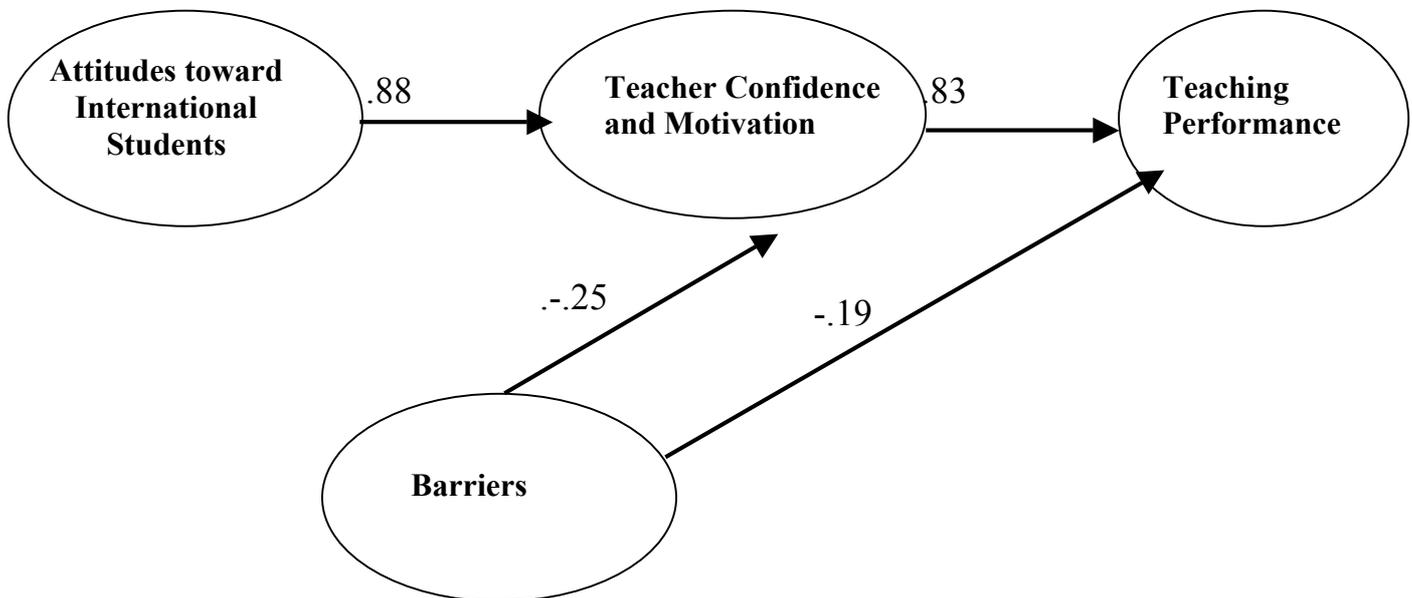
For secondary and tertiary institutions, estimated proportion of international enrolments in classes and the actual proportion of enrolments within an institution were linked to relatively few factors. Higher estimated enrolments were associated with a tendency to see the budget for international education as too low. Higher proportions of international enrolments were linked to fewer accommodative behaviours, fewer perceived barriers, and a greater tendency to see both students and institutions as responsible for students' adaptation. In contrast, a curvi-linear relationship emerged between proportional enrolments and attitudes toward international students. More specifically, attitudes toward international students became more positive with increasing enrolments until the proportion hit the 12-14% range where the attitudes became more negative.

## **MODEL OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE**

Figure 7 displays the results of a structural equation model of teaching performance. As can be seen below, there are two pathways leading to the performance outcome. The first commences with general attitudes toward international students. Teachers who have more positive attitudes have greater confidence and higher motivation to deal with international students. Teacher confidence and motivation lead directly to good performance outcomes. There is also a direct path between perceived barriers to teaching effectiveness (such as inadequate resources or information about teaching international students). Perceived barriers have a direct and negative effect on teaching performance.

Although structural equation modelling is referred to as causal modelling, it must be remembered that these are essentially correlational analyses and causality cannot strictly be inferred. Nevertheless, the survey data provide an adequate to good fit to the model.

Figure 7. A Model of Teaching Performance



$\chi(57) = 145.92, p < .001, GFI = .91, AGFI = .85, IFI = .91, TLI = .88, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .088$

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research set out to examine teachers' perceptions of international students and how they respond to the presence of international students in their classes. Of particular interest are variations in perception and performance across three educational sectors: secondary, tertiary, and language schools.

A causal model was developed to identify significant relationships between the various factors examined in the research. In keeping with findings from international research, the model shows a very strong relationship between teachers' attitudes on the one hand and their motivation and confidence on the other. In turn, motivation and confidence influenced the willingness of the teachers to engage/not engage in behaviours that support the learning experience of international students.

A second factor, perceived barriers, also affected motivation, confidence, and the evaluation of teaching performance. Thus, teachers who perceived barriers to be higher, were typically less motivated, less confident and rated their performance more negatively. Conversely, teachers who perceived barriers to be lower were more motivated, more confident, and were more positive about their teaching performance.

The teachers showed a strong commitment to cultural inclusiveness in their classrooms and similarly, their motivation for teaching international students was high, particularly amongst teachers in language schools. This is an encouraging finding as it suggests a willingness to adopt practices that will enhance the educational experiences of international students.

The level of confidence that the teachers expressed in their ability to deal with international students did not match up to their motivation and sense of cultural inclusiveness. Confidence was particularly low in areas such as determining academic needs and assisting international students with language problems. Teachers in the tertiary sector showed greater confidence than teachers in the other two sectors. One explanation for this is that international students in tertiary institutions have typically reached a higher level of proficiency and cultural adaptation through prior educational experiences in New Zealand and so require less direct assistance. The other is that, because of more limited contact, tertiary teachers feel less responsible in general for working closely with students to ensure they are successful.

The low confidence of the teachers in dealing with language difficulties deserves particular attention. Most staff in secondary and tertiary institutions do not have training in TESOL and yet they are faced with international students who frequently need assistance to overcome language barriers. While this assistance is often provided through TESOL support staff, it is mainstream teachers who must nevertheless ensure the participation of international students in tutorial/discussion activities, grade their written work, and who carry responsibility for ensuring they their own lessons and lectures are understood. A first response to this issue is to ensure that international students meet appropriate pre-entry language levels. A second is to provide additional support through ancillary staffing. A third is to encourage teachers to adjust their communicative practices to suit the needs of a linguistically diverse student population.

The results show that the majority of teachers are indeed adjusting their communication style to accommodate to the needs of international students. Although teaching practices were variable, the majority of teachers reported using accommodative practices such as providing extra visual support, repeating key points and adjusting speaking speed and style. Other linguistic adjustments that improve the comprehensibility of speech directed at non-native speakers and which teachers could incorporate include:

- more use of stress and pauses
- more careful articulation
- less complex utterances
- more questions
- fewer idioms and idiomatic speech
- topic restatements

(Chaudron, 1983; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

More effective than input adjustments however are opportunities for learners to actively participate in learning through interaction (Long, 1996; Pica et al., 1987). Comprehension increases when learners are able to seek clarification and confirm understanding and when the teacher regularly checks comprehension (Doughty, 2000;

Pica, 1991). Such actions lead to a more conversational style of classroom/lecture room communication and a more participatory style of learning.

Other simple but effective ways that teachers can improve the effectiveness of their communication with international students include the following:

- Learning the correct pronunciation of the names of international students
- Treating international students as individuals, not as representatives of their country
- Allowing time for international students to adjust to the new learning environment and not assuming that they know what is expected of them; it may take some time for international students to identify the tacit assumptions that underlie student and teacher roles in classrooms, lectures, tutorials, and in interactions outside of formal tuition.
- In the tertiary context, encouraging international students to use office hours. Initially this may require teachers to take time to meet with international students outside of class hours for informal Q & A session. Teachers may need to take the first step by asking students about their experience of a class, find out what successes and problems they are experiencing in their studies.
- Showing an interest in the unique experiences and cultural perspectives that international students bring to the classroom.
- Employing strategies to mix up who sits together. When facilitating group work, teachers should assign students to groups randomly and regularly rotate groupings. Alternatively students can be asked to make groups with students they don't know.

An additional area of teaching practice that was surveyed concerned the extent to which the teachers assisted international students to engage with the local community. The teachers reported frequently facilitating such contact by setting projects to encourage communication outside the classroom, providing information about New Zealand society and local events, and exploring strategies for making contact with English speaking New Zealanders. Their practices rarely extended to setting up social contacts or inviting guest speakers to class. It is likely that such responsibilities lie beyond what is usually possible within set curricula and limited class contact times.

The teachers rated their teaching performance in the good to excellent range. This is an encouraging result that shows the teachers are generally positive about their performance in relation to the nine teaching strategies identified. It is worth noting that the following four items appeared to be rated consistently lower than other items, although still within the *good* range:

- helping students think critically
- adjusting classes to the proper level for international students
- dealing with difficult behaviour
- encouraging those who show an interest in their studies.

Encouraging critical thinking is a frequently cited problem by teachers working with international students from cultures which discourage questioning of and challenges to authority. Vandermensbrugge (2004) identifies a number of possible responses to this issue. They include:

- making students aware of expectations concerning critical thinking

- explaining learning practices with specific examples of critical thinking applied to course content
- making an effort to understand the learning styles of international students as learners and to seek to reconcile differences in teaching and learning practices (i.e., becoming more interculturally competent)
- identifying the value of the cultural competencies that international students bring to educational institutions.

These constitute what Vandermensbrugge describes as becoming ‘culturally competent institutions.’

Adjusting classes to the proper level for international students is likely to be an issue of barriers to communication, including differences in academic background and language proficiency. Both issues are dealt with elsewhere in this discussion.

Dealing with difficult behaviour is likely to be a challenge for teachers when dealing with any student and, in the absence of comparative data, there is no reason to believe that international students cause a specific problem here. Equally, it is unlikely that the final item, encouraging students with interest or flair, is a specific issue with international students.

The teachers did not perceive the barriers to effective teaching of international students to be great. Two barriers with the strongest effect were large differences in student ability and language difficulties. Responding to classroom diversity is a widely researched topic in the educational literature (Ho, 2005) and one for which number of plethora of pedagogic responses are readily available on-line (e.g. <http://www.princeton.edu/~djbutler/ditclink.htm>). Teachers need opportunity and encouragement to engage with these ideas through professional development sessions, discussions in professional forums such as newsletters, discussion boards, and sector group meetings (see <http://www.tesolanz.org.nz/Sectors.htm> for information on sector groups within TESOL).

The second barrier, the issue of language difficulties, was raised earlier in relation to teachers’ confidence and its appearance again here confirms that, not unsurprisingly, language issues constitute an important barrier to effective teaching of international students.

Finally, the research sought information on teachers’ attitudes towards international students. Attitudes were somewhat mixed. While the teachers agreed that international students had admirable qualities and made a contribution to NZ, there was much less agreement about the value of their contribution in educational contexts. This reflects the perceptions of secondary and tertiary teachers that students from different cultural groups do not work particularly well together in their classrooms and that there are few opportunities to learn about different cultures (items 2 & 6 in Table 3). This suggests that the overriding task for teachers is to establish a coherent community from the diversity. This is true not only in teaching institutions where there are minority groups of international students, but also in private language schools where there is a need to make links with the wider New Zealand community. And in both cases there is a need to recognise that international students themselves are not usually a homogeneous group from one culture but a mixed group from several cultures that itself has a dynamic that needs to be recognised.

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## **FOOTNOTE**

<sup>1</sup> Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## **APPENDIX A – SURVEYS**

- 1. SURVEY FOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTRUCTORS**
- 2. SURVEY FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

## Section 1: Information about You

- 1) Are you... (tick one)?       Female       Male
- 2) What is your age?      \_\_\_\_\_ years
- 3) Are you a...(tick as many as applies)?
- New Zealand resident       New Zealand citizen       citizen of another country
- 4) In which city are you teaching (tick one)?
- Hamilton       Christchurch  
 Tauranga       Auckland  
 Wellington       Other
- 5) Are you teaching at... (tick one)?
- Secondary school       University  
 Polytechnic       Language School  
 Other
- 6) What is your ethnic background (tick one)?
- Maori  
 New Zealand European  
 Samoan  
 Other Pasifika  
 Indian  
 Chinese  
 Other Asian  
 Mixed ethnicity  
 Other
- 7) Can you hold a conversation in a language other than English or Maori (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 8) Have you ever studied a foreign language (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 9) Have you ever worked or studied in another country (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 10). How many years of teaching experience do you have? (please indicate a number)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) How many years experience do you have teaching international students? (please indicate a number)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) What is/are your qualification(s)?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) What subject(s) do you teach?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Perceptions of International Students

1. Estimate the number of international students in your classes this year (please indicate a number)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Estimate the percentage of international students in your classes this year (please indicate a percentage)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In this section you will be given 4 scenarios involving either a New Zealand student or an international student. After each scenario you will be asked about your impressions of the student. (*Note - Chinese and NZ names vary across different versions of the survey*)

### Scenario 1

One of your students, Xiao-Rong Chen is always well-behaved in class. Xiao-Rong seems like a popular student and is known to be helpful to classmates. For example Xiao-Rong often brings books or notes to students who miss class because of sickness.

*On each line below, please circle the number (1-7) that best describes your impressions of this student.*

lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	hard working
responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	irresponsible
cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	warm
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unintelligent
sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unsociable
rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	courteous

### Scenario 2

One of your students, Jing-Wei Li is misbehaving frequently in your class and is often inattentive. Today in class Jing-Wei was disruptive. You tell Jing-Wei firmly to take a seat and quiet down. Jing-Wei turns away from you, says something in a belligerent tone that you can't hear and sits down.

*On each line below, please circle the number (1-7) that best describes your impressions of this student.*

lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	hard working
responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	irresponsible
cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	warm
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unintelligent
sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unsociable
rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	courteous

### Scenario 3

You have a student, Kelly Stevens, who always hands in assignments on time, always comes prepared, and is never late for class Kelly obviously has the ability to do above average work and also benefits from encouragement.

*On each line below, please circle the number (1-7) that best describes your impressions of this student.*

lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	hard working
responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	irresponsible
cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	warm
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unintelligent
sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unsociable
rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	courteous

#### Scenario 4

A new student, Pat Brown, has been assigned to your class. The records indicate that Pat never does assignments and does not seem to care about education. Pat's performance has been amongst the lowest in the class and a counsellor has recommended participation in a peer support group.

*On each line below, please circle the number (1-7) that best describes your impressions of this student.*

lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	hard working
responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	irresponsible
cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	warm
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unintelligent
sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unsociable
rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	courteous











**3.** Finally, we would like to ask you for your opinions regarding New Zealand policy issues on international students. Please circle the response that best represents your views.

3a. There are over 110,000 international students in New Zealand. Do you think that this number is...? (circle one):

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Much too low	Too low	About right	Too high	Much too high

3b. In the 2004 budget, \$40 million has been allocated for new initiatives in international education over the next four years. Do you think this amount is (circle one):

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Much too low	Too low	About right	Too high	Much too high

## Section 1: Information about You

- 1) Are you... (tick one)?       Female       Male
- 2) What is your age?      \_\_\_\_\_ years
- 3) Are you a...(tick as many as applies)?
- New Zealand resident       New Zealand citizen       citizen of another country
- 4) In which city are you teaching (tick one)?
- Hamilton                       Christchurch  
 Tauranga                       Auckland  
 Wellington                       Other
- 5) Are you teaching at... (tick one)?
- Secondary school                       University  
 Polytechnic                       Language School  
 Other
- 6) What is your ethnic background (tick one)?
- Maori  
 New Zealand European  
 Samoan  
 Other Pasifika  
 Indian  
 Chinese  
 Other Asian  
 Mixed ethnicity  
 Other
- 7) Can you hold a conversation in a language other than English or Maori (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 8) Have you ever studied a foreign language (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 9) Have you ever worked or studied in another country (tick one)?
- Yes       No
- 10). How many years of teaching experience do you have? (please indicate a number)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) How many years experience do you have teaching international students? (please indicate a number)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) What is/are your qualification(s)?
- \_\_\_\_\_





4. In your most recent teaching, how often have you used the following strategies to facilitate contact between international students and the wider community?

	<b>1</b> Never	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Very often Very Often
1. Provided information to international students about New Zealand culture and society?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ensured that international students are aware of local current events?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Set projects that require international students to communicate in English outside of class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Discussed strategies for making contact with English-speaking New Zealanders.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Invited guest speakers into your classroom to talk about their work or life.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Set up specific social contacts, for example local community groups, churches, sports clubs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Other? Please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

5. The following questions are about how you feel while interacting with international students. Please indicate your overall feelings when interacting with students in the classroom using the following scale:

	<b>1</b> Not at all	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Extremely
1. How <i>confident</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How <i>awkward</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How <i>patient</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How <i>uncertain</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How <i>anxious</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How <i>irritated</i> do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

6. To what extent do the following factors limit your effectiveness with international students.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Extremely
1. The amount of diversity in the student population	1	2	3	4	5
2. Language difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of teacher-student communication	1	2	3	4	5
4. Lack of information about cultural differences in teaching and learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Lack of information on effective teaching in multicultural classes.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Inadequate teaching resources.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Classes with large differences in student ability.	1	2	3	4	5

7. The following tasks refer to your work with international students. Please use the following scale to evaluate your performance on the following tasks when working with *International Students*

	1 Poor	2	3 Average	4	5 Excellent
1. Dealing with difficult behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Helping them think critically.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Adjusting your classes to the proper level for them.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Encouraging those who show interest in their studies.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Making your expectations clear about their behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Getting them to believe they can do well in their studies.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Providing an alternative explanation or example when they are confused.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Responding to difficult questions from them.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Gauging their comprehension of what you have taught.	1	2	3	4	5



**3.** Finally, we would like to ask you for your opinions regarding New Zealand policy issues on international students. Please circle the response that best represents your views.

3a. There are over 110,000 international students in New Zealand. Do you think that this number is...? (circle one):

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3b. In the 2004 budget, \$40 million has been allocated for new initiatives in international education over the next four years. Do you think this amount is (circle one):

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Much too low	Too low	About right	Too high	Much too high

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SCALAR RELIABILITY**

Cultural Inclusiveness	.86
Community Contact	.86
Teacher Motivation	.81
Teacher Confidence	.96
Intergroup Anxiety	.81
Accommodative Behaviours	.82
Barriers	.86
Attitudes toward International students	.80
Locus of responsibility	
Student	.68
Institution	.62
Teacher Performance	.86

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND  
INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:  
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Prue Holmes

Waikato Management School  
University of Waikato  
in association with the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research,  
Victoria University of Wellington

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OVERVIEW

This report presents the major findings emerging from a qualitative study of teachers' perceptions of and interactions with international students. From the findings and conclusions, a set of recommendations are suggested. The objectives of the research are:

1. To explore the perceptions, attitudes, and communication experiences of staff who teach in multicultural classrooms;
2. To examine how staff and student attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students in classrooms; and
3. To identify issues of concern for teacher and international student interactions.

### METHODOLOGY

Focus groups were conducted in eight institutions (two university faculties, four secondary schools, and two private English language schools) across three locations. The first location included centres with a high concentration of international students (Auckland and Christchurch); the second location was a centre with a medium concentration of international students (Hamilton); and the third location was a centre with an emerging international student population (Tauranga).

Each of the focus groups had approximately eight participating teachers. Teachers were asked to talk about their perceptions and experiences of, and interactions with international students in the classroom. The focus groups were approximately one and a half hours each. The discussion was recorded and transcribed. The emergent themes form the basis of the findings.

### MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Within the tertiary context, all the teachers shared the view that all students should be treated equally, both in the teaching process and with regard to academic expectations and standards. They also agreed that all students bring strengths and weaknesses to the classroom. A second major expectation was that international students' language skills (along with New Zealand students' in some cases) were not sufficient for their programme of study. There was a need for a greater vetting at entry level, along with ongoing language support programmes during the period of study.

Rapid increases in numbers, for example from China, had required teachers to reassess their teaching styles, particularly the *how* and the *what* of teaching. Many were adapting to the diversity of learning styles as well as having to manage a new intercultural communication dynamic in their classes. Nonetheless, teachers felt that the presence of international students was positive in enriching the learning environment and providing alternative experiences. However, teachers felt pressured by the new research environment that required them to produce research outputs, while at the same time feeling that teaching was consuming more of their time and energy.

Group work provided the greatest challenge for teachers in ensuring that both international and New Zealand students benefited from the interaction. However, teachers concluded that New Zealand students did not take advantage of the presence

of international students in their classrooms. There is a need for further in-depth research to better understand the intercultural communication issues in the multicultural classroom. Teachers would have preferred a greater diversity and balance of numbers across cultures among the student population. Finally, while tertiary teachers demonstrated a willingness to be flexible in their teaching approaches, there is a need for funded teacher education programmes around diversity teaching to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in the multicultural classroom.

Where teaching practices were concerned, teachers emphasised developing academic skills, whereas some international students were concerned mainly with obtaining the qualification at the end of the degree. Teachers were also impressed by the ability of international students to adapt positively to the learning environment over time.

In the secondary school sector, especially in the centres with a high and medium concentration of international students, teachers could not always distinguish between international and permanent resident students. Students from refugee families also added to the mix. Teachers reported that science and maths classes tended to attract students who needed a qualification to enter university, thereby impacting on the demands made of them in their teaching and in the classroom. By contrast, subjects like food technology attracted students who wanted to improve their English or who had come for cultural rather than academic purposes. Like the tertiary teachers, secondary teachers were concerned about English language levels of international students. Teachers reported the need for ongoing and specialised learning support for their students both within and beyond the classroom. Language concerns had been exacerbated more recently by the greater literacy standards required in NCEA examinations, and the examinations' cultural and linguistic nuances peculiar to New Zealand that therefore disadvantaged international students.

Secondary school teachers also reported a high degree of interest and support among New Zealand students towards international students. Teachers from the emerging region noted that socialising appeared to take place in the community more than in the classroom. In the centres with high and medium concentrations of international students, teachers were also able to profit from the multicultural mix in their teaching approaches, for example, in drawing on the languages and learning styles of international students (problem solving approaches, and a positive work ethic). Overall, the teachers demonstrated a concern for international students' learning success as well as for their pastoral care, in practically all cases with little or no prior preparation. They demonstrated extraordinary resourcefulness and exemplary dedication and commitment.

Within the private English language schools, the teachers showed a high commitment to treating all students as individuals, to assisting in their pastoral care (through well-constructed support systems), and to facilitating their adaptation to New Zealand. The learning environment enabled them to draw on the cultural and life experiences of students and incorporate these into the overall international student experience. Teachers felt a greater responsibility to provide what they called "a Kiwi experience." Part of this responsibility included helping international students to adapt to the cultural differences. For example, one Korean student needed help in understanding why he might be offered a condom in Queen St by a health and safety campaigner. Intercultural interaction was encouraged through a constant variation in activities and regroupings. Teachers also extended their commitment beyond the

classroom to helping international students engage with New Zealanders in the community through various cultural, sporting, and social activities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings from the study show the teachers' commitment across all sectors to promoting the cultural, learning, and social experiences of international students while studying in New Zealand. Where tertiary and secondary school teachers were concerned, much of their work was given generously amidst other strong calls on their time. While they requested more support for international students in enabling them to achieve their learning goals, the teachers themselves were uncomplaining and demonstrated a commitment to international students' success. Within secondary and private language schools, this commitment extended to pastoral care. Much of this work was achieved despite lack of preparation or guidance from within their institutions, especially in the tertiary and secondary sectors. There is a need here for further development. While their teaching approaches showed flexibility and encouraged intercultural interactions, much more could be done to promote further intercultural communication, especially among international and New Zealand students.

The following key recommendations emerged, and they are expanded upon in the relevant section of the report:

- Provide greater institutional support for teachers
- Ensure language entry levels are appropriate for the requirements of the study programme
- Provide opportunities for ongoing language and learning development, both within the mainstream and through concurrent and additional support programmes
- In teaching international students, enhance teacher-international student communication through a range of systematic communication strategies
- Enhance intercultural communication among all students in the multicultural classroom
- Develop effective teaching strategies to enhance communication across cultures, including drawing on international students' experiences, broadening the curriculum to be inclusive of international students' experiences, teaching the process as well as the content

Where the export education industry is concerned, the following recommendations emerged within the focus group discussions:

- Promote positive policies (through work and immigration) that facilitate international students' choices for study in New Zealand
- Promote and encourage international student participation in the community and workforce
- Review NCEA to address the way in which it currently disadvantages international students
- Encourage and promote language and culture learning among New Zealand students
- Explore the potential for twinning programmes in attracting international students who have preparation for the new learning and cultural environment

- Better resource teachers through diversity training and through language and learning support programmes to ensure the continued credibility of the Export Education brand

## INTRODUCTION

This study provides a qualitative, in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences with international students in New Zealand secondary, tertiary, and private language institutions. Teachers have an important role to play in facilitating intercultural interaction and fostering intercultural awareness—skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable both New Zealand and international students to participate fully, socially and economically in the community (Ministry of Education, 2005). Thus, this study explores teachers' perceptions of and interactions with international students in this learning context.

In the report, a brief background to classroom learning and communication styles are presented, the aims and objectives of the study are outlined, and the methodology is described. Next, the findings relating to teachers' interactions and perceptions within the tertiary, secondary, and private institutions are presented respectively. Finally, from the conclusions, recommendations and guidelines are suggested for enhancing the teaching experience with international students in the multicultural classroom.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

International students' ability to engage in the communication practices required in New Zealand classrooms is strongly influenced by the socialization and education received in their first culture learning environment. Many of the international students who contribute to the composition of multicultural classrooms in New Zealand come from typically traditional learning contexts where students engage in dialectic communication practices (Hammond & Gao, 2002). In these contexts, communication is constrained by the role of the teacher who is seen to hold both knowledge and power in the classroom; reproduction of knowledge tends to be rewarded in a competitive environment; and students are not expected to engage in communication as part of their learning goals. By contrast, New Zealand classrooms are typically dialogic, encouraging co-construction of learning among students and the teacher and students (Holmes, 2004). Students engage in interaction and group work to solve problems. Thus, students require specific communication skills to be effective and achieve their goals.

A further feature of New Zealand classrooms concerns attitudes to knowledge. Ballard and Clanchy (1991) distinguish between conserving and extending approaches to knowledge. In learning contexts that favour a conserving approach, students are encouraged to memorise and reproduce knowledge; skills such as summarizing, describing and applying formulae and information are encouraged and the aim is on correctness. By contrast, an extending approach to learning encourages the search for new possibilities and explanations. Students are required to speculate and hypothesise, aiming to develop creative originality. Many international students come from Confucian backgrounds where these approaches predominate. Rather than interpret these two models as a simplistic binary, we should view the two divergent approaches in terms of a continuum along which teaching and learning may occur. In the case of New Zealand classrooms, much of the teaching and learning that takes place is characterised by dialogic communication practices and extending approaches to knowledge. Therefore, teachers need to be sensitive towards and understand the challenges these shifts might create for international students, and further, how the roles, relationships, and responsibilities these students have with others, namely,

peers, family, and teachers might be challenged by the new learning environment (Kennedy, 2002). It is thus appropriate to investigate teachers' perceptions of and experiences with international students in the New Zealand educational context.

## **RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This study is part of a wider project that explores interactions with international students. The qualitative approach taken in the study complements the quantitative survey conducted by Ward et al. The two approaches are complementary in that they inform one another's arguments (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Teachers from secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and private language schools have been included in this research.

The research objectives are:

1. To explore the perceptions, attitudes, and communication experiences of staff who teach in multicultural classrooms;
2. To examine how staff and student attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students in classrooms; and
3. To identify issues of concern for teacher and international student interactions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Liaison with key people in four secondary schools, two tertiary institutions, and two private language schools in the four key areas (Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, and Christchurch) took place to set up focus groups with teaching staff. In the centres with high concentrations of international students (Auckland and Christchurch), a secondary school in Auckland and Christchurch, a private language school in Auckland, and a university faculty in Christchurch participated. In the centre with a medium concentration, a secondary school and a university faculty participated. In the centre with a low concentration, a secondary school and a private language school participated. Focus groups took place between October, 2004 and March, 2005. The focus group findings complement the survey of teachers conducted nationally.

### **FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus groups with teachers were chosen as an appropriate method to explore teachers' perceptions of and interactions with international students. Focus group discussions enable a group of participants to engage in socially negotiated interpretations of observed patterns of communication and behaviour (Morgan, 1998). The discussions among participants in focus groups can also reveal much about what is considered to be authentic, appropriate, and salient, as well as enabling the researcher to identify the importance of particular communication and rules for conduct (Collier, 1998). Further, exploring individual accounts within the focus groups allows for multivocality and within-group diversity (Collier, 2001).

Eight focus groups were conducted, one in each of the eight institutions. Each focus group had six to eight participants (teachers), except the private language school in the centre with a low concentration of international students which had only three participants (representing the number of teaching staff at that institution). The focus groups ran from one to one and a half hours. Teachers were asked to discuss their

perceptions and experiences of communicating and working with international students and of managing classroom interaction, the challenges they faced in this process, and the resources they required to be effective teachers.

The focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed. The findings, presented here, are the key themes that emerged from these discussions. They describe teachers' perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and experiences with international students. The findings are presented according to institution: first tertiary, followed by secondary, and finally, private language schools.

## **INTERACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS WITHIN TERTIARY CLASSROOMS**

Two tertiary institutions participated in this research, one in a region with high concentrations of international students, the other, with medium levels. One faculty was chosen from each university, both of which enrol relatively high numbers of international students. The teachers at both institutions were, for the most part, experienced in terms of the years they had worked as teachers.

### **EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

#### **Expectations**

At the tertiary level, teachers in both the high and medium concentration areas for international students felt that all students should be treated equally. All students were believed to have strengths and weaknesses, and the teacher's aim was to teach the students the content of their courses. One teacher made the comment:

They are students and it's my job to teach them and I'll do the best I can to meet their needs. Having said that, I think that having taught just mainly New Zealand students at some points, I actually quite like to have some mix because it just gives some diversity. But the more I'm churning through the different semesters with a lot of Asian students, I mean, I'm seeing the similarities, there's no difference. I'll get people that can write, can't write, cheated, but they can be Asian or they might be New Zealand students.

Another stated:

What I emphasise on is having an open mind and to be able to grasp that there are a number of ways of doing things and that's all it is. I don't think the distinction that because somebody's an international student that there should be different standards for them.

And further, and more vehemently stated:

People have different needs and strengths and it is up to us to help them consolidate their strengths. And where they are weak, it's our duty to try and help them, rather than say that this is a group which needs to be given certain allowances.

A very strong point made by the teachers at the tertiary level involved the standard of students they encountered in their classes. When asked about the optimal number of international students in a class a teacher said: “I would rather have only bright students who were motivated and mature.” This theme was present in both of the focus groups at the tertiary level, where the teacher’s expectations were that all students should be treated equally in terms of academic standard.

Nevertheless, teachers felt that some students, both international and New Zealand, did not have basic skills or understandings, for study at university. Thus, teachers had to deal with this shortfall from the outset. The basic premise of the teachers, particularly among those teachers in the sciences disciplines, was that they should teach the content to the same academic standard every year and students should have adequate thinking and writing levels. However, a teacher of a research and methodology paper acknowledged that students came to her classes with different experiences and abilities and she should accommodate these differences; she explained: “I try to choose appropriate readings and different levels of readings.”

Finally, teachers expressed concerns about students’ language ability on entry into a degree programme. Teachers acknowledged that raising entry standards was unlikely, given that both Australian and New Zealand universities operated under similar standards which to some extent compounded the potential to change. However, they felt that more could be done at the level of their own institutions in vetting students before entry, and in continuing language skill development during their first year of study. Methods they considered appropriate were either through language enrichment specific to the discipline, or through further English language teaching. International students were not given sufficient support under the current system. There was an added perception that institutions and the Government readily accepted their international student fees but were not necessarily prepared to fund ongoing support for their learning once in their institution of study.

### **Perceptions**

A deep-seated perception was that students, again both international and New Zealand, were only interested in gaining the qualification, and not in the work that it takes to receive the qualification. In reference to international students, and in particular, students from China, there was a perception that many students are sent to New Zealand by their parents for an education, so there is an element of parental pressure. The teachers felt that parental pressure was compounded by students’ belief that they had paid a lot of money for a degree and so their qualification was deserved irrespective of the effort they made in their academic work.

### **Increasing numbers of international students**

The increasing numbers of students had impacted on classroom dynamics, particularly in terms of how teachers approached teaching to a large group. Some teachers noted that when there were lower numbers of international students, they tended towards “teaching to the mainstream.” However, they have become increasingly aware of the larger number of international students and the new challenges this presents. One teacher stated that the change in the composition of classes towards a larger number of international students left him with uncertainties about just *what* and *how* he should teach. He was attempting to balance his expectations about and for his students while confronting the process of change as he

moved from classes with a minority of international students to 70 per cent within the space of a few years:

Suddenly you have large classes, large proportions of international students and I'm no longer sure whether or not I'm meant to be giving a pure Western education. . . Their expectations when they come here, the difficulty of working with so many large numbers and to convert them to, what am I meant to convert them? I'm no longer sure I'm meant to be doing that. The only thing I'm sure of in my mind is that, if they want to have a job in a Western-style organization, there are certain things that they must do. So that's the way I gear my classes up . . . at the end of the day if they haven't got a job and a career, then I personally failed and the students feel that as well. So for that reason I tend to stick to my guns.

Some teachers commented that students, in particular those from East and South-east Asia, tended to be very quiet in class and not ask questions. One teacher related this to "cultural differences" in classroom dynamics and teaching and learning styles in China. However, attention also focused on English language proficiency and "Asian" students not feeling confident enough to speak up in class. On the other hand, reference was also made to the fact that sometimes New Zealand students tended not to speak in class if there were large numbers of international students.

Teachers' comments on proportions of numbers varied. There was an overwhelming preference for a multicultural mix which was seen as good for all students' multicultural education and preparation for life and work experience. The emergence of single culture clusters were seen as more problematic. However, one teacher's insights are pertinent to this topic:

This is an odd discussion to me because if I was teaching a class where every student was brilliant and understood what I was saying, I wouldn't care one jot about where they were from . . . You've just got this class of brilliant people from all round the world.

This comment was made in reference to the teaching of technology. The teacher did not comment on the requirement for collaboration and problem solving which requires competent communication skills. In classes that rely on discussion-based teaching and learning, cultural influences begin to impact on students' communication and learning performances, as the teachers in this study have attested.

Where teachers had experienced increasing numbers in their classes, two key challenges emerged. First, teachers felt overwhelmed by the rapid increase in student numbers, particularly from China. The shift had created a tension as to where teachers should allocate their time and energy. On the one hand, they felt the importance to do a good job in their teaching, and on the other, institutional expectations about research performance, exacerbated by the new Performance-based Research Funding (PBRF) initiative, forced them to deliver within the research domain. As one teacher remarked:

I have to be a brilliant administrator, brilliant teacher, and a brilliant researcher. There's just not the time, the energy.

And another commented on this conflict:

You can't expect two really good jobs [teaching and research] out of one person unless you're going to resource them properly.

The consequence of the increasing pressures that internationalisation of classrooms and the current research environment has placed on university teachers is summed up by this female teacher:

A lot of us are burning out . . . and we have to make these hard choices on things that we don't want to do and it goes against our values.

Second, teachers were concerned about maintaining standards to ensure that all students (both international and New Zealand) were receiving a quality education. Teachers felt a responsibility to turn out graduates who were able to perform to the standards and expectations of the workplace. This outcome could only be achieved, teachers felt, if adequate resourcing was given to international students to assist them in their learning.

Teachers' concerns about the current situation led them to speculate on the choices international and New Zealand students might make regarding where they might study. If standards were to drop, and the qualification ceased to be valued externally, then all students might choose to study elsewhere, for example, in the case of international students in Australia; or New Zealand students may choose to study at an institution where there are fewer international students (as already evidenced in some disciplines).

One response to maintaining quality was through increasing involvement in twinning programmes. One institution cited a programme where a few students were sent each year from an institution in South-east Asia. There is an established track record, and the international students already know what to expect. The teacher reported that there was an extra benefit because students came in with greater confidence about succeeding: "They've talked to other people about what it's going to be like when they're here and then gradually they're more interested in developing relationships . . . whereas a lot of other foreign students, they just never seem to form that bond . . . They've got the expectation, they understand the way things operate and they do quite well." The programme has been so successful that a second generation of students from the same family are now coming to the institution. Yet, at the same time, teachers expressed concern about universities recognising equivalency of overseas degrees, whereby overseas students who have passed the first two years of a degree can enter into the third year of a New Zealand degree. The fear expressed was that these students may not be sufficiently prepared.

In conclusion, teachers had high concerns that their institutions should be adequately resourced to ensure quality, and that educational and social support enabling international students to aid their learning and enable them to perform better should be given priority over allocation of international student revenues to the physical infrastructure. This position is aptly expressed by one teacher: "If you want to build a Rolls Royce you have to have the right infrastructure and support and everything else." Similar concerns were also expressed by many of the secondary school teachers.

## **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT INTERACTION**

At the tertiary level interaction between international students and New Zealand students was perceived to be low. Some teachers acknowledged that some members of both groups are more than willing to work with the other, but the overall feeling was that, in general, in-group practices are preferred by both groups. The teachers in one of the faculties reported that group work was a technique they often used to encourage intercultural interaction and a supportive peer environment. Particular emphasis was put on the fact that students need to become accustomed to group work in preparation for the work environment upon graduation. Again, teachers emphasised the equal standing of students and the important contributions of each student in interactions:

I hate the divide between domestic and international students. I think they're all students and as you say they have various skills, needs, work ethics and everything else, and stereotyping people must, I think we perhaps send a message to domestic students that it's okay to stereotype. International students or second language speakers of English are somehow lesser students or weaker students in some way. So they don't actually get through the barrier that these are people, and people who actually have strengths and weaknesses to bring to their group work.

Many of the teachers talked about the reluctance of both international students and New Zealand students to want to engage in group work together; instead, their preference was to work in same-culture groups. Many of the problems revolved around trust and fairness. Teachers gave the following examples: a lack of support among the students; a patchwork approach, where each student completes one section and the sections are just joined together and handed in; communication breakdowns in intercultural groups; and a feeling of security gained by remaining within their own cultural groups. One teacher explained her approach in encouraging students to work in multicultural groups:

It's a matter of just being supportive and trying to build a kind of trust or a relationship where they understand that there's no right or wrong answer or they might actually gain from working together. So when they are interviewing each other, it's learning about each other's experiences rather than there being a right or wrong answer. And they can use pictures as well as their words. I think that helped find [the answer] together.

One teacher explained the responsibility she felt teachers needed to take in supporting all students during the group work process:

I don't think these issues are just around group work and international students and domestic students. They're about how well do we really prepare people for working in groups in the first place, and I think we need to go a step back really in preparing everyone for the demands of group work and giving them really good advice on how to go about it and supporting them as you go through, irrespective of how the groups are made up.

Teachers differed in their views on group composition. Some teachers thought that teacher-assigned groups worked well, while others preferred their students to self-select. Teachers justified student self-selection on the basis that students needed to take responsibility for their learning as preparation for the workforce; they needed to learn how to function in a multicultural world where team work and intercultural interaction are important. Ironically, the multicultural classroom provides a perfect forum for developing these skills. Another suggested that groups worked better if there were more of the “minority group” making up the group. For example, mixed groups functioned better if the “minority” became the “majority.” So groups that had more same-culture international students than New Zealand students, or more females than males (in a male-dominated class) tended to work better.

Overall, teachers at the tertiary level thought that New Zealand students did not take advantage of the presence of international students in their classes; the students did not focus on the fact that they would be working in a multicultural world, and therefore, needed to have a better understanding of others. Some teachers felt that the social benefits of internationalisation were not utilised by New Zealand students. Others found that they had to devise ways to ensure students interacted with one another:

When we have our class discussions or whatever we will look at culture differences a lot of times with the different issues and maybe that's a part of the [curriculum topic] that allows us to do that. What happens in Asia compared to, or the different countries that people are from? How would you be treated or what would be the process? So we do look at those things. At the end of my class, my [topic] class anyway, I say to people okay now it's time to make sure that you have the connections. You've met all these people who have worked together throughout class. Do take peoples' names, get their emails etc. because you don't know when you're going to be in their country or vice versa, or you're going to need that connection. And they do become quite close in that class because they work very closely together in a number of different ways. So I encourage it, even at the very end we take a class picture, we exchange email addresses, those kinds of things which I think is quite important.

Others thought that more diversity might be more beneficial; therefore, students should be recruited from countries other than Asia, and more from South America and Canada. Teachers' comments suggest then an acceptance and acknowledgement of the economic imperative of internationalisation; however, the social imperative was not so well recognised or utilised in classroom interactions, especially among New Zealand students.

## **COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING PRACTICES**

Teachers mentioned the cultural differences in the teaching and learning styles between New Zealand and Chinese students. To encourage the Chinese students to move from a teacher-centred approach to learning and accept responsibility themselves for their own learning, one teacher promoted the notion of “collective ownership” in her class. She introduced the concept gradually by asking the students for feedback about the topics or the course, and step by step, required the students in

learning to take responsibility in the classroom. The teacher experienced some students suggesting that the class look at the Chinese equivalent of industry structure, and the students themselves took the initiative to find and provide some information for the teacher.

It's a collective learning for me so I'm not going to pretend that I know everything; I'm not going to make sure that they, that I'm only going to teach them my way. Well I guess my way is to be interactive and hopefully getting them to come out of their shell.

The mismatch in expectations appeared to be frustrating for teachers as they tried to teach international students both learning methods as well as content. There is also a mismatch in teachers' and international students' expectations about university education. Teachers emphasised teaching students the skills of writing, organising, working in teams. However, the teachers perceived that many students valued only the qualification that came at the end of the degree as an entry into the workforce.

The teachers often made a connection here with the level of maturity among students. They focused not only on international but New Zealand students as well. They attributed differences in effort to cultural differences. For example, in terms of education, China has a highly competitive environment. On the other hand, Chinese students come from one child families where they tend to have everything done for them. However, the teachers acknowledged that these attitudes tended to be overcome as international students adapted to the learning environment. This finding, that with some guidance international students are able to adjust very well to the new environment, is supported in the literature (Ho, Holmes & Cooper 2004; Holmes, 2004).

## **INTERACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS WITHIN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS**

Four secondary schools participated in the focus groups for this research. Two represent regions which have high concentrations of international students, one represents a region of medium concentration, and one represents a region that is emerging in the international education field, and therefore, low numbers of international students are present. Most of the teachers were experienced in regard to the numbers of years they had been teaching; only a few teachers who had taught for less than five years participated.

### **PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The teachers who participated in the focus groups were aware that the focus of this investigation was on international students who are Full Fee-Paying (FFP) students. Yet, they pointed out that many of the issues regarding international students also applied to Permanent Resident (PR) students, especially those who had arrived only recently with their families. Unlike international students who usually do not come to New Zealand with their families, these PR students had family support at home. However, PR students shared similarities with international students in that they also faced difficulties with English proficiency, and cultural differences in the

classroom environment and in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the schools also had students from refugee backgrounds. While these students may find themselves in classrooms, or even schools, with no other students from a similar background, international students can usually find another classmate who comes from the same or similar cultural and linguistic background.

Teachers' concerns for all of these students were greater at the secondary school level than the tertiary level, perhaps attributable to secondary school teachers' closer and more frequent contact with their students and smaller class sizes compared to their tertiary level counterparts. Teachers at both levels also pointed out that they did not necessarily know whether a student was an international or a PR student.

### **Expectations**

Like the teachers at the tertiary level, many secondary school teachers felt that *all* students should be treated equally. Therefore, teachers' expectations were the same for both international and New Zealand students. However, at the secondary school level the teachers needed to take into consideration the international students' experiences and expectations of their educational sojourn while in New Zealand. For instance, the teachers recognised that some of the international students, especially those who were exchange students, tended to be in New Zealand primarily to learn English and to learn about the cultural and social life of New Zealand, rather than primarily for academic purposes. Mostly, the teachers were happy to have these students in their classes because of the social and cultural contribution, as long as they were not disruptive to the rest of the class who needed to focus on gaining qualifications. In particular, the Brazilian students were perceived to be very social and the German students were thought to be very focused on their academic studies while experiencing life in New Zealand. As far as expectations of the students went, the teachers had to find out individually what the students wanted out of their time in New Zealand. One teacher commented:

You have to talk with the students who come into your class each year to find out what, I don't know about you, but I've never had any written reports on what these kids have or what they are expecting to do, um, it's only when you talk with them. I had a student last year who was regarded as somewhat autistic. I found he wasn't actually, he was just shy, and he understood perfectly well what was happening, but he said "Miss, I have a position in, named the university in Japan for economics, I am simply here to get my English better," and that was it.

A key difference emerges here between tertiary and secondary school teachers. Secondary school teachers have more opportunities to get to know their students in classes that are much smaller and are held more frequently. Talking to students is important in finding out what their needs and expectations are, and therefore, how they can be helped in the learning process. This outcome can have a huge benefit in helping international students to feel like they belong and are valued, as well as provide the support that enables them to overcome learning and intercultural communication barriers.

The subjects that the students were studying were also significant. For example, science and mathematics subjects tended to attract students who were aiming to gain a qualification that provided entry to university, whereas classes such

as food technology attracted students looking for a social experience, perhaps trying out subjects that are new to them, while practicing and improving their English.

Some secondary school teachers were concerned about the “quality” of international students that were now coming to New Zealand. In the past, international students were perceived as being “top” students, whereas more recently teachers perceive them as “more ordinary.” Teachers reported that they now had to deal with language and discipline issues with international students. The most common topic associated with quality appeared to be English language proficiency which teachers perceived as declining:

From a historical point of view, I know, not in my subject but in physics in particular, many fee-paying students have gone into physics classes in the last five or six years, and have just been unable to participate in the class for most of the year because their language skills have been insufficient to cope. And therefore, you don't even know how capable they are, they're not able to show you what their abilities have been, it's not my subject teaching area, so I'm recording that anecdotally I guess.

Another stated:

It would be fantastic if they could reach some level of competency before they arrived. It's really, really hard when they come in with absolutely no language skills at all in English and it's, I'm sure they're bright, but they can't participate for months until they've got some language that's been developed.

Further, one teacher felt the responsibility owed to the family as well as the student. She opined that parents expected that their child would receive an excellent education, not acknowledging the impact of the language barrier, but expecting the school to resolve the problem: “We don't address it, and I think we are letting the kids and parents down.” Teachers also commented that language proficiency impacted on the rate at which the class progressed through the course material and the time that teachers were able to offer to individual students.

Teachers raised concerns about international students' quality of language in relation to assessment, in particular, the greater standards of literacy required by the NCEA examinations. Currently, examination questions, even those within science and maths, are set within a written context, one that can be challenging for international students unfamiliar with the cultural and linguistic nuances of New Zealand. One teacher explained the challenge: “It used to be knowledge recall, but the whole idea of NCEA is to explain and discuss, which disadvantages kids who don't have an English background.”

A further concern was expressed over NCEA. The teachers at one school noticed that parents were asking if the school presented students for the Cambridge examinations, perhaps, according to one teacher, because those examinations held more credibility in the parents' eyes than NCEA. The teachers perceived that because the school did not offer the Cambridge examinations, parents chose not to enrol their child.

## **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT INTERACTION**

Teachers at the secondary school level in the medium and high regions reported that New Zealand students are mostly very supportive of and interested in their fellow students who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The teachers in one of the focus groups put this down to the fact that teenagers can usually find something they have in common with each other, whether it is music or clothes or cars. Three of the secondary schools had high levels of diversity and the multicultural mix was highly valued and appreciated by students and teachers alike.

To promote intercultural understanding and awareness, one school developed a race relations week. The purpose was to encourage people to be confident with their own culture, to express it, to feel safe within it, and also to allow others to experience and take away from it what they want. This programme, was seen as important in developing cultural awareness, for all students and teachers, across the wide range of cultures present in the school.

One teacher qualified the nature of the interaction with reference to Chinese students:

If they're serious about what they are doing, they can actually make a lot of progress, as long as they don't keep in their little wee cliques and just chat away in Mandarin and Cantonese or whatever all the time at interval, and at lunchtime. If they can try and get assimilated into our culture so their English actually does improve, it's vital, it's absolutely vital.

Yet, another teacher from the same group qualified the contribution the Asian international students made in promoting a positive work ethic to New Zealand students in particular.

In the emerging region, however, students' interaction inside the classroom was much less evident, although the teachers thought that interaction did happen outside of the classroom to some degree, primarily through social events such as parties or sports activities. Other studies have suggested that interaction between New Zealand students and international students is reported to be low (Ho, Holmes & Cooper 2004; Holmes & Bird, 2002; Ward & Masgoret, 2003). Further research is required to establish the nature and level of interaction among New Zealand and international students.

## **COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING PRACTICES**

In one school, where there is a medium concentration of international students, the teachers reported the school as being very multicultural, with many PR and international students. The teachers were very positive about how students interacted with one another and the enthusiasm this generated. They believed that everybody was quite used to the multicultural mix. One teacher reported how the multicultural mix influenced her teaching practices:

I actually had nine different languages that were first languages in that science class. We only did one topic which was like electricity, and we were introducing circuit symbols to get over the point that the symbol was the same in any language. We had all the different, nine different languages up on the board and just the term electricity and we had all the different variations of it, the different languages, and I think it helped the

kids appreciate the different cultures and you know where everybody was coming from, and that was really positive, that was a positive lesson, yeah and it got across the point of symbols, but the other students got an appreciation of each other.

The multicultural mix, already present in the school, seems to have aided the adaptation and intercultural communication of both New Zealand and international students. A similar situation was reported by another teacher in a centre with a high concentration of international students. In the following episode, the teacher focuses on the learning benefits for New Zealand students in having a multicultural mix:

I also see um, quite a lot of group co-operative activities and having to get a white middle class New Zealand kid to explain the concept to someone who doesn't have a good grasp of English really challenges them, so it gives those kids a good challenge in terms of verbalising their understanding [in] two or three different ways to reach this other person in the group.

Both of these situations indicate that teaching practices encouraged positive intercultural relations between the groups.

In some instances, the international students themselves, through their preferences for interactions with New Zealand students, determined their class structure. A teacher in a school with a high concentration of international students reported that the school held science classes at senior level for international students, but then stopped them because the international students did not want to be in a class with other international students, instead preferring to mix with New Zealand students and speak with them in English. Ironically, the students performed better academically in the international class than they did in mainstream classes: "You could teach a certain style of teaching and it worked beautifully, and they could question you and could take longer on things and then the others wouldn't be getting frustrated." However, the school felt obliged to respond to the preferences of the international students and their parents and cancelled the programme. Another school had widened course options so that each subject might have three or four different levels at which it is taught to accommodate students of different abilities.

Where teaching styles were concerned, the presence of international students appeared to bring to the fore teachers' skills in adapting their teaching to meet all students' needs. One teacher commented that even where New Zealand students were concerned, they had different learning styles, which had to be accommodated. Instead, the teacher attributed differences to cultural experiences, their backgrounds, and their English language needs. Teachers appeared to be resourceful in managing all students in the multicultural learning environment. For example, one teacher discussed the importance of changing seating plans to ensure that the students mixed. Another commented on the need to ensure that in pairing students, communication breakdowns were minimized in case students began to "start hating each other." Another teacher explained how he capitalized on international students' approaches to problem solving so that the other students could learn another approach:

The Asian kids approach problem solving in quite a different way, its actually quite refreshing to hear, to see different ways of doing things . . . I get volunteers to put their methods on the board . . . you've got three or

four different ways to achieve the same thing, . . . so if they don't get my way, they might get someone else's way.

The commitment teachers showed to international students was overwhelmingly positive in the focus groups. Teachers reported spending much extra time, during breaks and after school, in helping international students to understand. They appeared to give their time willingly because they wanted to help their students to succeed. Teachers reported that international students often asked for extra help to understand after the class, and therefore, teachers gave their assistance. Not one teacher complained of the extra time international students were taking from them, time which they might normally need for preparation and marking of class work. Teachers also reported challenges in dividing up their time among the students in their classes, especially where some international students required large amounts of the teacher's time to understand a concept. At that point, the teacher expressed frustration and inadequacy at not being able to either help the student understand or meet the needs of all the other students in the class.

The number of international students in the schools was much lower than at tertiary level, usually around five to seven percent, although one physics teacher reported having 50 per cent international students in her physics class one year ago. In the centres with high and medium concentrations of international students, the demands coming from the classroom diversity were heightened by the presence of PR students and refugees. As one teacher remarked, "They don't go around with a tag." On the whole, teachers welcomed the possibility of greater support in their role. Many spoke of the need to reduce class sizes (down to 17 to 20) as they faced greater numbers of international students in their classes. A further possibility was to better use the physical and teaching resources in schools with dwindling school rolls. Further, teachers did not necessarily have access to student files to know their profile or understand their needs. This lack of access to information was seen as a disadvantage. Teachers also welcomed more teaching support in the classroom, not necessarily by employing more teacher aides, whom they saw as exploited and in some instances under-qualified to perform the required tasks, but by offering ESOL support both in the classroom and as follow up after class. However, they opined that schools were not adequately funded to enable this to happen. Their greatest fear appeared to be that international students were not having their needs met. This fear was most strongly expressed by a teacher from the centre with a low concentration of international students: "Make sure they get a good deal because they will go back home as ambassadors for our country having been here. I do feel that we short change quite a few of them."

Finally, many teachers felt they had little or no preparation, so it was a case of "sink or swim." Their resourcefulness was extraordinary and their dedication and commitment exemplary.

Overall, the secondary school teachers in this study were adamant that the presence of international students in their schools had resulted in positive experiences for everybody. While the language difficulties experienced by international students sometimes slowed class progress, the benefits outweighed this shortcoming. International students brought different life experiences, languages, a positive work ethic, and different methods of solving problems, thereby exposing New Zealand students to a wider range of ways of thinking and opportunities to broaden their horizons.

## **INTERACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS WITHIN PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS**

Two private language schools participated in a focus group each in this part of the investigation. One language school, reasonably large, was located in a region with a high concentration of international students. The second institution was a private language school in a region where there was a low concentration of international students. The school, like others in the region, was very small. The teachers had been teaching across a range of years, with one being in the first year of teaching, while others had had teaching experiences abroad and in other sectors, including secondary schools. One participant had been a primary school teacher. Most had taught for four or more years.

### **PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES OF STAFF WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

#### **Expectations**

Like the teachers in the tertiary and secondary sectors, the teachers all commented on the need to treat international students as individuals: “You have to take each student as that student comes to you, and it would be different for every student.”

Another stated:

I don't think you can make a generalisation about how they all feel cause they are all different people, and they all have totally different ideas about what they expect from New Zealand, what they expect from their schools, and they all have different experiences as well. So some of them have a fabulous time, and some of them have a stink time, but it's not, I mean, it's all about them.

However, teachers' experiences, perceptions, and expectations differed from teachers in the other two sectors because they taught solely international students. The larger school had as many as 20 different nationalities at any one time, providing a multicultural communication experience for the students. The teachers capitalised on this diversity and encouraged international students to mix within the classes. By contrast, the smaller school had contracts with small institutions abroad, so groups of students tended to come from the same place, thus resulting in a much more limited intercultural mix within the classroom.

Where language use was concerned, both schools encouraged students to speak English at all times. One teacher reported her sense of achievement when a Chinese student announced at his graduation that he had not used one word of Chinese in the entire year he had been in New Zealand.

#### **Attitudes**

Teachers showed warmth, caring, and respect for the students they were teaching. In part, this was due to their livelihood depending on them. As one teacher commented: “Most people in this industry are really positive about the students, this

is their bread and butter.” Teachers commented that since students were monitored and given progress tests, the students therefore recognised that teachers’ expectations of their performance and success were high. This attitude extended beyond the classroom to socialising, especially in the school where there was a high concentration of international students. The teachers’ attitudes were also apparent in the support systems their schools had in place. The larger of the two schools had a separate pastoral care support network, whereas the head of the smaller school was primarily responsible for that role. Yet the teachers integrated students’ social welfare into classroom discussion and activities where appropriate in both schools.

Unlike the tertiary and secondary sector, the students in private English language schools had little, if any, opportunities to mix with New Zealand students. The teachers, therefore, used teaching strategies that facilitated intercultural learning experiences and adaptation to the host environment to try and address this gap.

Teachers’ commitment to the well-being of their students was high. In the centre with a high concentration of international students, teachers commented that competition in the industry had resulted in students’ expectations of the schools’ offerings being much higher. Students’ expectations included not just learning English in the classroom, but an entertainment package, and for some, a desire to have a “Kiwi” experience. Part of that experience was gained through homestays. However, the teachers extended their commitment beyond the classroom to socialising with the students, and organizing evening functions and day trips. Encouraging them to engage outside of the classroom appeared to go with the job. As one teacher concluded: “Teachers here are pretty generous with their time.”

A further aspect of the teachers’ commitment was their willingness to engage in pastoral care. Teachers reported the importance of listening to students, “going beyond the grammar,” and finding out what is going on in their lives. In this way, teachers were able to check that students were happy in home environment. Teachers were also able to instruct them in the language they would need for survival in the environment.

### **Challenges**

A major challenge the teachers faced was getting students motivated to engage in the classroom:

Trying to get those people motivated and engaged in challenging topics like that with somebody that’s got totally different ideas to them is often quite daunting for them , but in the end they really enjoy it, it’s just that initial kind of scared of being away from home thing, I guess.

Another teacher stated:

It’s a learning thing for the students, a challenge for them to sort of step out of where they’ve come from, out of those shoes and think so that’s how other people think....Yeah, a challenge to get them to think and then to say what they think.

A second challenge is to encourage the students to enjoy their community, to go out and do things. Teachers would encourage the students to engage in the local attractions and sometimes arrange visits to these attractions. They also organised social events such as pub nights and parties and attended them with the students. Part

of this experience included encouraging students to make friends with New Zealanders and start talking to them, a challenge for international students. This practice was made worse by racist episodes students frequently encountered. Teachers were instrumental in helping students to deal with these, even where it meant encouraging students to report attacks to the police. Teachers spoke of a number of examples where students had been the victims of racial abuse, assault, and deprivation of services. Teachers helped students to understand their rights in these situations and the need to report the attacks to the police.

Ensuring that international students were happy in their home environments also appeared to be part of their job. The larger school had same-language counsellors who were able to monitor students' well-being. However, teachers also took an active role here by responding to the moods of their students. The teachers acknowledged that the homestay experience had a huge impact on students' happiness, and they, the teachers, were pivotal in ensuring that this unhappiness does not go unrecognised and is dealt with:

The most important thing is [that] the students actually talk to someone, whether it be their counsellor, or their teacher, or someone, that they are having problems in their homestay or at school. That is really important.... I find just recently, when a student is definitely not happy in their sort of homestay life, but actually they don't want to complain because its not their culture to complain. And I actually overheard a conversation and being interested, I said, "Hey, you know what's going on, tell me what's happening." "Oh, no, don't don't say anything, don't say anything."

Therefore, teachers wanted to ensure that students were happy in their homestay experience. One teacher summed up its importance: "The students change in their whole demeanour when their homestay is good...to see them moping around and think something's wrong, change the homestay and they suddenly liven up, they're cheerful."

## **COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING PRACTICES**

Teachers encouraged intercultural communication among the students through a range of teaching strategies: English was the *lingua franca* in the school; the composition of classes was changed from time to time; students with higher English language levels are encouraged to talk to students at lower levels; shy students are encouraged to speak up, and females to interact with males; clusters of ethnic groups were broken up; and students from cultures encouraged to communicate, for example, a Chinese and a Japanese, who would not readily mix. School rules also helped in this process, for example, students had to work with a different partner every day, and they were not allowed to sit next to someone of the same nationality. Teachers value these teaching practices because they were able to see a growth in the students—in their life skills, independence, and personal confidence.

The teachers also played an important role in teaching the essential life skills that enabled students to survive. For example, teachers helped students over immigration issues and making phone calls related to their living arrangements by suggesting what they might say; they also sat next to them to assist if they got stuck. Teachers also brought instruction into the classroom around the topics of driving

safely in New Zealand, water safety, and how to cross the road. However, the teachers' approach was to encourage autonomy, rather than dependency. Many of the teachers, having lived in a foreign country themselves, were able to empathise with the students, and therefore, help them to overcome these challenges.

A second role teachers performed in the class was in helping international students to understand cultural and attitudinal differences. For example, a teacher explained the cultural challenge a Korean student faced in coming face to face with a contraception campaign in the street:

It's a cultural challenge, I mean, even a Korean student, yesterday, he came in to the library and he'd been given that ad campaign "No rubber, no hubba-hubba." And he came in and he was going "what's this hubba-hubba" to me, you know, "I was holding this condom," he couldn't believe it, he thought it was really bad that someone had given him a condom in the street, and I said "oh no, you know its useful information you know. You don't wear a rubber, there'll be no hubba-hubba." Yeah, yeah. He wasn't convinced.

The teachers felt that these life experiences, exemplified by such exchanges in the street, performed a valuable part of the international student experience. Students were introduced to new ideas and different ways of thinking, resulting in students being more open-minded on departure.

Overall, the discussion in the two focus groups with teachers in private language schools showed their commitment to their students, first as students, and then as individuals seeking to gain a positive life experience in another country. Their students were all international students who, in many cases, were seeking to improve their English rather than prepare for a New Zealand qualification. Therefore, teachers were not constrained by the inflexibility of a national curriculum and assessment. Engaging with the students in their daily lives also resulted in teachers gaining deeper insights into the experiences of international students and thus being in a better position to support their learning and life experience in New Zealand.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the focus groups across tertiary and secondary institutions, and private language schools suggest that teachers have positive perceptions and experiences of international students in the classroom context. Among the private language schools, the contact with international students appeared to be more extensive, with teachers also engaging in the well-being of these students.

The teachers in the secondary and tertiary sectors valued the opportunities provided by the presence of international students in the classroom because they made learning interesting for all and provided a richer, more complex social environment. None wanted to return to pre-international student days. They also demonstrated their commitment to teaching in that they were willing to teach all students in their classrooms—international, or otherwise. The tertiary teachers noted the successful adaptation international students made to the learning environment. However, within the tertiary sector, teachers voiced their concern at having to balance the research requirement with the increased time commitment created by the presence of a rapid increase in international student numbers, particularly in the case of Chinese students. The mismatch between international students' language abilities and the requirements

of the programme of study created ongoing tensions, including the need for greater language support. Much of the teachers' commitment came from a self-motivation and desire to see all their students succeed and flourish. Above all, teachers felt that the value of internationalisation was not sufficiently appreciated in the learning environment, especially among New Zealand students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICE**

In developing best practice guidelines, attention is given to the nature of teacher-student and student-student interactions, the types of teaching practices employed and their effectiveness in promoting intercultural interaction, and curriculum choices and teaching strategies in facilitating classroom interaction across cultures, as well as implications for the export education industry. The guidelines that follow are suggestions that have emerged partly from the teachers themselves in this study, but also from the international literature on international student teaching and learning. They are not intended to be prescriptive or regulatory; some may be inappropriate given the context and purpose of the institution, and the nature of the international student environment where learning is taking place. They are merely intended as possibilities for future directions and/or finding a way forward. Many of these guidelines have already been included in a report to which this author contributed.<sup>1</sup> The guidelines are designed to help teachers in secondary, tertiary and private institutions to develop effective teaching, learning, and communication strategies that assist not only international students, but all students in the multicultural classroom.

A further consideration is that the suggested guidelines take a "difference" rather than a "deficit" approach. Teachers, and all students in the classroom, base their conceptions of teaching, learning, and communication on their culturally-based socialisation and educational processes. Rather than identifying differences as either right or wrong, or good or bad, the challenge in teaching international students is to recognise and value the differences and build on them for the benefit of all students.

### **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS**

Secondary school and tertiary teachers faced the challenge of teaching to all students with a range of abilities and language levels. Where international students were concerned, teachers commented that, in some cases, international students' language levels were insufficient for curriculum requirements. In the tertiary sector, the rapid increase in international student numbers had in some instances exacerbated this situation, particularly where international students from the same language and culture base are clustered. The following recommendations emerged:

- Have an institutional policy on and practice of a multiethnic mix to ensure a balance across a range of ethnic groups; ensure there is a person to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and practice; include teachers and support staff in the process of change; and ensure that programmes are sufficiently flexible to respond to changes

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<sup>1</sup> Ho, E., Holmes, P., & Cooper, J. (2005). *Review and evaluation of international literature on managing cultural diversity in the classroom*. Report prepared for the Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand, 15 December, Wellington, New Zealand.

- Make explicit the institution's responsibilities to all, including international students
- Provide sufficient preparation and support to teachers for teaching and communicating in multicultural classrooms, including intercultural training, and teaching and learning in bilingual and English as an additional language (EAL) contexts
- Ensure that the institution has a sufficiently staffed support programme in place that covers learning, socialisation within the institution and within the community, counselling services, and accommodation support
- Provide orientation programmes for both international and New Zealand students together; include instruction on intercultural communication and differences in learning and communicating in different learning contexts to prepare all students for difference in the multicultural classroom.

## **LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

Language problems often mask mismatches in teaching and learning as EAL students try to assimilate new attitudes to knowledge, new approaches to learning, and a different communication style in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of their own talk so they are not privileging those who are already cognisant of the language structures of the academic classroom. However, the role of language support must also be acknowledged once international students are placed in programmes of study.

- Ensure that English language requirements are set at appropriate levels to enable international students to achieve
- Make explicit the academic English necessary for EAL students to succeed, particularly since the English language requirements of institutions do not always reflect the level of English language competence required
- Provide the communication strategies required in problem solving tasks, and in managing group work processes (for example, students may need help in assigning tasks, negotiating responsibilities, preparing the manuscript or presentation, and resolving their difficulties)
- Actively foster links between students' first language and English, a process that facilitates rather than detracts from the learning of English (May, 2002)
- Provide opportunities for ongoing language and learning developments (for example, through a wide range of EAL programmes, tutor support, within the mainstream classroom, and through informal conversation classes at lunchtimes with local students)

## **ENHANCING TEACHER-INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNICATION**

The following strategies, some of which come from Ryan (2000) may be helpful in improving communication between the teacher and students.

- Monitor teacher language by avoiding idiomatic and colloquial language; use literal and unambiguous language; define technical terms (more than once and in different ways, and provide contexts for its use)

- Respect cultural and religious practices and beliefs; recognise the heterogeneity of international students and multifaceted characteristics of individuals; respond to racist remarks and make it clear that they are not tolerated
- Provide opportunities for students to speak in class; pause and allow time for thinking and organizing language; avoid finishing the sentence for students; if students are struggling, suggest words or phrases, but let them complete what they want to say
- When checking for comprehension, avoid questions like “Has everyone understood:” which implies that they should have; instead, try questions such as “Is there anything that is still unclear?” or “Have I explained that well enough?” or “One or two areas may still be unclear” or “Any questions?”
- Recognise and accept that using students’ first language can assist them in acquiring the academic English of the classroom; it may also provide a relief device; at the same time, try to find ways of encouraging the use of English by finding other ways of saying something
- Give students prior warning that they will be required to speak in class so they have time to prepare what they will say; ask students to work in pairs so they can assist one another to report to the class
- Be tolerant of EAL students speaking their own language in class (where appropriate/necessary) and in social groups on campus
- Recognise that some cultures value silence; some students may see the communication that takes place in the dialogic classroom as unnecessary time being wasted in prolonged discussion; they may also consider that New Zealand students ask too many and unnecessary questions at times; remind students of the purpose of the discussion and how discussion is an important process or stage in arriving at the learning outcome
- Listen to what international students say about what is going on in their lives beyond the curriculum

### **ENHANCING STUDENT COMMUNICATION IN THE MULTI-CULTURAL CLASSROOM**

Recognising and managing cultural difference at the individual level is critical for successful communication with international students in the classroom. The following strategies encourage all students, including international students, to question and challenge their own assumptions about communication in the classroom and how learning occurs.

- Encourage all students, particularly international students, to talk about themselves, their family, and their home town so that all students know something about one another; this strategy may help New Zealand students overcome their shyness in talking to international students; ask them to articulate their feelings about entering a new culture, or about meeting people from a culture new to them. What was strange/unexpected/new/different?
- Assign information gathering tasks that require students to find out about each other or collaborate; international students need to feel included and be on an equal footing with New Zealand students

- When introducing a new task, ask all students to reflect upon how learning might occur, what expectations they might have of the teacher and of one another, and the nature of the interaction they will be required to engage in and with whom
- Encourage the mixing of all students as much as possible as new tasks are introduced
- Preserve harmony as much as possible in the classroom to avoid students losing face; try to provide feedback in a way that does not cause loss of face; similarly, be aware that international students will not want the teacher to lose face and may therefore be reluctant to question what teachers tell them or ask them to do
- Use multicultural groups for a variety of purposes—in-class groups for discussion or assignments, homework groups, problem-solving groups, study groups
- Vary group assignment methods from random assignment (for example, name out of a hat) to self-selection (to capitalise on co-operative learning strategies and trust); the latter strategy should be used sparingly to avoid reinforcing social group differences
- Address assumptions students might make about who they need in the group by reminding students that each individual brings a different combination of strengths and weaknesses
- Give students roles within the group and encourage them to rotate roles (for example, observer, encourager, summariser, notetaker/recorder, reporter); pay attention to process issues—how well the group is working together in progressing towards the learning outcome
- Assist students in providing feedback to one another; encourage them to have process meetings where they discuss what is working well and what group processes need to be improved; remind students to focus on specific group behaviours, such as meeting a group deadline, rather than on individuals' behaviours;
- Inform students that the teacher is available to help work through group processes where group members are unable to resolve the problem
- Encourage international and New Zealand students to exchange names and (email) addresses, and take a class picture, to encourage future collaboration in the workforce
- Conduct further in-depth research to better understand the intercultural communication that takes place between international and New Zealand students

### **DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURES**

The strategies for creating a culturally responsive classroom where international students are present has been outlined in detail in Ho, Holmes, and Cooper (2004). Readers are directed to the section “Creating a culturally responsive classroom” (pp. 68-71) for details beyond the main points highlighted below.

- Draw on the expertise of international students, where appropriate and in an inclusive manner; just as New Zealand students may perform support/assistant

roles, act as mentors, tutors, and providers of learning support, so might international students

- Set up informal learning and social support networks among international and New Zealand students
- Ensure that course content covers multiple voices and perspectives
- Question prior assumptions (as a teacher) about teaching and learning approaches and students' identities
- Plan to promote cultural inclusion
- Gain a knowledge of student backgrounds
- Examine teacher decisions, comments, and behaviour during the teaching process

Further strategies to help teachers deal with differences in communication and learning styles are highlighted below. Readers are directed to Ho, Holmes, and Cooper (pp. 72-79) for a deeper discussion of strategies for responding to mismatches in expectations and assumptions on the part of both teachers and international students.

- Provide a clear structure to the content (course design, lecture/tutorial/lesson); provide objectives, an introduction, internal summaries, a conclusions, a review of the important points learned in the lesson, and a preview of the next lesson
- Teach the skills of critical thinking and how you expect students to respond to a reading, concept, theory, case study, etc.
- Make learning outcomes and teacher expectations clear
- Focus on the process (the how) as well as on the content (the what)
- Provide guidelines or scaffolding (an outline of the content and the process)
- Model appropriate behaviour through daily teaching practice
- Ensure that international students are informed about and understand what plagiarism is; teach the rules and conventions of referencing; teach the processes of paraphrasing, synthesizing information from a wide range of sources, and weaving the ideas/words of others into students' own writing
- Make explicit the rules and conventions of referencing

Where assessment is concerned, the following strategies are suggested:

- Examine prior assumptions and expectations about assessment tasks
- Analyse the appropriateness of the tasks being set
- Help students to succeed (by helping students through the process of developing a written answer)
- Provide clear, explicit, and fair criteria
- Provide adequate, timely, and helpful feedback
- Set examinations to accommodate diverse students' needs

Where writing is concerned, Ballard and Clanchy (1997) remind teachers of their responsibility in teaching students how to write in their discipline. The onus should not be singularly on the language or support teacher, but on the subject teacher to find ways of transmitting to *all* students the message for good writing or good performance in any task.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EXPORT EDUCATION INDUSTRY**

The following recommendations emerged from the focus groups as a reflection of where teachers see their place in relation to the development of the industry. While some of the teachers' reflections do not necessarily impact directly on classroom practice, the implications of these recommendations impact directly on international students' learning experience and performance within their chosen programme of study and their experiences as international students while studying and living in New Zealand. Therefore, the recommendations have been included here.

- Broaden work visas so that international students have greater opportunities to engage in paid work in the community and undertake holiday jobs
- Expedite the process of extending visas to facilitate international students remaining longer in New Zealand, thereby enabling them to capitalise on their educational experience beyond the learning institution and to follow pathways to further education more easily
- Provide more positive stories for the media on the lives of international students in New Zealand
- Develop greater exposure to and better quality programmes on, for example, water safety and driving to teach international students about living safely in New Zealand
- Market the hospitality industry better to international students and their families; improve service to international students in these contexts
- Promote the presence and contributions of international students more in the community; encourage international student participation in the workforce and in volunteer organisations
- Ensure that there are national standards for entry into NZQA authorised programmes; in some cases, this may require some kind of standardised national curriculum to ensure that international students have acquired the appropriate level of English and followed the appropriate pathway to enter into such programmes
- Monitor English language entry levels into academic programmes—through interviewing or written tasks—to better evaluate international student preparation to undertake the programme of study; there is a feeling, especially at tertiary level, that the IELTS test is not sufficiently robust, or the level of entry is too low, especially for tertiary studies
- Review the current NCEA programme to accommodate international students; currently, it disadvantages them
- More closely monitor and evaluate how the revenue from international students is allocated within institutions, for example, towards providing international students with improved access to learning and social support
- Beyond promotion on the industry's Web site, provide greater support for smaller private educational providers (such as language schools) in marketing their programmes abroad (e.g., at international fairs); encourage more co-ordination within the industry and among Education New Zealand regional branches in the co-ordination of marketing
- Explore the value and success of twinning programmes with overseas institutions in preparing international students for mid-entry secondary and tertiary programmes

- Encourage and promote language learning among New Zealand students to enable them to gain improved understanding of language and culture differences as preparation for multicultural education
- Ensure that governmental responsibility for attracting international students through the Export Education brand is followed up with adequate resourcing within the programmes of study in institutions; this strategy is seen as necessary to ensure the value and survival of the brand in the long term
- Fund teacher education around diversity teaching, especially at the tertiary level, to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in the multicultural classroom.
- Conduct in-depth qualitative research on the nature of New Zealand and international student interactions to better understand the processes that promote intercultural interaction.

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## APPENDIX

### Teacher interview protocol

(Time required: 1 hour 30 mins to 2 hours)

#### A. Introduction

(10-15 minutes)

1. Introduce self, topic of discussion, thank participants for coming,
2. Privacy issues/ethics, their opinions and impressions are important. Sign ethical approval form. Tape recording/transcription.
3. Ground rules – it's okay to disagree with each other; we all have different experiences; one person talking at a time
4. Introduce selves; name, subject discipline, length of time teaching; interests outside of teaching

#### B. Individual reflection

##### General background – An imaginary scenario (story telling)

(30 minutes)

Now we are going to imagine a teacher who is teaching international students. We are going to find out now about this teacher who is teaching international students. You may draw on your own personal experience, or the experience of someone else you have talked to.

Write down your responses to these questions. Then we will each tell our stories.

1. How does the teacher feel about teaching international students?
2. What expectations would the teacher have of all the different students in the class?
3. What challenges does the teacher face?

#### C. Group discussion

(45 minutes)

This section focuses on teachers' experiences in managing interactions in the classroom.

4. How does the teacher manage interactions among NZ and international students in the classroom?
  - How does the teacher get students to work together successfully?
  - Are there any communication breakdowns? Give examples?
  - How does the teacher deal with those kinds of issues?
  -
5. What kinds of expectations of performance does the teacher have of international students in the classroom?
  - Does the teacher expect them to do the same as the other students?

- Does the teacher sometimes set tasks that international students can't do? What preparation might be useful in these situations?
  - How does the teacher respond when expectations aren't met?
6. Does the reality match the teacher's expectations?
  7. What resources do you need to support you?
  8. What areas of concern do you have?

#### **D. Conclusion**

(15 minutes)

If you had your two minutes of fame, and you could meet with the Ministry of Education, based on what we've talked about, what key things/ideas would you say that would make a difference for you?

Is there anything else you want to say?

#### **E. Closing the focus group**

(5 minutes)

Thank the participants for their time. Explain that they are one of eight focus groups who teach international students to be interviewed. Explain that the interviews will be written up into a report that will be part of a larger study of interactions with international students. These findings will be made available to the institution as a summary of findings emerging from the focus groups.

**PART II : INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE  
COMMUNITY**

**NEW ZEALANDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND  
INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Colleen Ward & Anne-Marie Masgoret

School of Psychology and  
Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research  
Victoria University of Wellington

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The report summarises the major findings of the A6- Interactions with International Students project funded by the Export Education Levy and administered by Education New Zealand. This component covers the survey research with the New Zealand public. The objectives of the research are:

1. to assess the overall attitudes toward and perceptions of international students in New Zealand,
2. to examine the quality and quantity of New Zealanders' exposure to and/or interactions with international students, and
3. to examine how attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students and as a function of demographic characteristics of New Zealanders (e.g., age, gender, SES)

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research participants included 526 respondents (276 females and 238 males) drawn from households across New Zealand. The majority of respondents were New Zealand European (78%), but the sample also included Maori, Pasifika and Asians. The bulk of the participants were in the 36-55 age range. Three-quarters were in paid employment and 30% had a university degree.

The research was conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interview. Participants completed an anonymous survey that examined: personal background information; multicultural ideology; perceptions of international students (including threat, stereotypes and numbers in the community and in New Zealand); interactions with international students (number of students known, frequency, quality and domain of contact, intergroup anxiety, and willingness to assist international students); and attitudes toward international students (including attitudes toward specific groups, social and economic impacts and worth of the export education industry).

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The major findings are:

- New Zealanders strongly endorsed a multicultural ideology, and this was related to positive outcomes including more contact with and more positive attitudes toward international students.
- Stereotypes were largely positive, and international students were widely seen as intelligent and hard-working. Positive stereotypes were associated with more frequent and satisfying intercultural contact and more positive attitudes toward international students.
- Perceptions of threat were low, particularly realistic threat relating to issues such as crime, health and education. New Zealanders were more likely to perceive symbolic threat to the New Zealand way of life, particularly issues pertaining to language and culture. For example, 49% and 47% of respondents, respectively, agreed that international students speak their own language when they should be speaking English and that they stick to their

own customs when they should be behaving like New Zealanders. Women, young people and those with higher levels of education perceived less threat, and this was linked to more frequent contact with and more positive attitudes toward international students .

- Most New Zealanders (66%) believed that the number of international students in the country is about right; however, 26% believed the numbers were too high or much too high. There were no regional differences in response to this item; however, those with a higher level of education were less likely to see the numbers as too high.
- Most New Zealanders reported knowing at least some international students; however, 28% of New Zealand residents reported that they did not know any international students personally.
- New Zealanders had a moderate level of contact with international students, and the quality of contact was described as positive or very positive by 69% of the respondents.
- Overall, New Zealanders appeared comfortable about interacting with international students. On average, they see themselves as “somewhat” to “very” patient and confident and “not at all” to “somewhat” anxious, irritated and awkward. Less anxiety about intercultural interactions was associated with other positive factors such as more frequent contact, less perceived threat and more positive attitudes toward international students.
- Contact with international students occurred most frequently in the context of work-related activities, followed by at school, in the community and through social networks. Contact through clubs, associations and religious activities were not commonly reported and provided venues for than 10% of all cited contact domains.
- Most New Zealanders were willing to assist international students with English and to learn about the local culture, and almost half (47%) said that they would be willing to offer home-stays.
- The overall attitudes toward international students were moderately positive—they received a favourability rating of 70/100; however, perceptions differed depending upon the origin of the student. Students from Europe and North America were seen more favourably than those from any other region while those from the Middle East were viewed the least favourably. International students from the Pacific were seen more positively than those from China and Africa.
- Although the majority of New Zealanders agreed that international students have qualities that they admire (69%) and have made an important contribution to New Zealand (68%), less than half (47%) said that they would like to get to know more international students.
- New Zealanders viewed the economic impacts of international students more favourably than the social impacts and evaluated the impacts arising from tourism more positively and from immigration less positively than those from international students.
- Most New Zealanders (62%) believed the revenue generated by the export education industry is sufficient; however, 26% believed that it is not enough.
- Attitudes toward and interactions with international students varied somewhat as a function of the demographic characteristics of the respondents with the major finding being an association between higher education and more positive responses. There were very few regional variations in the factors

examined suggesting that the concentration of students in a given area was not a critical factor in community attitudes.

- A causal model was fitted to the data with two parallel processes predicting attitudes toward international students. The first identified negative stereotypes as leading to an increased sense of threat, which in turn, resulted in negative attitudes. The second set of linkages began with multicultural ideology, which led to a decrease in intergroup anxiety and on to more frequent and satisfying contact with international students. Contact, in turn, resulted in more favourable attitudes toward international students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report noted the mismatches in perceptions of intercultural relationships as seen by New Zealanders and by international students. In order to address these, to maximize the satisfaction of international students, and to support the sustainability of the export education industry, the following recommendations were made:

1. Increase face to face contact between international students and members of the community through
  - Home-stays
  - Peer mentoring schemes within educational institutions
  - Campus-community links, such as international days with special programmes, ESOL tutoring and community workshops
  - Active recruitment of international students by clubs, organizations, churches and other religious centres
  - Offering support to NGOs and voluntary organizations that engage in pastoral care of international students and link them to the community (e.g., Operation Friendship)
  - Giving priority attention to students from the regions perceived less favourably (e.g., Middle East)
  - Ensuring the quality of the contact has positive features, such as cooperative, pleasant and mutually beneficial encounters.
2. Initiate and support activities that promote multiculturalism at local, regional and national levels
3. Use the media to present positive images of international students in New Zealand, particularly examples of how they have integrated well into the local culture.

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Export education has been a rapidly growing industry in New Zealand. The sustainability of this industry rests on a number of economic, educational and social factors, including institutional capacity, market receptiveness to internationalisation, and client satisfaction. Consequently, the proportion of international students enrolled in New Zealand institutions and the quality of their experiences inside and outside the classroom are core issues for the export education industry. This research approaches these issues from a novel perspective and examines New Zealanders' perceptions of and interactions with international students.

These perceptions and interactions are important for a number of reasons. At the individual level, research has clearly shown that more frequent and more satisfying intercultural contact is associated with a number of positive outcomes for international students, including enhanced psychological well-being, better social adaptation and fewer academic difficulties (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). The converse is true for perceived discrimination, which has been linked to negative psychological, social and academic consequences. Furthermore, at the macro level, it has been suggested that the perceived receptiveness of New Zealanders towards international students, including the perceptions of and interactions with the newcomers, may directly affect the viability of the export education industry. Indeed, Infometrics (2003) cited political factors, specifically, negative attitudes, discriminatory practices and anti-immigration rhetoric, as one of three major risk factors for the success of export education in New Zealand.

Related to this, Berno and Ward's (2003) research on the adaptation of Asian students in New Zealand noted that 72% of international students expected to "be accepted" by New Zealanders, but only 37% found this to be the case after arriving in the country. More recently, the Ministry of Education's national survey on the experiences of 2736 international students in secondary, tertiary and private language schools found that 71% of the students reported that they experienced unfair treatment from members of the community, and 10% said that this was "often" or "very often." In addition, 42% believed that New Zealanders would prefer to have fewer international students in the country, and less than half agreed that New Zealanders have positive attitudes toward international students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

Despite the extensive research undertaken from the perspective of international students in New Zealand, we have very little information about New Zealanders' attitude towards international education. Nor do we know much about New Zealanders' perceptions of international students or their interactions with them. This component of the A6 project examines attitudes toward and contact with international students via a random telephone survey of 500 households across New Zealand. In addition to providing descriptive baseline data on attitudes and interactions, the research design permits the examination of regional variations in these factors. This is important because the national survey of international students revealed that students in Auckland and Christchurch believed New Zealanders' attitudes and intercultural interactions to be more negative than those in Wellington and other parts of the North and South Islands (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research assesses the overall pattern of intercultural perceptions and interactions and considers the implications of the findings in relation to the experiences and satisfaction of international students in New Zealand. The research objectives are:

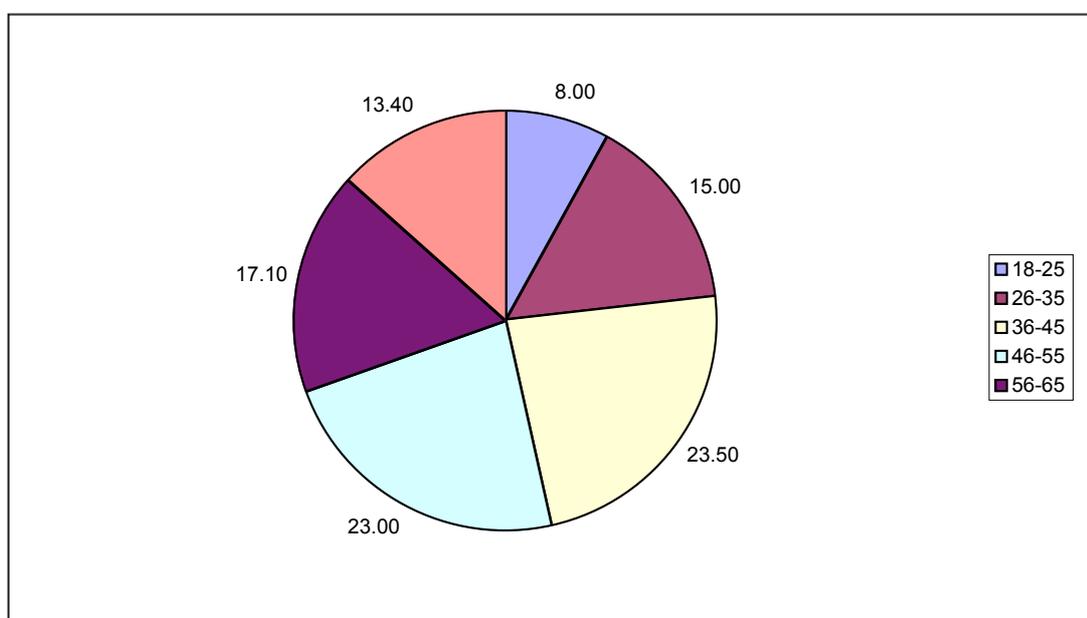
1. to assess the overall attitudes toward and perceptions of international students in New Zealand,
2. to examine the quality and quantity of New Zealanders' exposure to and/or interactions with international students, and
3. to examine how attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students and as a function of demographic characteristics of New Zealanders (e.g., age, gender, SES).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The sample included 526 New Zealand residents.

*Figure 1. Age Distribution of Respondents*



There were 276 females (53%) and 238 (46%) males who completed the survey; 12 respondents did not indicate gender. The majority of respondents (78%) who

provided information on ethnic background were New Zealand European; 4% were Maori. The remainder was split amongst Chinese, Indian, Pasifika, mixed ethnicity and others.

The age distribution of respondents is presented in Figure 1. The bulk of the respondents were in the 36-55 age range.

Seventy-five per cent of the respondents were in paid employment, and the income distribution is presented in Table 1. The breakdown of educational qualifications was: university degree (29.5%), post-secondary qualifications (27.1%), secondary qualifications (41.8%) and less than secondary (1.6%).

*Table 1. Pre-tax Income of Respondents*

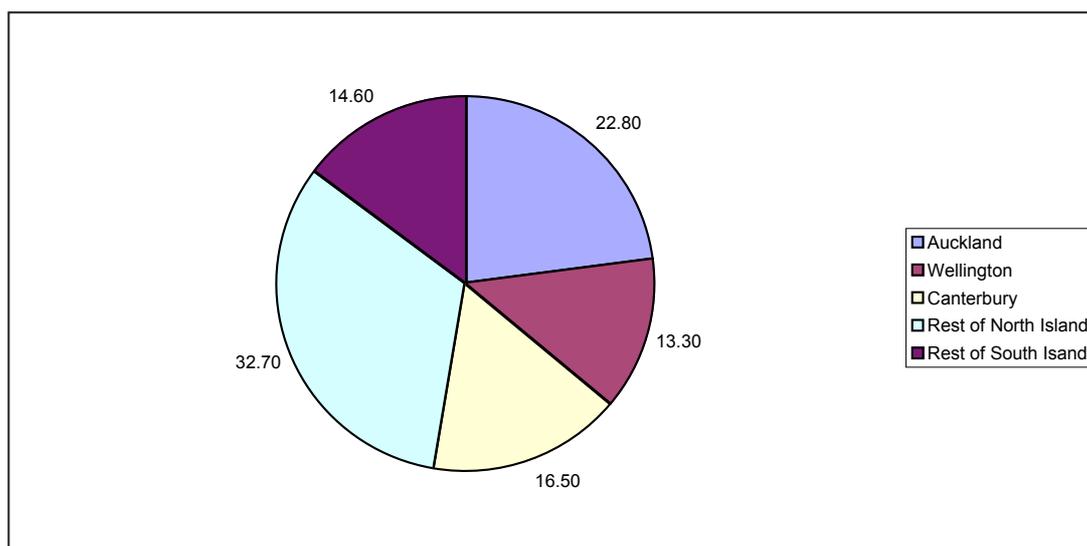
	% breakdown
Under \$10,000	11
Between \$10-20,000	14
Between \$20-30,000	12
Between \$30-40,000	15
Between \$40-50,000	12
Between \$50-70,000	16
Between \$70-100,000	10
Over \$100,000	11

Note. May not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Eighty per cent of the respondents were born in New Zealand, which is in accordance with census data on the birthplace of New Zealand residents. Less than one per cent was neither New Zealand citizens nor permanent residents. English was the first language of 94% of the research participants, and 26% could speak a language other than English or Maori.

Figure 2 presents the regional distribution of respondents, which included research participants from New Zealand's 16 regions. Note in this instance, Canterbury, rather than Christchurch, defines a region. This compares with the census distribution of Auckland (31%), Wellington (11%), Canterbury (13%), rest of North Island (34%) and rest of South Island (11%).

Figure 2. Regional Distribution of Respondents



## RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument was developed by the research team with reference to the companion study of domestic students and the Ministry of Education's national survey of international students (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

The major components of the survey (see Appendix A) are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Survey of New Zealand Public

Section 1: Multicultural Ideology
Section 2: Perceptions of International Students
Section 3: Interactions with International Students
Section 4: Attitudes toward International Students
Section 5: Background Information

Section 1 is an assessment of attitudes toward diversity or multicultural ideology used in previous research by Ward and Masgoret (2005) on attitudes toward immigrants.

Section 2 broadly examines perceptions of international students, including perceptions of threat and stereotypes. The items examining threat include both realistic threat (e.g., international students bring crime to New Zealand) and symbolic threat, that is, threat to New Zealand lifestyle and values (e.g., international students do not appreciate the New Zealand way of life). Stereotypes are consensual beliefs about groups of people and are measured by six adjectives, which can be classified as positive or negative. All of these factors (stereotypes, realistic threat and symbolic threat) have been shown to be important predictors of attitudes (including prejudice) toward and interactions (including discrimination) with members of different cultural and linguistic groups.<sup>1</sup> This section also includes perceptions of the number of

international students in the respondent's community and an item about the number of international students in New Zealand more widely.

Section 3 broadly examines interactions with international students including the number of international students known, frequency of contact and quality of interaction. This section also examines the feelings associated with interactions with international students (referred to as intergroup anxiety). Finally, the section includes a 3-item scale pertaining to the willingness to help international students.

Section 4 is concerned with attitudes toward international students. In addition to a standard 4-item attitude scale, it also includes a 0-100 (thermometer-like) scale, which is commonly used in research on intergroup attitudes. This was linked to international students in general as well as specific groups: students from China, other Asian countries, Europe, North America, the Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

The final section includes demographic descriptors such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, income, birthplace, language, and residential region.

Note that the method of data collection by telephone survey necessitated the use of fewer items per scale compared to paper and pencil surveys. This generally affects the psychometric properties of the measurements scales, particularly their internal consistency (see Appendix B).

## **PROCEDURE**

The data were collected by the University of Waikato's Computer Assisted Telephone Interview facility based on the pre-purchase of telephone numbers across New Zealand. Numbers were provided on the request that a regionally representative sample could be obtained. Respondents could not be identified by the researchers, and participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary.

Interviews were conducted between 5:30 and 9 p.m, and a request was made to speak to the person in the household who was at least 18 years of age and had the most recent birthday. The estimated response rate was 53.4%.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data were analysed both at the item and scale levels. For item level analysis, frequency breakdowns are generally reported (e.g., % agreement) although mean scores are presented where more appropriate (e.g., stereotype measures). When scales based on aggregated items are used, they are first subjected to psychometric analysis to ensure reliability (internal consistency). The results of these analyses are reported in Appendix B.

Scales are then subjected to analysis by demographic factors, including age, gender, education, income, geographical region (Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, rest of North Island and rest of South Island) and internationalism (birthplace in New Zealand or overseas and ability to speak a language other than English or Maori) using either t-tests or analyses of variance. The regional analyses are consistent with

the comparisons in the national survey of international students with the exception that Canterbury replaces Christchurch.

Following the descriptive information, the relationships amongst the research variables are examined by correlational analyses. Finally, structural equation modelling is used to test a causal model of interactions with and attitudes toward international students.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are organized and presented in line with the layout of the survey; therefore, readers may find it useful to refer to Appendix A in conjunction with the following material.

### MULTICULTURAL IDEOLOGY

*Table 3. Multicultural Ideology*

	% agreement
It is important to accept a wide variety of cultures in New Zealand.	89
Encouraging the use of different languages should be supported.	64
It is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures.	91

Overall it appears that New Zealanders are accepting of a multicultural ideology with a strong majority endorsing cultural and linguistic diversity. The mean item response is 4.1, above the scalar midpoint of 3 on a 5-point scale, and falling on average in the “agree” range for the statements. On the positive end, nine out of ten agree that it is a good thing for society to be made up of different races, religions and cultures. On the other hand, a smaller majority (approximately 2 out of 3) believe that multilingualism should be encouraged.

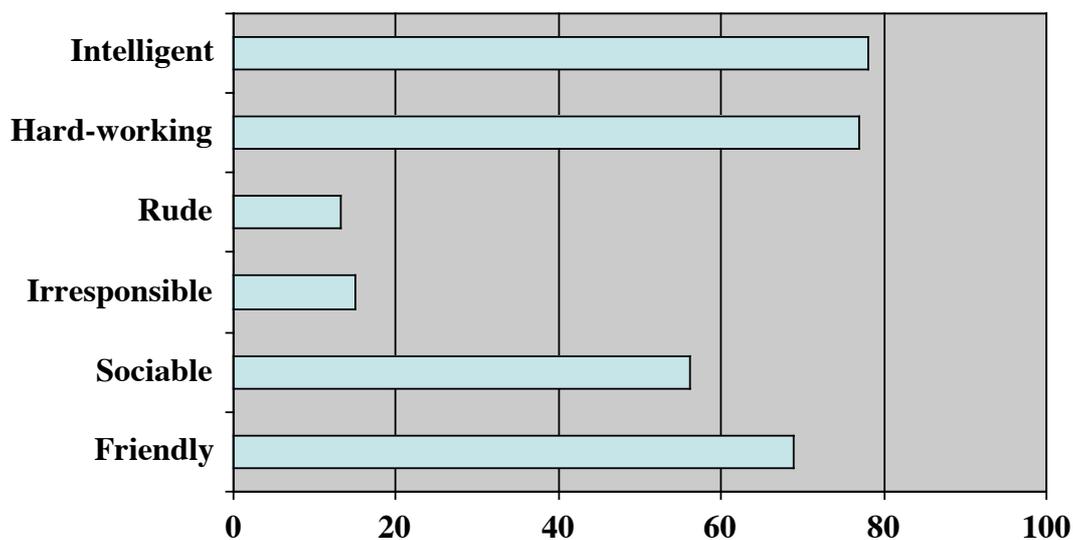
Multicultural ideology is endorsed more strongly by women, young people, those with a higher level of education and by those born overseas. Wellingtonians have the most positive attitudes toward diversity, but the regional differences are only significant for the comparisons between those living in Wellington and the rest of the North Island.

### PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This section examines stereotypes, that is, consensual beliefs about international students, perceptions of threat and views about the numbers of international students in local communities and the country as a whole.

#### Stereotypes

Figure 3. Stereotypes of International Students: % agreement



As can be seen from the table, stereotypes of international students are generally favourable with a majority of respondents attributing positive characteristics (intelligent, hard-working, sociable and friendly) to the students and a relatively small number describing them in negative (rude, irresponsible) terms. As in the research with New Zealand students, the traits most strongly associated with international students were intelligent and hard-working. Stereotypes of students did not vary in relation to demographic characteristics of the respondents.

### Threat

Table 4. Perception of Threat

Percentage of agreement that international students....	
Speak their own language when they should speak English.	49
Bring crime to New Zealand.	25
Have a positive effect on the quality education.	57
Stick to their own customs instead of adopting local customs.	47
Put pressure on health care facilities.	30
Appreciate the New Zealand way of life.	74

Table 4 presents the percentage of agreement with positively and negatively worded items pertaining to perceived threats arising from the presence of international students in New Zealand. For the most part, perception of threat is relatively low, particularly in areas that may be defined as realistic threat, that is, tangible threat to existing resources, such as health, education, and crime prevention. The most negative responses to international students relate to what is referred to as symbolic threat, or perceived threat to the New Zealand world-view, values or way of life. In particular, the sense of threat is strongest in relation to language and culture, with 49% and 47% of respondents, respectively, agreeing that international students speak their own language when they should be speaking English and that they stick to their

own customs when they should be behaving like New Zealanders. This pattern of results converges with the findings of the New Zealand student survey.

Perceptions of threat did not vary across regions or by internationalism; however, women perceived less threat than men. Younger people and those with higher education also perceived less threat.

### Student Numbers

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of international students in their communities as well as in the country as whole. At the community level, 5% indicated there were no international students, and at the other extreme 11% said there were very many. The modal response, given by one in three research participants, pointed to “a moderate number” of international students in the community. Not surprisingly, respondents from Auckland indicated that there were more international students in their community than respondents from any other region.

*Table 5. Opinions about the Number of International Students in the Community*

None	5
Very few	23
A moderate number	34
Many	26
Very many	11

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Participants were provided with information on the number of international students in New Zealand (approximately 110,000 per annum) and were asked if the number was too low, too high or about right. Table 6 presents the distribution of responses. The majority (2 out of 3) believed that the numbers were about right; however, 26% believed the numbers were too high or much too high. There were no regional differences in response to this item, but those with a higher level of education were less likely to see the numbers as too high.

*Table 6. Opinions about the Number of International Students in New Zealand*

Percentage who agree that the number is:	
Much too low	<1
Too low	8
About right	66
Too high	21
Much too high	5

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## INTERCULTURAL CONTACT AND INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### Contact with International Students

Most New Zealanders (72%) know at least some international students; however, 28% of New Zealand residents reported that they do not know any international students personally (see Table 7). Persons born overseas, who speak a foreign language and who have a higher level of education were more likely to know international students.

*Table 7. Acquaintances: How many international students do you know personally?*

Number	% breakdown
0	28
1-5	38
6-11	15
More than 10	19

Similarly, those who speak a foreign language have more frequent contact with international students. Respondents in Auckland had more frequent contact with international students than those in the rest of the North and South Islands, and those in Canterbury had more contact than those in the rest of the South Island. These results are presented in Table 8. Note that only 7% of the population say that they never have contact with international students, and 37% have contact often or very often. The average (and modal) response is in the “sometimes” range.

*Table 8. Contact with International Students*

Frequency	%	Quality	%
Never	7	Very negative	<1
Hardly ever	27	Negative	3
Sometimes	29	Neutral	27
Often	23	Positive	50
Very often	14	Very positive	19

Note. May not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The areas of contact were named in response to an open-ended question. The percentage breakdown of contact across work, school, clubs and associations, church and religious activities, social networks (e.g., through friends or family), home-stays and in the community (e.g., around town, shopping, on the bus) is presented in Table 9. As can be seen in the table, the work place and work-related activities appear the most common meeting place, although contact also occurs with some frequency in school, through social networks and in the wider community.

The quality of contact with international students was positive to very positive and described as such by 69% of the respondents. Less than 4% perceived their

interactions with international students to be negative. The quality of contact did not vary by gender, region or cultural characteristics of the respondents. Older respondents and those with a higher level of education reported the contact to be more positive.

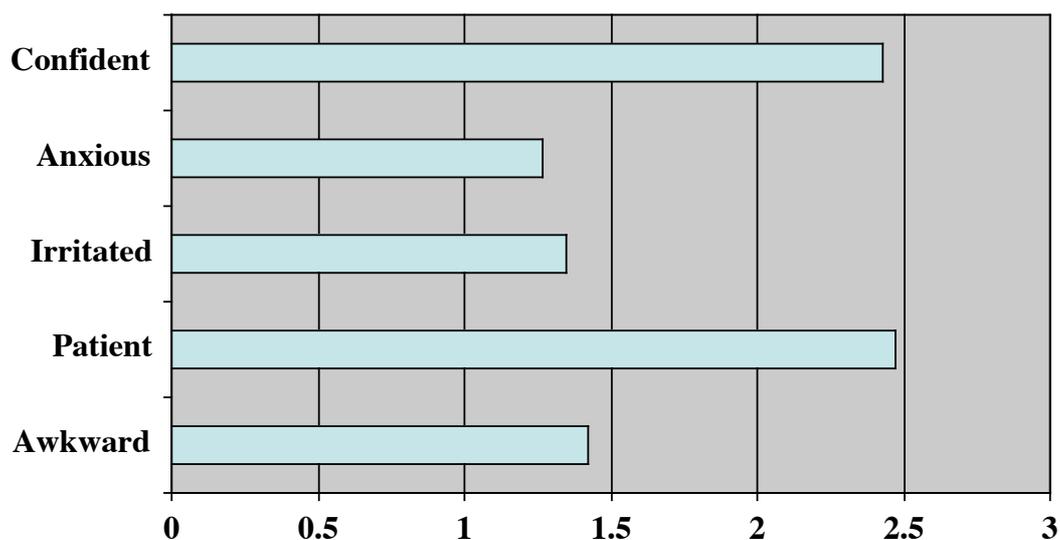
*Table 9. Areas of Contact*

	% breakdown
Work	27
In community	19
School	18
Social networks	18
Home-stays	11
Clubs and associations	7
Church and religious activities	1

Note. May not add up to 100% due to rounding.

### **Intergroup Anxiety**

*Figure 4. Intergroup Anxiety*



Note. 1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat and 3 = very.

When asked about their anticipated feelings concerning interactions with international students, the responses were largely favourable. On average, New Zealanders see themselves as “somewhat” to “very” patient and confident and “not at all” to “somewhat” anxious, irritated and awkward. There was little variation in intergroup anxiety across demographic characteristics of the respondents with the exception that higher income and education were associated with lower intergroup anxiety.

### **Willingness to Assist International Students**

Given the possibility that some New Zealanders would realistically have limited opportunity for interaction with international students, the general willingness to assist them was also examined (see Table 10).

*Table 10. Willingness to Assist International Students*

	% of agreement
Would be happy to help an international student with English	78
Would be willing to help international students learn more about NZ	79
Would be willing to offer a home-stay	47

New Zealanders were very receptive to assisting international students with matters pertaining to language and culture as evidenced by over 3 in 4 respondents being willing to support these activities. Offering home-stays, which requires considerably more interaction with and responsibility for international students, received less endorsement, but still almost half of the respondents said they would be willing to provide this type of assistance.

Willingness to assist international students did not vary by gender or across regions. Nor did it differ between those who were born in New Zealand and born overseas or as a function of multilingualism. Higher education, however, was associated with a greater inclination to help international students.

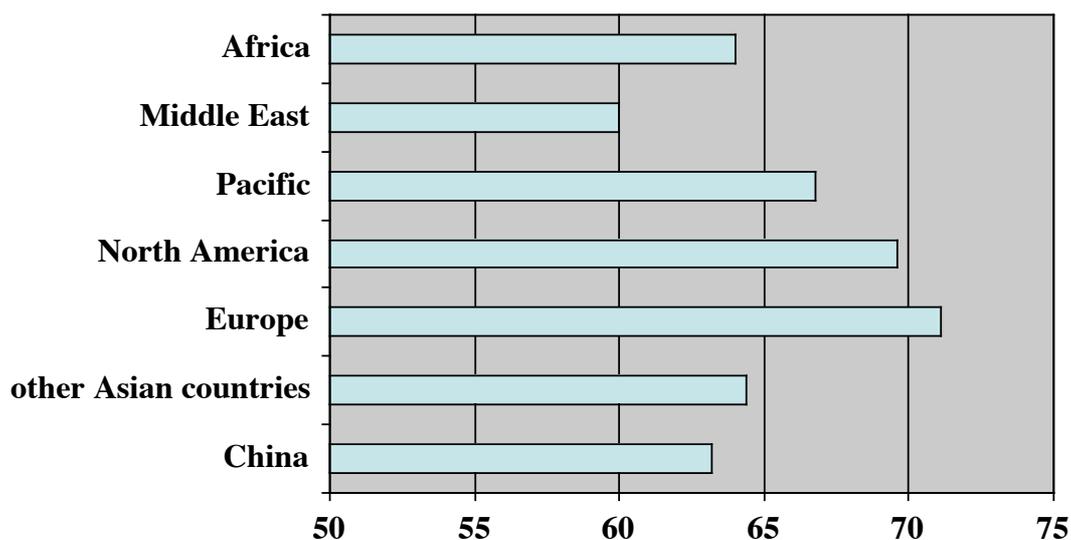
## **ATTITUDES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **Attitudes**

In response to the thermometer overall students gave a mean rating of 69.5 out of 100, indicating a moderately positive response to international students. This appears less favourable than the parallel ratings provided by New Zealand students (87).

The responses to specific groups appear in Figure 5. Analyses indicated that international students from Europe and North America were perceived significantly more favourably than students from any other region. Middle Eastern students received the least favourable evaluations, and these were significantly lower than students from any other region. Students from the Pacific were viewed more positively than those from China, Africa and the Middle East. There was no significant difference in the ratings of students from China, other Asian countries and Africa.

Figure 5. Perceptions of Students from Various Regions



Note. Scale from 0-100 with 100 most positive.

Neither overall evaluations nor evaluations of specific regional groups were strongly affected by demographic factors such as gender, region, birthplace or language facility. The two exceptions were that those born overseas had more positive impressions of students from China than New Zealand-borns and those with higher education had more favourable general perceptions.

Table 11. Attitudes toward International Students

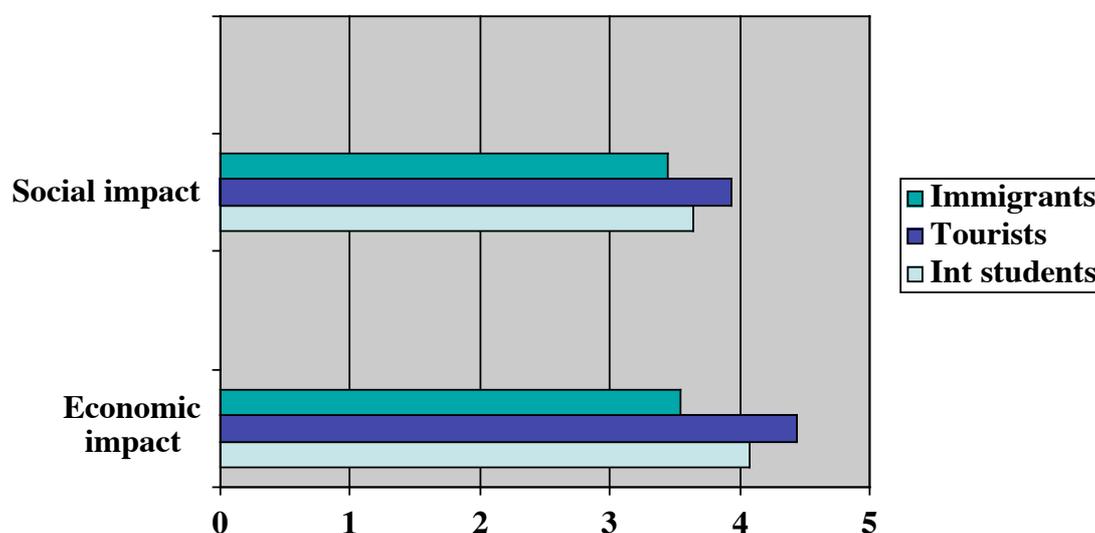
	% Agreement
International students have many qualities I admire.	69
International students have made an important contribution to NZ.	68
The more I hear about international students, the less I like them.	8
I would like to get to know more international students	47

On the whole, attitudes toward international students fell in the moderately positive range. As can be seen in Table 11, at least two-thirds agree that international students have admirable qualities and that they have made an important contribution to New Zealand. The former compares to 56% agreement from domestic students and 80% endorsement by teachers in parallel surveys. Less than half, however, would like to get to know more international students.

There were no regional or gender differences in attitudes; however, New Zealand-borns had more positive attitudes toward international students than those born overseas. Those with higher levels of education had also more favourable attitudes.

### Perceived Impacts and Opinions about Export Education

Figure 6. Impact Perceptions of Tourists, Immigrants and International Students



Note. 1= very negative and 5 = very positive.

Views about the social and economic impacts of “outsiders” who enter New Zealand, that is, tourists, international students and immigrants, are presented in Figure 6. Analyses indicate that New Zealanders perceive the overall economic impacts of outsiders to be more positive than the social impacts. Findings also show that the tourist impacts are seen more favourably than international student impacts, which are, in turn, viewed more positively than the impact of immigrants.

In addition to views about social and economic impacts, respondents were asked about the value of the export education industry. Respondents were told that the export education industry is worth about two billion dollars per annum in New Zealand and asked if this amount was enough. The % breakdown of their responses is reported in Table 12. As can be seen in the table, most respondents (62%) believed the amount if sufficient, although one in four thought it was not enough.

Table 12. Worth of Export Education in New Zealand

	% breakdown
Not enough	25
Enough	62
More than enough	13

Higher income was associated with the tendency to see the worth of the industry as not enough.

## RELATIONSHIPS AMONGST FACTORS

The relationships between respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions, attitudes and interactions with international students were described in the previous sections. This section considers the relationships between the attitudinal and contact variables.

As would be expected, multicultural ideology is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including more frequent and more satisfying contact with international students, more willingness to assist them, lower intergroup anxiety, more positive attitudes, stereotypes, and perceptions, including those of positive social and economic impacts and the diminished likelihood of seeing the numbers of international students as too high.

Conversely, perceptions of threat are associated with a pattern of negative responses, including less frequent and satisfying contact, higher intergroup anxiety, less willingness to assist international students, more negative stereotypes, attitudes, and perceptions, including perception of negative impacts and a greater likelihood of seeing student numbers as too high.

Increased frequency of contact and more positive perceptions of the quality of this contact are linked to a diminished sense of threat, lowered intergroup anxiety, more positive stereotypes and attitudes toward international students, including less likelihood of seeing the numbers as too high.

Those who have positive attitudes toward international students are less likely to see their numbers as too high.

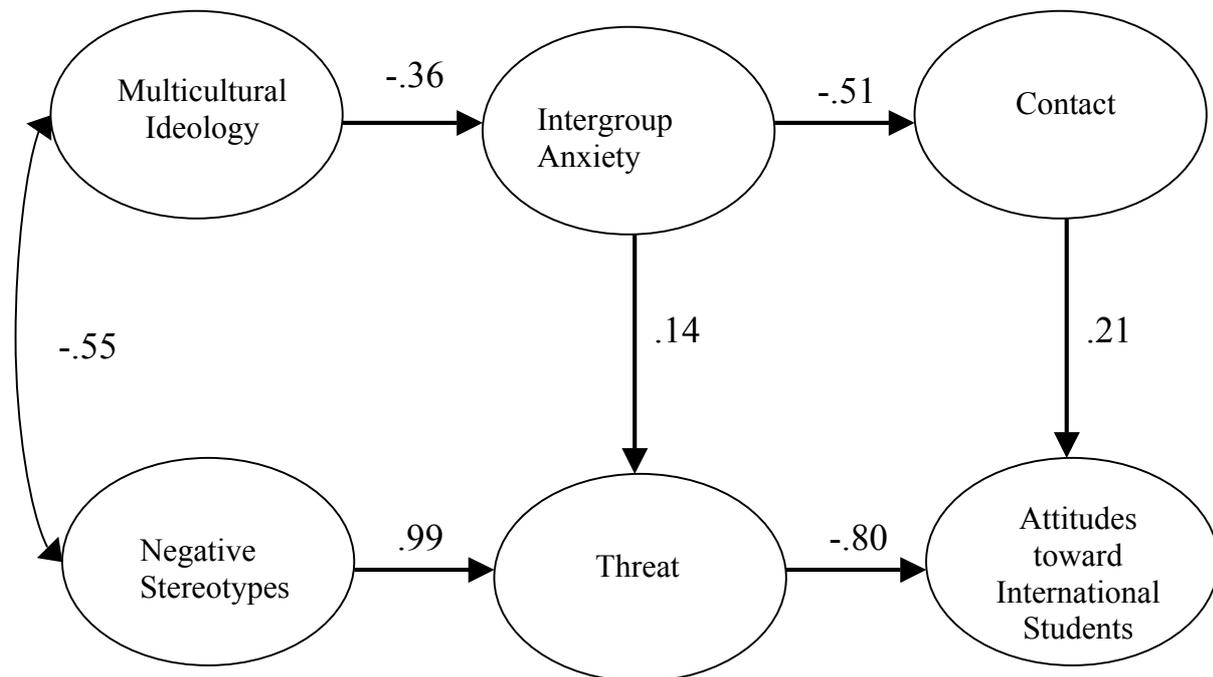
## **A MODEL OF ATTITUDES AND INTERACTIONS**

The causal model of attitudes and interactions is presented in Figure 7. It shows two core strands of relationships. One commences with stereotypes, that is, consensual beliefs about international students. Negative views of international students precipitate a heightened sense of threat, which, in turn, results in negative attitudes toward international students.

The second strand of the causal model commences with acceptance of a multicultural ideology. Endorsement of multiculturalism leads to a decrease in intergroup anxiety, which, in turn, predicts more frequent and more satisfying contact with international students, and consequently, more positive attitudes. As can also be seen in the model, there is a moderately strong relationship between positive stereotypes and multicultural ideology.

Although structural equation modelling is referred to as causal modelling and the statistics show that our data fit this model very well, it must be remembered that these are essentially correlational analyses and causality cannot strictly be inferred. Nevertheless, the survey data provide a very good fit to the model.

Figure 7. A Model of Attitudes and Interactions



$\chi(128) = 356.30, p < .001, GFI = .91, AGFI = .89, IFI = .89, TLI = .87, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .065$

## DISCUSSION

### OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The research set out to examine New Zealanders' perceptions of and relationships with international students and how these may vary across regions or by the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Associated with this was the task of identifying any areas of concern.

The research commenced with the examination of perceptual domains, in particular, stereotypes and threat, which have been shown in international research to affect prejudice and discrimination. The results indicated, that on the whole, stereotypes of international students were largely positive. Perceptions of threat were generally low, with the exception of some symbolic domains pertaining to language and culture. The findings raise no major cause for concern about the general perceptions of international students. In fact, the moderately positive perceptions widely adopted by New Zealanders are an encouraging finding.

A similar trend was found for acceptance of cultural diversity in general. New Zealanders strongly supported multicultural ideology; however, it appears that they are more likely to endorse diversity in principle, by agreeing that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people with different races, religions and cultures, but less

so in practice, such as encouraging the use of different languages. This pattern of discrepancy is consistent with international research.

Most New Zealanders know at least one international student personally, and one in three claim to know more than five students. On the whole, interactions with international students occur with some frequency (“sometimes”), and these interactions are generally positive. The moderate level of contact, its positive nature, the low level of intergroup anxiety and the widespread willingness to assist international students are all positive outcomes. All of these factors are related to more positive attitudes toward international students.

With respect to broader attitudes, the majority of New Zealanders (66%) think that the number of international students in the country is about right; however, a noticeable proportion (26%) believes the number is too high. Research participants evaluated international students positively (with a mean of 70/100), and their agreement and disagreement in response to a range of statements about international students also presented a favourable view.

Of significant interest, however, are the differential evaluations of students from different countries and regions. New Zealanders prefer international students from Europe and North America. Students from the Pacific were viewed more favourably than those from China and Africa, and students from the Middle East were evaluated more negatively than any other group. This has significant implications for the recent trend of China being the largest export education market and the new initiatives for recruitment of students from the Middle East.

At a general level these findings converge with the results of the national survey of international students in New Zealand where students from ESANA countries (Europe, North and South America and Australia) reported less discrimination than those from China and other Asian countries (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). However, the regional differences that emerged in the national survey, which suggested that students in Auckland and Christchurch may get less favourable receptions than those in other region, were not reflected in New Zealanders’ reported perceptions and interactions. Indeed, there was little variation across regions in any of the factors examined. This suggests that at present the wider communities are large enough to absorb the numbers of international students and that unlike at the classroom and institutional level, their proportion is not large enough to be perceived as a source of threat.

There was, however, some variation in the responses to international students as a function of respondents’ background characteristics. The most consistent of these was that higher education was associated with better relations with international students and more positive attitudes toward them. There was also some evidence that more “international” respondents, such as those born overseas or who speak other languages tended to know more international students.

Of particular interest in this project is the construction of a causal model of attitudes toward and interactions with international students. The model confirms that a general acceptance of multiculturalism provides a good base for relationships with international students. More specifically, it leads to less intergroup anxiety and more

frequent and satisfying contact. On the other hand, negative stereotypes (consensual beliefs) about international students lead to detrimental outcomes, including perceptions of threat and unfavourable attitudes toward international students. This process model suggests stages at which interventions can be introduced with a view to increasing interactions and improving attitudes toward international students.

## LIMITATIONS

The participants secured in this research approximated a representative sample across the regions of New Zealand, and reflected census data in terms of proportion of Pakeha, those born overseas and those tertiary educated. Maori, however, were under represented, and this is a limitation of the research.

As with all survey research, the possibility of response distortion due to social desirability influences is a source of concern. The anonymous nature of the responses diminished the likelihood of this, but the extent to which social desirability may have influenced the results is unknown.

## MISMATCHES IN PERCEPTIONS

In this study, New Zealanders:

- Strongly supported multiculturalism (e.g., 89% agreed it is important to accept a wide variety of cultures in New Zealand),
- Displayed positive perceptions of and attitudes toward international students (e.g., students received an evaluation of 70/100, and 69% agreed that international students have qualities that they admire),
- Described the quality of their interactions with international students as positive to very positive although this contact occurred only “sometimes” rather than “often” or “very often,”
- Expressed a strong willingness to assist international students (e.g., 78% would be happy to help an international student with English), and
- Tended to see the numbers of international students as about right (66%).

In Ward and Masgoret’s (2004) research, international students:

- Reported low levels of contact with New Zealanders (e.g., in social settings 24% never and 32% seldom had contact),
- Were ambivalent about New Zealanders’ attitudes toward international students (e.g., less than half- 46%- agreed that New Zealanders generally have positive attitudes toward international students),
- Said that they have experienced discrimination by members of the community (e.g., 71% reported unfair treatment with 10% saying it was often or very often), and
- Did not perceive social support or assistance as available from the community (e.g., less than 10% believed that practical or emotional support was available from members of the community).

It appears, then, that there is a mismatch in the mutual perceptions of the relationships between New Zealanders and international students. In this case the perceptions of community members are substantially more positive.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the most direct and effective way to address this mismatch is to increase face to face contact between international students and New Zealanders and to augment efforts to integrate international students into the wider community. This recommendation is made for a number of reasons, including

- New Zealanders' positive attitudes and apparent receptiveness to international students,
- their "occasional" interactions with this group,
- international students' strong desire to have more frequent contact with New Zealanders, and
- a robust research literature that demonstrates the effectiveness of face to face contact in enhancing intergroup relations.

Educational institutions, NGOs and regional councils can all play a significant role in meeting this objective.

One of the most obvious ways that schools and other educational institutions can promote the integration of international students is through the home-stays. The national survey of international students indicated that students in home-stays were more satisfied with their accommodation than those in flats or hostels. The study also found that relationship with host families was the greatest source of satisfaction with the home-stay. The home-stay family was also seen as a significant source of social support, particularly for practical problems, and the vast majority (83%) of international students reported no problems with the home-stay. Satisfaction with home-stay, in turn, was an important predictor of life satisfaction in New Zealand.

At the most basic level, home-stay arrangements offer the opportunity to have more frequent contact with international students, and greater contact is associated with more positive attitudes. It is not only the frequency of contact, however, that is important. The home-stay offers the opportunity to develop closer and more intimate ties with international students and to increase cross-cultural awareness more broadly. As 47% of the respondents in this survey indicated a willingness to provide a home-stay for international students, this opportunity should be exploited.

Home-stays are not the only domain for intercultural interactions. International experts have argued that educational institutions should be responsible for developing campus-community links in international education (Hochhauser, 1990), and recommended activities have included international days with special programmes, ESOL tutoring and community workshops. Furthermore, "in-house" activities such as "buddy" schemes or peer mentor programmes, which have been shown to benefit both domestic and international students, may have spill-over effects into the wider community as local students may assist their international peers to form social networks outside of the campus environment.

Promoting intercultural contact should not be confined to educational institutions. One of the greatest successes in New Zealand has been Operation Friendship, a national hospitality programme, which has linked an estimated 1000 students with Kiwi friends and fostered a significant number of long term friendships. Programmes such as this should be developed further and expanded. Voluntary organizations and regional and city councils may play an important role here.

Respondents in this study reported that contact with international students is less likely to occur through clubs and associations or religious activities than in other contexts such as school or work. It may be the case that these resources are under-utilized as means of promoting intercultural contact and social integration. Relevant organizations should ensure that information is available to international students and that their associations are easily accessible. In some instances, active recruitment may be appropriate.

While emphasis here is placed on the importance of increasing contact between New Zealanders and international students, there are other factors that impact upon intergroup perceptions and relations. Our causal model (Figure 7) highlights the significance of multicultural ideology and stereotypes as exogenous influences on intercultural contact and attitudes toward international students. Interventions and activities that support multiculturalism in general or promote more positive portrayal of international students more specifically will lead to positive outcomes. For example, fairs and festivals that celebrate cultural diversity are means to this end.

With respect to the issue of stereotyping the portrayal of international students in the media exerts a significant influence the perceptions of international students. The unduly negative emphasis on “sensational” stories (e.g., abortion rates in young Asian women or the extortion activities in the Chinese community) can be expected to damage the image of international students and the test the tolerance of New Zealanders. A more balanced perspective that includes features on “success stories” and positive contributions of international students to New Zealand would be conducive to promoting positive intercultural relations. In fact, research by Masgoret (2004) found that editorials that portrayed immigrants as neither more nor less successful than New Zealanders resulted in more positive perceptions.

In conclusion, the major recommendations arising from this research are:

1. Increase face to face contact between international students and members of the community through
  - Home-stays,
  - Peer mentoring schemes within educational institutions,
  - Campus-community links, such as international days with special programmes, ESOL tutoring and community workshops,
  - Active recruitment of international students by clubs, organisations, churches and other religious centres
  - Offering support to NGOs and voluntary organizations that engage in pastoral care of international students and link them to the community (e.g., Operation Friendship),
  - Giving priority attention to students from the regions perceived less favourably (e.g., Middle East),
  - Ensuring the quality of the contact has positive features, such as cooperative, pleasant and mutually beneficial encounters.
2. Initiate and support activities that promote multiculturalism at local, regional and national levels.
3. Use the media to present positive images of international students in New Zealand, particularly examples of how they have integrated well into the local culture and community.

All of these initiatives should contribute to more positive intergroup perceptions and relations. In turn, they will positively affect the satisfaction of students and lead to greater sustainability of the export education industry.

## FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup> This is elaborated in research based on Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (Esses, Jackson & Armstrong, 1998). These theories are well established in social psychological study of intergroup relations and were used to guide the design and development of this project. Realistic and symbolic threat, stereotypes and intergroup anxiety (described in the following section) are all important predictors of intergroup outcomes.

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## APPENDIX A- RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

### MULTICULTURAL IDEOLOGY

- 1) It is a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures.
- 2) It is important to accept a wide variety of cultures in New Zealand.
- 3) Encouraging the use of different languages should be supported.

*Responses: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree*

### PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

#### Threat (Realistic/symbolic)

- 4) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students speak their own language when they should be speaking English.*
- 5) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students bring crime to New Zealand.*
- 6) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students have a negative effect on the quality of New Zealand education.*
- 7) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students stick to their own customs instead of adopting the New Zealand way of life.*
- 8) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students put pressure on healthcare facilities in New Zealand.*
- 9) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students do not appreciate the New Zealand way of life.*

*Responses: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree*

#### Opinions about the Number of International Students

10) In general, how would you describe the number of international students in your community? Are there:

*Responses: None at all/ Very few/ A moderate number/ Many/ Very many*

11) There are over 110,000 international students in New Zealand. Do you think that this number is:

*Responses: Much too low/ Too low/ About right/ Too high/ Much too high*

#### Stereotypes

- 12) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students are friendly?*
- 13) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students are sociable?*
- 14) *How much do you agree or disagree that international students are irresponsible?*

- 15) *How much do you agree or disagree* that international students are rude?  
 16) *How much do you agree or disagree* that international students are hard-working?  
 17) *How much do you agree or disagree* that international students are intelligent?

*Responses: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree*

## **INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **Intergroup Anxiety**

*I would like you to **imagine** you are interacting with a group of international students.*

- 18) How confident do you think you would feel?  
 19) How awkward do you think you would feel?  
 20) How patient do you think you would feel?  
 21) How irritated do you think you would feel?  
 22) How anxious do you think you would feel?

*Responses: Not at all / Somewhat / Very*

### **Contact**

- 23) How often do you have contact with international students?

*Responses: Never/ Hardly ever / Sometimes / Often / Very often*

*[If 'Never' go to #25]*

- 24) In what settings, for example at sports events or at work, have you had this contact?

[Responses will be recorded with a limit of 5 settings]

- 25) Overall, has this contact been:

*Responses: Very negative/ Negative / Neutral / Positive / Very positive*

- 26) How many international students do you know personally?

*Responses: None/ 1 to 5 / 6 to 10 / over 10*

### **Willingness to Help**

- 27) I would be happy to help an international student with English.  
 28) I would be willing to help international students learn more about New Zealand.  
 29) I would be willing to offer a homestay to an international student.

*Responses: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree*

## **ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **Attitudes**

- 30) International students have many qualities I admire.
- 31) International students have made an important contribution to New Zealand.
- 32) The more I hear about international students the less I like them.
- 33) I would like to get to know more international students.

*Responses: Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree*

### **Evaluations**

- 34) If you were to describe your general views of international students on a numerical scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is very unfavourable and 100 is very favourable, what would your rating be?

*Responses: Number from 0 to 100*

*Now, moving on to specific groups of international student. From 0 to 100, what would your rating be for...*

- 35) International students from China
- 36) International students from other Asian Countries
- 37) International students from Europe
- 38) International students from North America
- 39) International students from the Pacific
- 40) International students from the Middle East
- 41) International students from Africa

*Responses: Number from 0 to 100*

### **Impacts**

- 42) Would you say the social impact of immigrants in New Zealand is:
- 43) Would you say the economic impact of immigrants in New Zealand is:
- 44) Would you say the social impact of tourists in New Zealand is:
- 45) Would you say the economic impact of tourists in New Zealand is:
- 46) Would you say the social impact of international students in New Zealand is:
- 47) Would you say the economic impact of international students in New Zealand is:

*Responses: Very negative/ Negative / Neutral / Positive / Very positive*

- 48) The export education industry is worth about 2 billion dollars per annum in New Zealand. Do you think this amount is:

*Responses: Not enough / Enough/ More than enough*

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

49) Are you?

*Fixed Responses: Male/Female*

50) What is your age? Are you?

*Fixed Responses: 18 to 25/26 to 35/36 to 45/46 to 55/56 to 65/over 65*

51) What is your ethnic background? For example, Maori, New Zealand European, Chinese.

*Fixed Responses: Maori/New Zealand European/Samoan/Tongan/Chinese/Indian/Mixed ethnicity/Other*

[If respondent reports MIXED or OTHER, their ethnic group/s will be recorded]

52) Were you born in New Zealand?

*Fixed Responses: Yes/No*

53) Are you a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident?

*Fixed Responses: Yes/No*

54) Is English your first language?

*Fixed Responses: Yes/No*

55) Do you speak any language other than English or Maori?

*Fixed Responses: Yes/No*

56) What is your highest educational qualification?

*Open response: Qualification recorded*

51) Are you currently in paid employment?

*Fixed Responses: Yes/No*

[If 'yes' continue] [If 'no' go to #53]

52) What is your occupation?

*Open response: Occupation recorded*

53) From all of your sources of income before tax was your income last year?

Was it...      *Fixed Responses:*

- under 10,000
- between \$10,000 and \$20,000
- between \$20,001 and \$30,000
- between \$30,000 and \$40,000
- between \$40,001 and \$50,000
- between \$50,001 and \$70,000

between \$70,001 and \$100,000  
over \$100,000

**APPENDIX B- SCALAR RELIABILITIES**

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Threat	.62
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Willingness to help	.67
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Cronbach alpha is used as a measure of scalar reliability (internal consistency). Due to the low number of items per scale the reliability estimates of some scales are slightly below the recommended value of .70

**LOCAL COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS WITH  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Elsie Ho & Jenine Cooper

Migration Research Group  
University of Waikato  
In association with the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research,  
Victoria University of Wellington

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The report summarises the major findings of the A6- Interactions with International Students project funded by the Export Education Levy and administered by Education New Zealand. This component covers the research with local communities, particularly businesses and service providers. The objectives of the research are:

- to examine how local businesses and community sectors in Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton and Tauranga interact with and perceive international students;
- to explore how attitudes, perceptions, and interactions vary across centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students; and
- identify issues of concern for international students-local communities' relations.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A total of 37 key informant interviews were conducted across the four centres. The key stakeholders included education providers, accommodation providers, public transport providers, insurance providers, entertainment and leisure providers, community constables, counsellors, local government organisations, student associations and volunteering organisations. An interview schedule was developed to aid in exploring participants' perceptions of the numbers of international students in their city, the impacts of international students on their businesses/organisations, issues of concern about international student and community relations, and effective practice features in services that can address the issue of international student and community relations.

The key informant interviews were supplemented by information obtained from informal discussions with participants from the business sector. In this part of the study, researchers visited public places such as libraries, retail shops, banks, post offices, food courts and entertainment centres where the presence of international students was high, and interviewed customers and businesses regarding their perception of international students.

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The major findings are:

- The economic impacts of international students were most strongly recognised in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton, whereas participants in Tauranga were less focussed on economic benefits even though they were acknowledged. Service industries such as banking have employed many bilingual staff especially as a result of the impact of international students on their business.
- There was a definite recognition in all four centres that there had been a decline in numbers of international students since 2003/04 and this was most often noticed in the financial sense and the impact on business.
- In Auckland and Christchurch, there was quite a large impact in terms of high numbers of 'visibly different' international students. Participants in these two

- centres tended to show a less positive general perception of international students. Participants in both Hamilton and Tauranga were generally more positive about international students and had more time to accommodate them.
- In all four centres, there was little acknowledgement of the cultural influence or cultural learning as a part of international education. Overall, there was the perception that international students did not mix well. Language difficulty and cultural factors were the most often mentioned barriers to integration. Service providers tended to think that educational institutions need to take the lead in intervention to integrate international students.
  - There was a high level of concern among participants in all four centres about media driven public perceptions that stereotype international students as wealthy kids who buy fast cars and drive badly. Other issues of concern ranged from culture shock and unmet expectations, lack of integration with the local community, health and gambling issues, accommodation, driver licensing and car insurance.
  - Many initiatives had been undertaken in the various centres to address the issue of international students and community relations. These initiatives included: proactive services for effective support of international students; services that encourage people of different cultures to interact; information provision and education. Tauranga is a later entrant to the international education sector. The education industry there was very focused on working closely with the city to provide a unique and personalised experience for their small numbers of international students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The major recommendations arising from this report are:

1. Encouraging interaction
  - Encourage international students to participate in community groups (including volunteering), and likewise, encourage community groups to make their services available to international students
  - Encourage intercultural understanding through assisting people of different cultures to interact
  - Improve cultural support, and cultural responsiveness in services to international students (police, lawyers, counsellors etc)
  - Provide training to service providers in the community who deal with international students (such as bus drivers, library staff and post office staff)
2. Information provision
  - Provide international students and their families with realistic information about New Zealand, such as the cost of living in New Zealand and what to expect in homestays, before the students leave their home country
  - Strengthen support for homestay families
  - Encourage information sharing and networking amongst service providers
  - One stop shop – where international students can go for independent information when the time arises
  - Need for independent advocacy for international students
3. Collaboration within the cities

- Each city attracts international students for different reasons. City leaders, educational institutions and community groups should work together to promote the development of educational materials for the wider community on the benefits of having international students, and to develop strategies for effective support of international students and improvement of their relationship with local communities
4. Future research
- Further research to explore why some groups of students, such as Brazilian students, are perceived to mix well with local communities while other groups are not, and how these differences impact on the experiences of the student themselves in terms of adjusting to the new environment.

## INTRODUCTION

### RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study is part of a wider project exploring community interactions with international students and the impact of international students on the communities they come to live in. Local communities have rarely been researched in relation to international students. In particular, this part of the research has targeted businesses and service providers in order to ascertain community attitudes about international students and how different numbers of international students impact on local communities. The objectives of this research are to:

- examine how local businesses and community sectors in Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton and Tauranga interact with and perceive international students;
- explore how attitudes, perceptions and interactions differ among centres with high, medium and low concentrations of international students; and
- identify issues of concern for international students-local communities' relations.

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Following a change in government policy in 1989 that enabled state-owned educational institutions to charge full fees for international students, the number of Foreign Fee Paying (FFP) students studying in New Zealand increased dramatically—a majority of them were from countries in Asia (Asia 2000 Foundation, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2001). Between 1999 and 2003, the number of FFP students increased by 318% (Table 1). The lifting of the quotas set by New Zealand for students from the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1999 contributed to this rapid growth in FFP student numbers.

*Table 1*      *Number of FFP students in New Zealand, 1999 to 2003*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
1999	28,340
2000	38,753
2001	52,696
2002	82,020
2003	118,684
Growth, 1999-2003	318%

Source: Ministry of Education, 2002; Education New Zealand, 2004a

Table 2 shows the top ten source countries of FFP students in 2001. PRC is the leading source country of FFP students in public tertiary institutions, Private Training Establishments (PTEs, including English Language Schools) and secondary schools. Korea is the biggest source of students for the primary sector. Other leading Asian sources are Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Hong Kong, while USA, Fiji, Brazil and Germany are the largest non-Asian sources.

*Table 2 Top ten source countries of FFP students in primary schools, secondary schools, public tertiary institutions and Private Training Establishments (PTEs), 2001*

	<b>Primary</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>Public Tertiary</b>		<b>PTEs</b>	
Korea	1,266	PRC	3,495	PRC	5,236	PRC	1,206	
PRC	59	Japan	1,375	Malaysia	1,126	Korea	504	
Taiwan	58	Korea	1,356	Korea	851	Japan	452	
Thailand	48	Thailand	580	Japan	766	Taiwan	165	
Japan	47	Taiwan	372	HK	465	India	133	
HK	20	HK	370	Taiwan	417	Thailand	103	
Solomon Is	15	Brazil	194	Thailand	409	Fiji	64	
India	14	Vietnam	139	USA	397	Germany	40	
Fiji	14	Germany	139	Indonesia	347	UK	38	
USA	14	Malaysia	132	Fiji	344	Indonesia	34	

Source: Ministry of Education, 2002

Different regions in New Zealand attract international students for different reasons. Table 3 gives the regional distribution of FFP students in 2001. There are high concentrations of students in Auckland and Canterbury regions, medium concentrations in the Waikato, and low levels of students in the Bay of Plenty region. The four cities in this study—Auckland, Christchurch (in Canterbury), Hamilton (in Waikato), and Tauranga (in Bay of Plenty)—have been chosen to compare the differences and similarities between the impacts of differing levels of international students on the cities.

Recent data released by Education New Zealand shows that the numbers of FFP students, particularly those from PRC, have declined (Aldworth, 2005; Education New Zealand, 2004b; O'Rourke, 2005). In the primary and secondary sectors, the numbers fell from 17,448 in July 2003 to 14,477 in July 2004, a decrease of 17%. The numbers in English Language Schools fell by 3% between 2003/2004, while FFP tertiary student numbers also declined in recent months.

Table 3 *Regional distribution of FFP students in primary schools, secondary schools and public tertiary institutions<sup>2</sup>, 2001*

	Primary		Secondary		Public Tertiary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Auckland</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>4,720</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>5,393</b>	<b>42.6</b>
<b>Canterbury</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Wellington	50	3.0	671	7.6	1,448	11.4
<b>Waikato</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>11.4</b>
Manawatu-Wanganui	44	2.6	335	3.8	1,311	10.4
Otago	23	1.4	529	6.0	822	6.5
<b>Bay of Plenty</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Hawkes Bay	5	0.3	181	2.0	121	1.0
Northland	7	0.4	69	0.8	119	1.0
Nelson	1	0.1	87	1.0	146	1.2
Southland	3	0.2	89	1.0	62	0.5
Gisborne	3	0.2	41	0.5	30	0.2
Taranaki	0	0.0	36	0.4	36	0.3
Marlborough	1	0.1	55	0.6	0	0.0
Tasman	0	0.0	22	0.2	0	0.0
West Coast	0	0.0	7	0.1	8	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,870</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,649</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, 2002

## METHODOLOGY

### INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key informant interviews were the main research methodology used in this study. A total of 37 key informant interviews were conducted across the four centres (Table 4). The interviews took place between 15 November 2004 and 23 February 2005. The key stakeholders were from government and local government organisations such as police and city councils; accommodation providers including homestay coordinators and hostel managers; counsellors and health workers; recreation providers including sports clubs, gaming businesses, libraries and entertainment facilities; community groups including student associations and volunteering organisations; transport providers; businesses and services including banks, post shops, restaurants, insurance providers; and education providers.

<sup>2</sup> The number of FFP students in private training establishments is not shown in this table because statistics for PTEs are limited in comparison to the public sector. The top ten source countries of FFP students in PTEs given in Table 2 were derived from data from a snapshot survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2001. The survey only gave the number of FFP students studying at PTEs at the time of the survey, and therefore is not representative of the whole year due to varying durations of courses.

Table 4 Key informant interviews in the four centres

Type of organisation	Auckland	Christchurch	Hamilton	Tauranga	Total
Government	2	1		1	4
Accommodation	1	2	1		4
Health	2	3			5
Recreation	3	2	3		8
Community		2	3	1	6
Transport	1				1
Business/services		1	5	1	7
Education				2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>

Before the key informant interviews were conducted, we participated in the following discussion forums which assisted with the identification of key stakeholders and the development of the interview schedule:

- A discussion forum on international students and society at the 13<sup>th</sup> New Zealand International Education Conference, 18-20 August, 2004. In that session, the LTAS, Police and Auckland Citizens Advice Bureau discussed the range of social issues that they are experiencing and measures to tackle them.
- A presentation by Andrew Butcher and Terry McGrath on “Campus Community Linkages – an evaluation of Campus-Community Linkages that assist the process of community involvement in the pastoral care of international students” at the 13<sup>th</sup> New Zealand International Education Conference, 18-20 August, 2004.
- A discussion forum with service providers for international students on 24 August, 2004 organised by the Asian Liaison Officer of Auckland City District Police in collaboration with Community Advisor (Auckland) of the Office of Ethnic Affairs.
- A discussion forum in Hamilton on 1 September 2004, on gambling issues facing Asian students, organised by the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand.
- A presentation entitled “Four Winds” by John Pickering and Terry McGrath on training service providers in the community who deal with international students, on 14 September 2004, in Hamilton. Participants in the seminar consisted of people in the community who work with and encounter international students in the work place.
- A presentation by the Hamilton Community District Law Centre on 15 September 2004, in Hamilton, covering a range of issues regarding international students’ rights and responsibilities, such as international driving licences, how to obtain a New Zealand driving licence, what to do at a car accident, burglary, and how to behave if arrested, etc.

Several people were also contacted for a brief discussion and to help with contacts in the four cities (Table 5). The interview schedule was not used in these cases but the

participants helped with identifying contacts and initiatives taking place in the cities. Key informants were located using a snowball technique initially through Study Auckland, Education Christchurch, Education Tauranga and Education Waikato. We also approached contacts at educational institutions and our existing community contacts in the four centres. Using the Auckland City commissioned report (Infometrics, 2003) and the issues of concern raised therein, and the Auckland Police Initiative which brought service providers together to discuss issues for international students and strategies to address these issues, we targeted accommodation providers, public transport services, community constables, counsellors, and entertainment and leisure providers.

*Table 5 Additional contacts in the four centres*

<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Auckland</b>	<b>Christchurch</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Tauranga</b>	<b>Total</b>
City Council		1	1		
Community	1		1		
Education NZ	1	1	1	1	
Education Providers		2	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

An interview schedule (Appendix 1) was developed to aid in exploring participants' perceptions of the numbers of international students in their city, how their organisation interacts with international students, the positive and negative aspects of this interaction, issues of concern about international student and community relations and effective practice features in services that can address the issue of international student and community relations. Interviews were conducted in person or over the telephone.

## **FIELD STUDY**

Around two days were spent in each centre in January and February 2005 to hold informal discussions with the participants from the business sector. We targeted retail shops, bars, restaurants, leisure facilities, banks and post offices in the four city central business districts. Participants were identified through key informants who suggested which businesses international students frequented in the city, in conjunction with some hard-calling over two days in each centre. The length of conversations often depended on how busy the participants were. In Auckland in particular, many participants showed interest but did not have time. Therefore, arrangements were made to contact them by email at a later date. However, out of the 11 businesses contacted at a later date no replies were received. Overall, 76 businesses were contacted throughout the four cities and discussions were held with 65 participants (Table 6). Discussions with these participants were semi-structured regarding the impacts of international students on their businesses, perceptions and interactions with the students, and issues of concern about international student and community relations.

The term ‘international student’ was used unless the participant stated they required clarification, which was given in terms of ‘full fee-paying student’. The timing of the observations and interviews was prior to the academic year commencing, thus international students were not present in the cities in their usual numbers as many return home for the summer break.

*Table 6 Field study participants*

<b>Type of business</b>	<b>Auckland</b>	<b>Christchurch</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Tauranga</b>	<b>Total</b>
Restaurant	3	4	4	3	14
Retail	4	1	9	4	18
Leisure	2	1	3	5	11
Transport		4		3	7
Service	4	4	2	5	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>65</b>

## **PERCEPTIONS AND INTERACTIONS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

Common themes were apparent in all of the cities regarding the general business community’s perceptions of and interactions with international students. These themes include: benefits to the economy; cultural learning; lack of mixing between Asian students and New Zealanders; and language barriers. In this section, these themes will be discussed in the context of city and the corresponding concentration of international students. One prominent similarity between the cities that deserves mentioning here is that most people recognise the diversity amongst international students, and often made a brief reference to American and German students; however, generally the term ‘international student’ was immediately related to ‘Asian students’. Much fewer references were made about the diversity of ‘Asian students’. The section concludes with a comparison across the four centres in terms of similarities and differences in attitudes, perceptions and interactions.

### **HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

#### **Auckland Overview**

As New Zealand’s largest city and most populous metropolitan area (of 1 million people in 2001), Auckland is a multicultural city that caters both to tourists and longer term visitors such as international students. There are high numbers of students in the CBD who are highly visible. In Auckland there are many Asian businesses such as foodcourts, small supermarkets, clothes shops, internet cafes and restaurants. Many of these businesses include signage and advertising written in Asian languages, for instance, Chinese or Korean. The rapid growth in these businesses is mostly as a result of the presence of large numbers of international students from Asian backgrounds. ‘Asian style’ food halls in Auckland are frequented by an ethnically

diverse range of people from business and tourists to students. The food halls offer large, cheap Chinese, Thai, Japanese and sometimes Indian cuisines and provide work for many international students as do fast food chain restaurants.

The Central Business District in Auckland is very busy, and this made it difficult to find participants who had time to take part in this survey during the field study component of the data collection.

Participants acknowledged the CBD as a much more ‘vibrant’ place than it was a few years ago as a result of the presence of international students. As a consequence, many businesses in the CBD have adopted longer opening hours because there are now more people, particularly international students, living in the city and therefore frequenting businesses for longer hours. On the other hand, there were also comments about Auckland as too ‘busy’ or ‘congested’. Some participants thought that people coming from outside of Auckland who were not used to the city may say that it does not really look like New Zealand anymore.

Service industries such as banking have employed many bilingual staff especially as a result of the impact of international students on their business. One bank had a specialised counter for international students and tourists, and most have Asian Banking Officers, or access to bilingual staff. The same can be said in many other service sectors such as libraries and postal services and in the retail sector, fast food restaurants. City bus use has increased due to the rise in international student numbers. However, the decline in student numbers since 2003/04 may possibly affect services, which is also likely to disappoint local bus service users.

#### *Perceptions of the Impact of International Students in Auckland*

The numbers of international students in the Auckland CBD are perceived to be very high during the academic year, but this is also in conjunction with the recognition of a rapid decline in student numbers since 2003/04. The drop in numbers of international students was most often noticed in the financial sense and the impact on business.

The economic impact of international students was the most common point raised about international students. Their financial contribution, both in the education sector and the retail and service industries, are widely seen as a major benefit to the city, one person stated “an economic necessity”.

However, a lot of people seemed reticent about whether they would like to see a drop or rise in student numbers or whether they preferred the status quo. This was because the financial benefits were weighed up against what many of them saw as the downside—or having ‘so many of one visible group’.

#### *Perceptions of Community and International Student Interaction*

When talking about their perceptions of the numbers of students in Auckland, participants often communicated a feeling of being “overrun” or “overpowered” by Asians in the CBD. One person mentioned that the fact “Asians appear to bunch together can make people feel out of place in their own country”. This recurring theme was often followed by statements that Asian international students do not mix well and prefer to mix in their own groups. Asian students were often compared to Brazilian students studying in Auckland who were perceived to mix very well. The

only interaction that was mentioned was by homestay families and their students, or groups of language school students who might be from different countries and ethnic backgrounds. Groups of mixed language school students could be seen hanging out for lunch in Aotea Square, relaxing away from the crowds on Queen Street. However, observations in a couple of different food halls which attract a diverse range of customers and in the CBD generally showed very little interaction between international students and New Zealanders.

Many migrants work in the CBD, especially in restaurants, banks, and city supermarkets. These participants acknowledged the addition of cultural ideas and experiences of international students to the city in conjunction with the economic benefits to their businesses. In contrast, Pakeha (European New Zealanders) were less likely to acknowledge cultural learning unless they had experienced close contact with international students, for instance, as a homestay carer. Nevertheless, all participants noted that there was very little or no intercultural interaction.

Overall, economic benefits were acknowledged and accepted; however, in Auckland there was little acknowledgement of the cultural influences or cultural learning as a part of international education.

### **Christchurch Overview**

As New Zealand's third largest city (with a population of 316,000 in 2001), Christchurch is a vibrant and ethnically diverse city which is very attractive to tourists and other international visitors, both for what the city has to offer and as a gateway to the rest of the South Island. Cathedral Square is a focal point in the central business district and is extremely busy with markets and street entertainment. People from all over the world stop for lunch and enjoy the energy and enthusiasm in the square, which is provided by community and overseas performers. A prominent feature in Christchurch is an overwhelming array of restaurants including many different Asian cuisines, restaurants of which are run by people from different Asian backgrounds. Other businesses run by people from Asian backgrounds include internet cafes, computer hardware stores, central city supermarkets, 'Asian-style' food courts, cafes, karaoke bars, clothes shops, make-up and hair salons, and health stores. In some pockets of the central city area advertising in Chinese or Korean is common. Most of the businesses have grown in direct relation to the impact of international students in the city. Many people made reference to the high visibility of international students in the city during the school year. Observations for this project occurred during the summer break, when there were not so many students in Christchurch at that time.

#### *Perceptions of the Impact of International Students in Christchurch*

Similar to Auckland, in the central Christchurch business district there was a strong perception that the numbers of international students within the city had declined rapidly over the last eighteen months to two years. This perception was often validated by a link to the economy and the impact of this decline on business. An emphasis of the financial benefits of international students was a common point made in Christchurch. Some businesses, such as those that provide computer simulation games, experienced a very high level of international student presence and saw this group of students as a target market who have a "high average spend". Public transport, for instance, city buses, experienced high numbers of international student

use, and recognised the importance of this market. At the same time the frontline staff experienced ‘rush hours’ as many groups of international students arrive at once, all wanting to purchase top up cards for their travel. As a result, liaison with private language schools has become important in order that staff are adequately prepared.

In contrast, some businesses, such as cafes and gift shops, did not necessarily see international students as a high impact on their business due to comparative high numbers of tourists.

#### *Perceptions of Community and International Student Interactions*

Most people, whether service providers or those in the business sector, recognised a real lack of integration between international students and New Zealanders.

Language barriers were often mentioned by participants in this survey and were perceived to prevent interaction. Language barriers were the most often mentioned barrier to integration.

Furthermore, the lack of integration was predominantly blamed on international students because they were seen to stay in their own groups and make little effort to integrate. City night life observations showed that New Zealanders hung out in pubs and bars drinking, whereas young Asian students preferred restaurants and cafes to socialise with their friends. In particular, the Chinese or Korean tea houses, which include karaoke rooms, provide an entertainment option for international students who do not frequent the pub scene in the city. Bubble Tea or Pearl Tea is a product that is popular in these tea houses and has now been franchised in a food court situation with Asian international students as the target market (Claridge, 2002). In Christchurch, some people did make distinctions between the countries of origin and cultures of international students rather than exclusively grouping them together as “Asian”. The distinctions were made in relation to perceived cultural differences, the most common being whether students were mostly polite or demanding. These traits were correlated to particular countries. Quite a few references were also made to the Brazilian students studying in Christchurch and their ease of integration as compared to the students from Asian backgrounds.

The main focus in Christchurch was on the money spent by international students. Those in businesses that were used by international students welcomed the income and viewed them as contributing significantly to the local economy. Most people, both service providers and those in the business sector, recognised a real lack of integration between international students and New Zealanders. Many participants blamed international students for not making an effort to mix, and also the fact that the cultural backgrounds between Asians and New Zealanders are very different. Brazilian students were often mentioned as mixing very well in comparison to students from Asian countries. Language barriers were raised in terms of preventing people from interacting well with international students and were cited as the most important barrier to integration. Service providers tended to think that intervention was needed to bring the local community and international students together, particularly intervention by education providers.

### **MEDIUM CONCENTRATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

## **Hamilton Overview**

Hamilton is a medium sized city (of 115,000 people in 2001) with a multicultural population but does not rely heavily on tourist numbers. Visitors are likely come to Hamilton for special events such as the Agricultural Field days or Hot Air Balloon Fiestas. A high density of restaurants is boosted by a reasonable sized migrant population who provide a diversity of food options in the central city. Like Auckland and Christchurch, Hamilton is a university city which attracts high numbers of students. The international student population from Asian backgrounds have, to some extent, influenced the business ventures of migrants in the city who run restaurants, supermarkets, pool halls, and karaoke venues. Many of these businesses, as well as fast food restaurants, provide part-time employment for international students in Hamilton.

### *Perceptions of the Impact of International Students in Hamilton*

Although there was a perception the numbers of international students had declined over the last 18 months, the numbers of international students in Hamilton were not really a concern to people running or working in businesses in the CBD. Most people who participated in the survey thought that higher numbers would be very good for business. The only concern that people had was that numbers of international students in Hamilton did not become too high as they perceived them to be in Auckland. Some of the migrant business owners or workers were concerned that Auckland looked far too much like Asia and preferred Hamilton to remain “looking like New Zealand”.

The foremost impact mentioned was the economic benefit of international students to the business district. Some businesses, particularly those offering entertainment and retail, noticed a significant drop-off in student numbers during the summer break. Those in the computer simulation gaming industry noted that international students were “high spenders”, thus valuable to their business operations.

### *Perceptions of Community and International Student Interactions*

Most people mentioned a lack of mixing between international students and New Zealanders. A very common term used in Hamilton was that international students “stick to their own group”. Language barriers were perceived to hinder interaction between service and retail industries in the CBD and international students. However, there was an understanding that with a little extra time they could usually get their point across and make themselves understood to the international student. Cultural barriers were also mentioned but with less frequency than language barriers.

Overall, the economic impact of international students was the most notable perception of people in the Hamilton CBD. The perceived difficulties of interaction with international students were language barriers, and the perception that international students preferred to mix in their own groups and make little effort to get to know the rest of the community.

## **LOW CONCENTRATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **Tauranga Overview**

Tauranga is a smaller city with 90,000 people in 2001. Tauranga and Mount Maunganui are very popular with out of town visitors, because of the beaches which are very close to the central business districts. Tauranga's City Council and education industry are very focused on a region wide marketing approach and work collaboratively for the benefit of the region and industry as a whole. The international students in Tauranga and Mount Maunganui are quite visible because there appears to be a much lower migrant population. Nevertheless, there are a few Asian restaurants and a supermarket that caters specifically to migrants and students from Asian backgrounds. From the perspective of the education industry and those with vested interests in promoting the region as a region of choice, there is a sense of pride in the personalised service that can be offered to individual students because of the small size of the educational institutions, and the corresponding small numbers of international students in Tauranga/Mount Maunganui.

*Perceptions of the Impact of International Students in Tauranga/Mount Maunganui*

People in Tauranga on the whole seemed rather ambivalent about the impact of international students. There was a definite recognition there had been a decline in numbers in the last one to two years, but people overall were happy with the numbers both now and the higher numbers in the past.

Economic impacts were acknowledged by some participants but not by all, although most people agreed that international students did frequent their businesses. The service sector, such as banks and information centres, did recognise an impact in terms of the volume of students who need specific products or information.

*Perceptions of Community and International Student Interactions*

As Tauranga is a city that has traditionally attracted retired people, some people mentioned they liked the fact that international students brought an element of youth to the city. Most people mentioned language as a problem but also recognised that patience was needed in order to communicate effectively. Many people responded that over time, they could see an improvement in the English proficiency of students. People seemed to find Asian international students to be very polite and pleasant, but did compare them to Brazilian students who they said mixed more easily than did Asian international students. Homestays were seen to be the place where the best interaction could take place between international students and community members.

Overall, people in Tauranga and Mount Maunganui noticed international students in their community; however, the impact was seen to be quite minor and their presence was seen to be quite positive. Although financial benefits were recognised, this aspect of international education was not a focus point. Some people did relate to some of the incidents involving international students at the national level which have been portrayed negatively in the media, but people perceived there to be no issues of concerns regarding international students in the Bay of Plenty area. Issues of concerns were perceived to be more likely to happen in places such as Auckland, where they knew there to be high numbers of international students concentrated in one area. Community organisations that provide community information are not utilised by students or educational institutions (unless they provide tourist type information), probably as a result of the personalised service given by the educational staff to individual students. Furthermore, liaison between the educational institutions and community services and businesses took place depending on what the schools

saw as the needs of the students. The issue which is brought up the most, in terms of interaction with international students, is language difficulties. However, most people recognised a need for patience and saw a rapid improvement in individual's language ability over time.

## **COMPARISONS OF THE FOUR CENTRES**

The most obvious similarity between the four centres was the perception of the lack of integration of international students into local communities. During the informal door-knocking part of the data collection, the blame was squarely laid on the shoulders of the international students for the lack of mixing in all four centres.

Both Auckland and Christchurch were very similar in terms of how community members within the CBDs perceived and interacted with international students. People saw the economic benefits, but this was tempered by the perception that international students did not mix well. There was quite a large impact in terms of high numbers of a 'visible' group.

An interesting feature of this research was that community members in Auckland, Christchurch and Tauranga mentioned Brazilian students as mixing much better than Asian students with local communities. Brazilian students tend not to feature significantly in FFP student statistics (see Table 2). Therefore, it was surprising references were so often made about this specific group. Key informant contacts suggested that Brazilian students were, as the community viewed them, "loud", "boisterous", "fun" and "adventurous". There were some who thought that a few Brazilians could add real life to classrooms and activities, but more than a few could be a little more difficult to handle. They tended towards "sticking together" themselves, as was perceived of the Asian students; however, the Brazilian students go out into the community as a group, are very social, and are inclined to let people know "we're Brazilian"! In Christchurch, a particular Burger King restaurant was always mentioned as the 'hang out' for Brazilian students. An informant validated this, saying that they seem to know about the Burger King meeting place even before they arrive in Christchurch. This would suggest Brazilian students' have access to pre-arrival information, although it is difficult to say whether it is formal or informal. Further research is required to explore the differences between the very large population of "quiet and exclusive" Asian international students, and the smaller number of "loud and social" Brazilian students, and how these differences impact on community attitudes and on the experiences of the students themselves in terms of adjusting to the new environment.

The economic impacts were most strongly recognised in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton, whereas participants in Tauranga were less focussed on economic benefits even though they were acknowledged. In both Auckland and Christchurch the service industries, in particular banks, catered to international students by providing specialised staff, bilingual staff and translations of information and application forms. The service industries in both Hamilton and Tauranga were also well prepared in terms of interacting with international students. Again, banks make the biggest impression in terms of seeing the need to make adjustments to suit the needs of this client base.

The sharp decline in international student numbers was very apparent to the business sector; but for service providers, this decline had given them a chance to evaluate their systems and processes to better cope with the needs of international students. Many service providers in both cities commented that a rise in the numbers of international students could only be possible if there was a corresponding rise in services and resources to support the students, and the encouragement of networking between service providers, both community and government agencies, in the cities. Service providers were more likely to recognise that integration takes adjustment and effort by both the host and the visitor, and most often thought that educational institutions need to take the lead in interventions to integrate international students.

People in both Hamilton and Tauranga made comparisons to Auckland and its high numbers of students and the “problems” associated with this. People in both centres thought they could handle more students, especially in terms of business. However, participants in Hamilton were more concerned that numbers did not get as high as Auckland. The education industry in Tauranga works closely with the city to provide “a good quality product and experience for their students”, competing with other centres, but was also proud of the unique and personal experience they could offer. It seems that international students in Tauranga do not provide their local community with any issues of concern.

## **ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

International students are a category of visitor to New Zealand who, in many ways, are very vulnerable. Unlike refugees and migrants, international students do not have easy access to all services because they are not New Zealand citizens. Furthermore, unlike most tourists, international students remain in New Zealand for extended periods, depending on the type of course or schooling they are enrolled in. They are also vulnerable as they are generally young and experiencing life away from families and friends for perhaps the first time in their lives.

Where international student numbers are in high concentrations and in the more established centres, such as Auckland and Christchurch, there is quite a high level of concern about how international students are adapting to New Zealand and how we can better provide services for their needs. Service providers in both these cities are proactive and want to make sure systems are put in place to support the students before they get into trouble. Issues of concerns range around culture shock and unmet expectations, lack of integration with the local community, health and gambling issues, accommodation, driver licensing and car insurance.

On the other hand, Hamilton service providers are generally more positive about international students, while still having issues of concerns about gambling, financial mismanagement, and health issues. From the point of view of service providers in Tauranga there are not really any issues of concern surrounding international students. This is due mainly to the very small numbers of students, small size of the institutions and the personal attention and care that can be given to individual students.

All centres are battling against media driven public perceptions that stereotype international students as wealthy kids who buy fast cars and drive badly.

## **MEDIA**

In all of the centres, remarks were made about the media portrayals of international students, which more often than not tend to be negative. Misconceptions and stereotypes are often drawn from media representations and this shapes general public perception. The (mis)perceptions can cause friction within communities. For instance, according to LTSA (Barker, 2004) and police (anecdotally) car accidents and crime statistics are actually quite low for international students as a group in society; however, public perception has created the international student as both a victim and perpetrator. In Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton education providers and service providers were advocating for media representations to show the value of having international students in the community, for instance, financial benefits, cultural learning, and the introduction of new ideas and experiences into the community. In Christchurch, a bilingual newspaper and student magazine aims to bridge the gap between cultures through being inclusive and showing points of similarities and differences.

## **INFORMATION PROVISION**

Mass media can be used as a tool to provide realistic information to the local community about international students. Similarly, realistic information must be provided to students and their families before they leave their home country. There was concern that information, including the cost of living in New Zealand and what to expect in homestays, is often not realistic, which in turn causes expectations to differ greatly from reality. This is an important point highlighted by Ward and Masgoret (2004) in the national survey about the experiences of international students. Furthermore, although orientations for international students are to provide students with information, there is some concern that information overload effects students really getting what they need at the time. Many service providers in Hamilton and Auckland were concerned about how to attract international students to seminars and orientations.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Issues about accommodation for international students were areas of concern in all of the regions in this study. Homestays were often seen as the best place for international student and community interaction. However, a predominant view, especially in the larger cities, was the need for the industry to be more efficiently regulated. The most significant concern, especially in cities the sizes of Auckland or Christchurch, was a homestay carer who has been blacklisted by one school or institution can easily go and sign up with another as there is no database or regulating system for homestay carers.

Homestays are viewed as the best way to provide intercultural interaction. However, both the student and the homestay carer need to be provided with support and information on how best to negotiate their intercultural experience. Cultural

differences occur in terms of how long a student spends in the shower, how much time they spend on the internet at night, and why they don't eat the food they're given. Whereas the students may feel they are not given enough food or they don't like the food, and sometimes feel they are not included in the family.

Students who are over 18 are only required to stay in their homestays for four weeks. In Auckland, this was an issue because international students often tend to leave their homestay after this time, instead of getting used to the change, and learning more about New Zealand life and improving their English. A care provider (coordinates homestay families) in Christchurch said her care givers (homestay families) and students stayed together for much longer, some of them staying with the same family for the duration of their course. The homestay family and students must have good support, networking and information in order to make the experience worthwhile for everyone concerned.

Homestay coordinators also expressed concern that when students went out flatting with their friends they were not equipped with information about tenancy, paying bills, cooking and cleaning. Self-management is an issue for young adults who come from families that include six people, parents and grandparents focusing care on one child.

## **INTERACTIONS**

Interaction with the community is a concern that was shared by almost everybody who participated in this survey. In particular, language barriers were seen to be the main cause of ineffective integration. Many people saw the educational institutions as the place where students would spend the majority of their time, and that educational institutions benefited the most financially. Therefore, they should be the ones who initiate interventions to help students integrate better into the community. In particular, mentoring, sports and similar activities were seen as the best way to get international students to interact with the rest of the community. Sport and activities such as hiking are viewed as interventions that can help stop students from experiencing boredom, which might lead them to frequent casinos and bars.

Along with homestay accommodation, volunteering is seen by service providers as an effective way to involve international students in local communities. Volunteering organisations in all of the centres had international student clients who sought placements to learn about New Zealand, practice their English, and perhaps find work in the chosen field of study. Various problems arise for the centres in terms of the expectations of the students that it will be easy to find work, and in some places, language proficiency. Furthermore, the work of finding agencies that will take on students in a volunteer capacity can sometimes be difficult. The length of stay of the students also affects whether they can be placed. Some volunteer offices have placed stipulations that students must be intending to stay in the city for at least six months to carry out their placement.

## **GAMBLING**

The presence of casinos in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton are issues of concerns for counsellors in this area who are seeing clients who are already

experiencing serious, life changing problems. Students who find themselves tempted into serious gambling can become prone to depression and other health illnesses due to overwhelming financial debt. All of these cities have services that provide students with access to bilingual counsellors. Service providers in Christchurch and Auckland noted the provision of cultural and language specific services has pre-empted a rise in Asian clients seeking the service. Although Tauranga does not have a casino, a couple of participants suggested that international students may find their social lives in Tauranga to be pretty boring. Another mentioned that students from Tauranga do travel in groups to either Auckland or Hamilton to have fun. Therefore, there is the opportunity for Tauranga international students to engage in gambling.

## **HEALTH**

Mental health and sexual health are also areas for concern, particularly in Auckland and Christchurch. Issues around depression, abortion and sex education are difficult issues to tackle, as they are not talked about openly by many people from Asian backgrounds. Bilingual counsellors in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton work closely with ethnic communities and international students to try to encourage people to come forward when they are suffering. The counsellors who participated in this project were all proactive in finding ways to provide support for international students before problems occurred.

Several people in both Auckland and Christchurch mentioned that health issues need to be declared before the student comes to New Zealand, so that institutions are aware of their student's history and can provide the appropriate support.

## **CITY VARIATIONS**

Auckland and Christchurch are well established in the international education sector. The rapid rise in international student numbers caught both cities off guard, in terms of service provision and resources available to properly provide a quality service. However, the decline in numbers over the last 18 months has afforded services providers the opportunity to put systems in place that enable them to better deal with the different dimensions of issues that international students present.

However, many service providers and those interested in the pastoral care of international students would be concerned to see a rise in the number of international students in these two cities, because they do not believe there is enough support in terms of issues to do with finance management, mental and sexual health, and culture shock. Both Auckland and Christchurch have Asian Liaison police officers who are concerned with the care of young adults who are not equipped with the right information to protect themselves. However, the police can only step in to help after the student is in trouble. The group which is seen to be most at risk in Auckland and Christchurch are those who are between 18 and 25, who are not covered by the Code of Practice as thoroughly as students who are under 18 attending primary and secondary schools.

Hamilton and Tauranga both have much lower concentrations of students. Therefore, concerns are more about information provision and working to avoid the problems that have become issues in the bigger centres. Like Auckland and Christchurch, the

lack of interaction and cultural misunderstandings are recognised as issues of concern. In Hamilton, quite a lot of emphasis is put on proactive prevention of problems. As well, service providers are confronted with issues such as how to get information to students, how to get them interested, and how best to match up mismatched expectations which are often formed before international students leave their home country. Tauranga, on the other hand, relies on its accessibility to individual students, and so can offer support mostly when it is needed.

Because Tauranga is a very small centre, international students may visit Hamilton and Auckland regularly in order to meet other friends and experience a faster pace of life. Similarly, students in Hamilton can travel to Auckland easily. Therefore, the students in Tauranga and Hamilton are also at risk to the problems which have surfaced in Auckland.

## **EFFECTIVE PRACTICE INITIATIVES**

In our interviews with key stakeholders in the four cities, we asked participants to suggest initiatives that have been undertaken in the various centres to address the issue of international students and community relations. Some of these initiatives are discussed below. It is important to note that the initiatives that have been suggested by the participants in this research are not exhaustive of the initiatives being used in each of the four centres. The initiatives are used as examples of good ideas that have worked well, and they are not ranked in any particular order. The aim was to use these initiatives to aid constructing recommendations and guidelines for this report.

### **AUCKLAND- MEETING NEW CHALLENGES**

An interesting feature of the initiatives we have identified in Auckland is that they are all proactive services designed to meet the new challenges and new needs that providing for international students presents.

#### **Citizens Advice Bureaux International Students Service Centre**

The International Students Service Centre (ISS) opened in June 2004 and is a non-profit voluntary organisation which provides free, unbiased, independent advice and advocacy for international students citywide. The ISS has four key features that allow for effective support of international students:

- ISS is a “*one-stop shop*” where international students can find impartial information about any issue they have.
- The centre employs international student volunteers so offers *bilingual and bicultural support*.
- ISS is situated in Queen Street and located in a building which also houses a language school and many other businesses and service providers. The *anonymity* of the ISS amongst many other locations helps to *protect the privacy* of international students who may feel embarrassed about an issue they need advice about.
- The centre uses a multi-agency approach. It allows many different service providers, such as Family Planning and the Problem Gambling Foundation, to hold clinics and also provides space for group meetings such as homestay

providers. Therefore, the ISS *provides information for service providers and the education industry* as well as international students.

### **New Zealand Police Initiative**

*Creating awareness and networking opportunities* are the key features of the New Zealand Police Initiative. In July 2004 the Asian Liaison Officer of Auckland City District Police, facilitated by Wong Liu Shueng (Community Liaison Advisor of the Office of Ethnic Affairs), held a workshop involving 22 people who have direct interactions with international students to discuss the concerns and issues surrounding the students. Consequently, six more workshops have been held for service providers in the Auckland region to create awareness of the services provided which benefit international students and to discuss the difficulties or ideas and initiatives that different service providers have experienced in their dealings with international students. The aims were to bridge service gaps, share information and learn from one another about international student experiences. Issues that have been discussed include: gambling, driving, accommodation, recreation, and 'living in New Zealand'.

### **Youthtown**

The key feature about Youthtowns' effective practice is its *refocusing of its service to accommodate the new needs* of international students. Originally, Youthtown targeted troubled New Zealand youth, 13-18 years. Recreational activities such as basketball and table tennis were provided to keep the youth off the streets. However, because of the influx of international students into the Auckland CBD, the centre has changed its mission statement to accommodate international students and actively seek this client base.

Similarly, changes to systems and processes have occurred in city libraries because of the impact of the presence of international students. Both Auckland and Christchurch libraries have been proactive in employing bilingual staff and in increasing funding of ESOL materials (which are the highest used resource in the libraries) to cater for the demands of international students. Libraries offer a safe and secure environment for students to meet with friends and study. During the peak of international student numbers, and the high international student use of city libraries, pressure was put on resources, study space within the libraries, and staff time dealing with communication issues and high school and tertiary assignment questions. Some of these issues, such as study space, are not easily resolved for libraries. However, the libraries are proactive in their response to international student needs.

## **CHRISTCHURCH- BRIDGING CULTURES**

A strong focus in Christchurch's effective practice initiatives was the emphasis on "bridging cultures". Service providers in Christchurch are interested in finding ways to best encourage people of different cultures to interact.

### **Asian Youth Trust**

The Christchurch Asian Youth Trust was set up in February 2001, initially to help young migrants in Christchurch. More recently it also targeted international students.

International students now make up almost 80% of the Trust's client base. The international students the Trust identifies as most in need are those studying at private language schools, mainly because the students at primary, secondary and state tertiary institutions have their own support systems. Most students find out about the Trust through word of mouth.

The aim of the Asian Youth Trust is to provide support for international students. It also provides *a bridge between international student cultures and the local community culture*. The Trust provides information seminars for students, as well as encouraging international students to become involved in sports, recreation and other activities and running events such as bus tours. The trust is active in creating and maintaining networks between themselves and service providers. The main problem the Trust encounters is getting Pakeha New Zealanders involvement in Trust activities and events.

The Trust is successful in creating a support network for international students and can mediate between students, the educational institution and the local community. A similar suggestion at a workshop held in Hamilton about the issues for international students included an independent advocacy for international students in the form of a students' association. The idea of independent advocacy is important because students may not feel comfortable approaching staff at the place they study.

### **Bilingual Newspaper**

A private initiative to provide a bilingual newspaper also aims to *bridge cultures*. The newspaper has been in circulation in Christchurch for over a year now. All stories in the newspaper are written in both Mandarin and English. The mainstream business community advertises in the paper and the letters to the editor are from both Chinese readers and the wider community. There has been a positive reaction from many people—one Chinese student stated it gave her issues to discuss with her homestay family. The editor also publicises more 'negative' responses in an attempt to "say it like it is". The stories are both positive and negative regarding international students, in order to show both the differences and similarities between the international student/migrant community and the host community.

Likewise, a Christchurch tertiary institution publishes a bilingual student magazine. Mandarin is used because it is by far the widest language spoken on campus after English. The aim of the bilingual magazine is to *include international students in the student culture of the institution*. There have been positive spin-offs in terms of international student participation on committees, becoming active in the student association, and an opportunity for the international students to increase their English language proficiency. Similarly, the student association president noted an increase in international student use of the student advocacy services.

### **Operation Friendship**

Operation friendship operates in several universities throughout New Zealand and began in Christchurch in 1991. This organisation is a Christian organisation whose aim is to be friends to international students and to assist them in any way that is needed as they settle in to New Zealand culture. In Christchurch, Operation

Friendship is made up of four (at present) groups of Kiwis who invite their group of students to their homes for meals and social occasions every month or so. These social gatherings provide opportunities for students to experience New Zealand culture, practise English, have fun, and form significant friendships with New Zealanders. Operation Friendship's aim is to help make the students' time at university and in Christchurch a highlight of their lives. The objective is to provide support and friendship to students throughout their stay, although challenges include maintaining communication and contact during that time. There is also some difficulty gaining enough New Zealand participants to host the students.

## **HAMILTON- EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING**

As a result of the success of the Auckland Police Initiative, we asked Wong Liu Shueng if she would facilitate a similar workshop in Hamilton to provide information sharing and networking opportunities amongst service providers. This workshop was held on 10 December 2004, and was attended by representatives from the education, local government, law, health, and community sectors. Many of the participants in the Hamilton workshop expressed concern about information provision for students. The initiatives we have found in Hamilton tend towards information provision and education, both of the mainstream community, and international students and their families.

### **Waikato Chinese Students and Scholars Association**

The Waikato Chinese Students and Scholars Association is primarily involved in the *education* of international students to help their adjustment to the new society and environment they are living and learning in. This organisation was established in 1993 to support Chinese students in Hamilton who were sponsored by the Chinese government. These students were usually post-graduate students, not necessarily young students. Today, however, the Waikato Chinese Students and Scholars Association is geared to help young students, usually 17 or 18, who are sent by their families to gain a Western education and English language practice, which is seen to be able to result in better job opportunities, either in New Zealand, overseas, or when the students return to China. Many of these students have not lived away from their families before, and "suddenly find themselves in a foreign country, with no parental controls and sole responsibility for their own finances" (Cunningham, 2004). One of the members of the association became involved in helping Chinese students because he noticed many students on his street were not recycling their rubbish in the correct way, and the street had started to look very dirty. He decided to do a pamphlet drop to explain to students how to look after their street and recycle their waste. Another related aim of this pamphlet drop was to show Kiwis that many Chinese do good work, and the intention is to help to dispel the negative connotations about international students that often appear in mainstream press.

Furthermore, a project has been initiated with some media students to make a ten hour documentary about the experiences of international students in New Zealand, as well as the experiences of New Zealanders towards international students. Steps are being undertaken to request to have the documentary shown on both China and New Zealand mainstream television.

## **E-Buddies**

Many international students experience mismatched expectations when they arrive in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). The University of Waikato International Centre is beginning a programme in A semester of 2005 as a way to address this problem. This programme gives international students who have been accepted by the university but have not yet left home, the chance to make contact with a new Kiwi friend using email. Valuable and realistic *information* can be provided to the international student before she or he even leaves their home. International students are invited to make contact with an e-Buddy who has been trained by the international centre. The brochure states “If you become an e-Buddy, you will be contacted by a new student who will want to ask questions about Waikato University, Hamilton, Kiwis, Kiwi culture – lots of things that will help them know what to expect when they get to New Zealand!”.

Because the programme is new there are no evaluations or indications as to how the idea will be received by both local and overseas students. However, preparation at home before the student leaves their home country is very important. E-buddies tries to improve this situation of information provision and is especially useful because the information is going from student to student.

Homestays is another area where improvement can be made in terms of information provision for homestay families, the students, and families of the students. Homestays are regarded as being an excellent place for intercultural interaction; however, all parties must be fully prepared for the experience and understand the reality of the homestay experience. A care provider in Christchurch suggested bilingual support was a necessity during the first part of the students stay, and handbooks in the students’ first language are necessary. Similarly, she recommended contact between the host family and the student’s family prior to their arrival in New Zealand, and maintenance of this close contact while the student is living with the family. This information sharing could include exchanging photos, email and telephone calls.

## **Volunteering Waikato**

Volunteering Waikato is an organisation that is very positive about international student contributions to the local community, and they are active in advocating and highlighting these contributions. Volunteering Waikato maintains a positive relationship with the high numbers of international students that come to them seeking work in the local community. The organisation reports students to be very highly motivated and wanting to get out into the community, and make the most of the opportunities on offer. Some students want jobs related to their field of study, which can be impossible; however, most are happy to be in the community, learning about New Zealand and improving their English. The only difficulty the organisation experiences is attracting enough community agencies to employ international students. Volunteering Waikato is proactive in recruiting international students and regularly attends the international student orientation day. International students are also involved in volunteer work at the organisation itself as volunteering interviewers and training is provided.

Volunteer Western Bay of Plenty is also proactive in recruiting international students in the Tauranga area. In particular they run Japanese student internships and actively evaluate the experiences of the students and the community agencies. Difficulties encountered for both parties include communication difficulties and a mismatch in expectations, particularly students who presume they will carry out their volunteer work in the business sector rather than the community sector.

## **TAURANGA- PERSONALISED SERVICE**

Tauranga is a small centre which is currently establishing itself in the international education industry. To do this, the focus is on providing a quality product. Because of the small number of international students in the city, providers are able to give their students a very personalised experience.

### **Personal networks between educational institutions and service providers**

The real benefit of the small numbers of international students and small size of the educational institutions in Tauranga was the *personal services and support* that could be given directly to individual students. Teachers and support staff are able to know their students individually. One language school we spoke to were able to personally escort students to the doctor or bank to help them if they were experiencing difficulties. On the other hand, the educational institution was also able to maintain close contact with the service providers whom the students most need to visit; therefore, the service providers are prepared for the students.

Similarly, two accommodation providers who participated in Christchurch also prided themselves on the very personal service they were able to provide their international students. One, a tertiary accommodation provider, made sure that all staff tried to learn the names of the students under their care as well as making sure that the residences were culturally mixed and many activities were planned. The other, a homestay coordinator for primary and secondary students, advocated close contact to be maintained with the students' families and that the student should be treated like a member of the family. Therefore, the larger centres, like the small centres which attract international students, can provide a personalised service at the organisation level.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **PERCEPTIONS AND INTERACTIONS- COMPARISONS OF FOUR CITIES**

In the parallel quantitative component of this research, it was found there was "little variation across regions in any of the factors examined". However, in this component, differences were found in the perceptions of people in the central business districts of the four cities.

Overall, the responses of the field study participants in the central cities emphasised differences between the two cities with higher concentrations of international students (Auckland and Christchurch) and the cities with medium (Hamilton) and low (Tauranga) concentrations of international students. These discussions showed a less positive general perception of international students, particularly in terms of

interaction and communication in Auckland and Christchurch. People in both Hamilton and Tauranga were generally more positive about international students' presence and have more time to accommodate international students.

The economic impacts of international students were strongly noted in all four communities. However, there was a much stronger recognition in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton. This was found particularly in relation to references made by participants to the recent decline in student numbers and the impacts on the local economies. The participants in Tauranga had noticed a decline in numbers but did not relate this to an impact on business. The economic benefits were acknowledged far more than any social or cultural benefits in all four communities.

The economic benefits were more likely to be weighed up in relation to the high numbers of a 'visibly different' group in both Auckland and Christchurch, so members of these communities were more likely to be reticent as to whether higher numbers would be beneficial. People in Hamilton thought higher numbers would be good for business but were concerned Hamilton's numbers should not reach a level relative to Auckland's. In Tauranga, people were mostly ambivalent about international student numbers, although, like people in the other three centres, they had noticed the decline in numbers over the last few years.

Service providers were more likely to say that more resources and support mechanisms were required for international students if the numbers of international students were to rise again. Services providers in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton had similar concerns to each other regarding international students; however, they focussed on service and information provision and the need for resources in order to better provide for the needs of the students. International students in Tauranga were not perceived to face any major difficulties because of the personalised service they could receive in the education institutions they studied at.

As a result of the differences in contexts and capacities of the cities different responses to the issues surrounding international students have arisen in the four cities. The effective practices described above show Auckland to be responding to and meeting new challenges. Christchurch has attempted to bridge cultures through fostering interaction and understanding. Hamilton is proactive in its attempts to inform students and pre-empt the difficulties and challenges students have faced in the larger centres. Tauranga, through its lower number of international students, is able to offer personal care and support. The cities have responded to the presence of international students, but further collaboration between educational institutions, central and local government agencies, international students and community groups needs to be developed. The numbers of students within a city does impact differently on the local community, however the focus should be on the capacity of the city to provide adequate resources and support for both the students and the local communities within the cities.

The recommendations and guidelines outlined below are made in relation to the recommendations provided in the adjacent report. We fully support these recommendations and expand them through the results of this study. The major recommendations arising from this report are:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Encouraging interaction

- Encourage students to participate in community groups (including volunteering), and likewise, encourage community groups to make their services available to international students.
- Often language barriers are blamed for communication problems; people seldom take cultural differences into account. Need to encourage intercultural understanding through assisting people of different cultures to interact. Improve cultural support, and cultural responsiveness in services to international students (police, lawyers, counsellors etc).
- Provide training to service providers in the community who deal with international students (such as bus drivers, library staff and post office staff), to help bridge language and cultural barriers.
  - ❖ The Four Winds project is an excellent example of intercultural training, which focuses on cross-cultural understanding and communicating skills. Training materials are provided in the form of modules for businesses, services or education providers who engage with international students or migrants (ie. Limited, <http://www.ie-nz.com/pages/pd.htm>).

### Information provision

- Provide international students and their families with realistic information about New Zealand, such as the cost of living in New Zealand and what to expect in homestays, before the students leave their home country. Often extensive information is provided to students during orientation, which can be very ineffective due to information overload.
- Strengthen support for homestay families.
- Encourage information sharing and networking amongst service providers.
- One stop shop – where international students can go for independent information when the time arises.
- Need for independent advocacy for international students.

### Collaboration within the cities

- Each city attracts international students for different reasons. City leaders, educational institutions and community groups should work together to promote the development of educational materials for the wider community on the benefits of having international students, and to develop strategies for effective support of international students and improvement of their relationship with local communities.

### Further research

- Further research to explore why some groups of students, such as Brazilian students, are perceived to mix well with local communities while other groups are not, and how these differences impact on the experiences of the students themselves in terms of adjusting to the new environment.

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## APPENDIX 1

### COMMUNITY SURVEY ON INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### 1. Introduction

- Self introduction
- Explain purpose of interview (to provide information to assist the Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand to understand perceptions and interactions of international students in the community)
- Outline topics that will be discussed
- Explain purpose of tape recording
- Assure confidentiality and have the respondent sign the consent form

#### *Turn Tape Recorder On*

#### 2. Background Information

- Name of responding organisation:
  - City: Auckland / Christchurch / Hamilton / Tauranga
- Respondent's position and responsibilities:
- Overview of the aims, target clientele and main services/business of the responding organisation.
  - Aims:*
  - Target Clienteles:*
  - Main Service/Business:*

#### 3. Your interactions and perceptions of international students

- What proportion of your clients are international students?
- Has the proportion of international students in your service/business changed in the last five years?
- What is the impact of international students on your service/business? (benefits/disadvantages)
- What do you do to enhance your organisation's interactions with international students?
- What prevents your organisation from interacting with international students?
- How many international students are studying in (city) currently? (probe for an estimate)
- Is this number too low, too high, or about right?
- What do you think should be the optimal number of international students in (this city)?

#### 4. Concerns regarding international student and community relations in your city

- What do you think are the key issues of concern regarding international and community relations in (city)? Why?

*Summarise respondent's concerns (e.g. accommodation, transport, security, entertainment and leisure facilities). Explore services currently available that can address **each** issue of concern raised.*

- What services are currently available in (city) that address this concern?
- What is useful / not useful about these services?
- What examples/suggestions can you give concerning best practice features in services that can address this issue of international student and community relations in this city?

## **5. Overall comments**

This research aims to provide information about interactions with international students and to develop guidelines on how to integrate international students into local communities.

- What can be done to improve the relationship of international students and local communities in this city?  
*By educational institutions?*  
*Local government?*  
*Business sector?*  
*Community groups?*  
*Central government?*  
*Others?*
- Do you think you have told me enough so that I understand the issues that are important for international students-local communities relations? Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Which other organisation(s) do you think I should contact to further my understanding of the situation?