Asian international teacher education (AITE) students in Australia: unfolding the different perceptions of their challenges, and disentangling their sources of struggle

Jim Peng Lee

Master of Education, TESOL (University of Sydney, 1993)
Diploma in TEFL (University of Sydney, 1992)
Bachelor of Arts (South China Normal University, Guangzhou, 1984)

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Centre for Education Research
College of Arts
University of Western Sydney

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DECLARATION

I declare that, except where due acknowledgement has been made, this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text, and a list of references is given.

..................
Jim Peng Lee
19 October 2013
DEDICATION

For my late father, Professor Xi Huai Lee

谨将此论文献给我敬爱的父亲李锡槐教授
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## List of Abbreviations

- **AITE**: Asian international teacher education
- **AST**: Australian schoolteachers
- **CALD**: culturally and linguistically diverse (background)
- **DET**: Department of Education and Training (NSW)
- **EFL**: English as a foreign language
- **ELF**: English as a lingua franca
- **ESL**: English as a second language
- **L1**: A person’s first language
- **L2**: The language acquired as a second one, after the mother tongue
- **NESB**: Non English Speaking Background
- **NNS**: Non-native speakers
- **NS**: native speakers
- **OECD**: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **P1**: First practicum
- **P2**: Second practicum
- **PDHPE**: Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- **WES**: World English Speakers
ABSTRACT

In the last decade, a corpus of research has explored the challenges that international students from non-English speaking backgrounds are confronted with in their teacher education courses. This thesis focuses on Asian international teacher education (AITE) students in Australia, who face extra challenges on top of the stress and anxiety that most novice teachers would experience during their teacher education course, and particularly in their practicum. While cultural difference and English language proficiency are two of the most frequently mentioned causes of these challenges in the research, opinions about the key challenges for these students are still much divided. In addition, there is a paucity of knowledge about AITE students’ own perceptions of their experiences. These issues are related to the problem of teacher shortages in Australia, and form the basis of this research project.

This thesis studies the perceptions of ten AITE students in regard to their struggles to construct their identity as a teacher in the Australian context. Two main research questions guided the exploration of the research problem: Firstly, what are the key challenges that AITE students themselves perceive as confronting them in their course, and particularly in the practicum, and secondly, are these perceptions echoed by other key players, such as their university lecturers or supervising teachers in schools? What are their perceptions about the students’ struggles, and do these perceptions match?

The focus of this research project is on postgraduate secondary teacher education students whose first degree was completed in a non-Anglophone culture and who were doing an end-on course in pre-service teacher education. Ten students were recruited from an Australian university that attracts high numbers of AITE students in a Master of Teaching (MTeach) degree. Semi-structured, individual
interviews, as well as group interviews and documentary analyses were used to collect the primary data.

With a view to conceptualising the issue of teacher identity as membership of a community, which was identified by this research as a key challenge that AITE students face, a theoretical framework was established, based on relevant concepts from the following scholars: Miller (2003) on teacher identity; Kachru (1985) and Pennycook (2010) on English and language; Wenger (1998) on communities of practice, and Pavlenko and Norton (2007) on imagination and imagined communities.

I argue that the biggest challenge that the researched AITE students faced is neither simply a language issue nor one of ‘cultural difference’, but involves the larger complexity of seeking to belong to the community of ‘Australian schoolteachers’—a complexity that is composed of various barriers. Overcoming this complexity depends largely on the ways in which AITE students perceive themselves and how they are perceived as teachers. Thinking about new ways of perceiving the students and their challenges, and cultivating ‘safe spaces’, various imagined communities of practice to which they feel they can belong, becomes critical.

This research project informs higher education policy-makers in governments and universities in Australia about the particular needs of such students. It provides an empirically grounded, theoretically informed investigation of the needs of AITE students and of the demands of their courses. It provides a basis for improving understandings of the process of orientation into Australian schooling cultures for AITE students or equivalent. Finally, this research suggests that teacher education courses should be reconceptualised for AITE students by addressing issues of equity (here positioned as a separate consideration from equality), and giving adequate attention to their special needs and differences.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis uses a case study to focus on the perceptions held by, and of, ten Asian international teacher education (AITE) students,¹ in relation to their struggles to be identified as teachers in the Australian context. The challenges that AITE students face, and arguments about the reasons for their struggles, were first brought to my attention in 2008, when I was working as a research assistant on a project concerned with IELTS scores. At that time, one of the key academic arguments entailed ‘cultural difference’ ‘in the areas of educational culture, the culture of relationships in the school environment as a workplace and an institute of education, and communication with the member of the school community’ (McCluskey, 2004b, p. 90) being seen as a key source of their struggles. Another key argument identified both ‘English language proficiency’ and ‘cultural differences’ as the key sources of challenges that international non-English speaking background (NESB) students face (Campbell, O’Gorman, Tangen, Donna, Spooner-Lane, & Alford, 2008; Campbell, Tangen & Spooner-Lane, 2006; Chen & Short, 2010; Muir, Ashman, Short, Jales, & Myhill, 2010; Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell, 2007; Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell, 2009).

My own opinion, after 25 years of teaching, researching and learning as a NESB person, did not support the claim of ‘cultural differences’. I felt that most NESB teacher education students were struggling not with ‘cultural differences’ but with language skills and a lack of the necessary tacit knowledge. I was surprised that

¹ By Asian international teacher education students, I refer to students who were born in countries in continental Asia and enrolled in an end-on teacher education course in Australia. I recognise that the term ‘Asian’ can be problematic. For more explanations in this regard, please refer to footnote 20, in Chapter 5.
even when the majority of NESB participants admitted, in a research project, that their level of English had proved to be ‘a greater barrier’ during the practicum than they had originally expected (Spooner-Lane et al., 2007, p. 6), researchers still hesitated to highlight language as the key source of students’ struggles. In other words, scholarly perspectives on the role that English language competence played in AITE students’ struggles in their teacher education course, particularly in the practicum, tended to be avoiding what students seemed to think, and certainly what I thought was a central issue for them. This was the context of my preliminary motive for conducting this research.

At that time, I believed that awareness of a culture would improve simultaneously with the progress one made in language skills, and that learning a language was similar to learning to drive: the more you drive, the more skilful you become. I believed that what these students simply needed was time, understanding, adequate support and compassion. The key to disentangling the sources of AITE students’ struggles seemed to be to differentiate ‘language issues’ from ‘cultural differences’, to explore their impacts on students, and to investigate the students’ own perceptions.

There were three possible outcomes of this disentangling. Firstly, my critique of the source of struggle as ‘cultural difference’ might be completely wrong. Secondly, I might be correct that language competence was the key factor. Finally, it was probable that the whole situation would be more complicated than I had expected. And, not surprisingly, this indeed is what was found in this research.

This chapter outlines the research background in terms of the phenomenon of teacher shortages, and the importance of maintaining and increasing AITE students’ interest in the career of teaching. It also explains the terminology and the theoretical
framework used in the research. The research questions, aims and significance are also presented. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the structure of the thesis overall.

1.1 TEACHER SHORTAGES

Over the last 25 years or so, there have been many inquiries into teacher education in Australia, and the impending shortage of teachers across the nation is one of the key issues (Crowley, 1998; Hartsuyker et al., 2007; Ramsey, 2000). Hartsuyker et al. (2007, p. 61) have warned specifically that there could be ‘significant teacher shortages [in the near future]’.

A report by the Australian Government, *Skill Shortages Australia* (SSA) (Australian Government, 2010), indicated that nationally, teacher shortages were already being experienced in Mathematics, Science, Languages other than English, Music and Technology, although these shortages were varied in terms of their general dispersion. The report pointed out that ‘employers in regional and rural areas generally experienced greater difficulty recruiting and retaining staff across all areas of teaching’ (Australian Government, 2010, p. 29). It was also reported that teacher supply was a ‘continuing theme’ in issues of teacher education and that immediate action was required, as the gap between demand and supply was expected to become greater in the future (Ramsey, 2000, p. 28).

The significance of teacher shortages for my research is the role that could be played by the NESB teacher education cohort in meeting the demand for more teachers. One factor that is not helping the teacher shortage problem is the ‘low

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2 Authorized by the Minister for Education and chaired by Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP, the Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training carried out an inquiry into, and reported on, the scope, suitability, organization, resourcing and delivery of teacher training courses in Australia’s public and private universities in February, 2005 by focusing mainly on areas of concern, with a view to setting out directions for strengthening teacher education in Australia.
retention and success rates of NESB students when compared to the entire initial teacher education cohort’ (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 48). If NESB teacher education students are not completing their training, obviously they are not able to join the Australian teaching service. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the challenges that AITE students who seek to teach in Australia face, with a view to explaining what adequate assistance might consist of. Additionally, it has been argued that more NESB teachers are needed, to better reflect the diversity of the Australian school population (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). Finally, the skills shortage is likely to mean that Australia will increasingly need to rely on teachers who are either trained overseas or who have completed their first degree overseas before seeking end-on teacher education in Australia. It is therefore important to consider the experiences and needs of AITE students.

Factors in higher education may also have contributed to this shortage. According to the Bradley Report³ (2008, p. 91), there has been concern about the sustainability of the international education market. One aspect of this concern is that overseas students are concentrated in a narrow range of subject fields, with over half of all international students studying in the management and commerce disciplines (Australian Education International, 2008). The Bradley Report (2008) argued that the imbalanced concentration of international students in a narrow range of subject fields showed a potential risk if ‘global political and economic circumstances change’ (p. 12). In addition, the report also indicated that international students’ rates of overall satisfaction with their learning experience in Australia and with their

³ In March 2008, the Government initiated a Review of Higher Education to examine the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting the needs of the Australian community and economy, and the options for ongoing reform. The Review was conducted by an independent expert panel, led by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC.
courses were lower than that of their domestic counterparts (Bradley, 2008, p. 93). Therefore, the Bradley review argued, there was an urgent need for both structural reforms and significant additional investment in higher education (Bradley, 2008, p. xii).

In spite of the great efforts that have been made to encourage AITE students to enter pre-service teacher education courses, the numbers of such students enrolling in teacher education courses are in fact decreasing. Therefore, research is needed to discover reliable and valid information on why teaching is, or becomes, an unattractive career option for NESB students (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 48), in order to attract more of them into teaching. The research undertaken here seeks to contribute to knowledge in this area.

Several factors have been suggested (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 49) that might contribute to the unattractiveness of teaching as a career option for NESB students: the students’s expectations about being a teacher, the rewards of the profession, and perceptions of the difficulties of entering a profession that requires high levels of English language proficiency. There have also been ongoing concerns about the quality of teacher preparation for all pre-service teachers (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 2), such as a shortage of practicum placements, and the weak link between the practicum and the theoretical components of teacher education courses, yet it is not known how they affect the future supply of teaching staff. The current research seeks to contribute to knowledge of the AITE students’ own understandings of the issues, particularly the role of English language proficiency, and of the extent to which their expectations are a problem of cultural differences.
1.2 STUDENT-TEACHER IDENTITY: A QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

The reader will note that in this chapter so far I have moved from using the term ‘AITE’ to ‘NESB’ and back again. Many terms have been used to name people whose mother tongues are languages other than English or who grow up in a country whose major languages may or may not include English. These terms include ‘NESB’ (non-English speaking background), ‘CALD’ (culturally and linguistically diverse), and ‘ELF (English as a lingua franca). One of the critical tasks in this research was to choose, from among these terms, an appropriate term for the Asian international teacher education student participants. As reported by other researchers (for example, Han, 2006; Miller, 2009b), this was not an easy task.

The term ‘NESB’, used by native English speakers to refer to non-native speakers of English, seems to be the most commonly used in most of the literature. The key assumption behind the term is the ‘nativeness’ of mother tongue speakers of English. This sets up a native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) binary, which leaves NESB speakers always in a deficit position; they are viewed, and may view themselves, as deficit users of English, consciously or unconsciously. For many, this position results in the pursuit of ‘native-like’ competence or ‘nativeness’, which can be endless and ‘extremely painful’ (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 263).

Although NESB does imply lack, it is ‘at times useful in a practical sense’ (Miller, 2009a, p. 186). Indeed, ‘NESB’ was a term I had previously used for myself. It had seemed to be ‘natural’ or ‘logical’ for myself and other Asians I knew with languages other than English as our mother tongues, to be called ‘NESB’ in English-speaking contexts. But the question of whether ‘NESB’ was really an appropriate term to describe my participants did not occur to me until some prospective participants told me they did not ‘fit’ my research criteria as they were not ‘NESB’.
They told me that, after receiving the invitation to participate in the research, they ‘were unable’ to participate because they were not ‘NESB’; although English was not their first language, they had been using English in their own countries since they were at school.

For many international students, then, the term ‘NESB’ is inappropriate. It does not acknowledge their facility with English and it does not reflect their cultural and linguistic diversity. In addition, it may create confusion in explaining the sources of the challenges they face in their teacher education courses. One appropriate substitute is the term ‘CALD’. This term has been used in this thesis to replace ‘NESB’ when referring to international students who are from a language background other than English. Another useful term is ‘ELF’ (English as a lingua franca). ELF is the use of English as a shared language among various communities for whom English is not the primary or native language. While the use of ‘CALD’4 shows my position on the inappropriateness of ‘NESB’ for my participants, the use of the term ‘ELF’ is used to work against any ‘lack’ implied by the term ‘NESB’, because ‘ELF’ does not imply a normative standard, students are liberated from the traumatising effects of the NS/NNS binary (Braine 1999; Miller, 2009b, 2010; Rajagopalan, 1997, 2005; Thomas 1999). While ‘CALD’ is used to indicate people with non-Anglophone backgrounds in general, ‘ELF’ refers to them as particular kinds of users of English. ‘ELF’ represents a totally different imaginary trajectory (compared to ‘NESB’) in the students’ constructions of their teacher identity, as discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

4 While ‘CALD’ and ‘ELF’ carry similar meanings in the context of students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and are used as alternatives for ‘NESB’, ‘ELF’ serves a specific function that ‘CALD’ does not serve, in the attempt to disentangle the struggles of AITE students. Please refer to Chapter 8 for detailed discussion of ELF.
Using the term ‘ELF’ to study the imaginary trajectories of the student participants as users of English in this research, is a symbolic step toward changing attitudes to, and perspectives on, the cultural and linguistic differences these international students bring with them. As Jenkins (2009, p. 201) argues:

ELF is thus a question, not of orientation to the norms of a particular group of English speakers, but of mutual negotiation involving efforts and adjustments from all parties.

This quote precisely captures the intention of this research, and my attitude towards my participants’ uses of ELF. Addressing my student participants as users of ‘ELF’ not only recognises the cultural and linguistic diversity they bring to their academic studies in an Anglophone country, but also contextualizes the challenges they face within the social and linguistic domains of universities, schools, and other work places. On top of that, constructing themselves as ‘ELF’, rather than ‘NESB’, could help AITE students avoid the endless, ‘painful’ journey of seeking native-speaker competence (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 260).

The main term I have chosen for the ‘Asian international teacher education’ student participants, however, is the acronym ‘AITE’ which lacks any negative connotations. However, the reader will still come across the term ‘NESB’ in citations from other researchers, scholars in the field and official reports. Additionally, the term ‘NESB’ is retained in discussion of the interview questions, to demonstrate to the reader the change I personally have experienced in the course of this study. The questions were drafted and delivered to a class when the prospective student participants were being recruited from a lesson in which the research project was introduced. The term ‘NESB’ was used initially because I was only targeting teacher education students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Later in the research process a change was made, based on the inappropriateness of the term ‘NESB’,
since this term potentially ignored AITE students’ differences among each other, in terms of their multi-cultural and multi-lingual backgrounds.

1.2.1 Differences among AITE students

Differentiation among AITE students is supported by some of the main findings in Llurda’s (2005, p. 5) study, which found that it was difficult to ‘characterise all non-native speakers of English (NNSs) as a single group’ because a wide range of variation exists among these students, and such difference is considered central to the problems experienced by these NNS teachers in affirming their identity as teaching professionals. Llurda (2005, p. 144) argues that the great variability that exists among international students, in terms of language proficiency, cannot be ignored, in spite of the fact that they satisfied the same English language requirements to be accepted into their programs.

Miller (2003, p. 172) also argues that it is inappropriate to view Asian students as a linguistically or culturally homogeneous category and echoes Lippi-Green (1997), who states that ‘dumping all Asians in one basket is as misleading as it is expedient’. Cruickshank (2004, p. 134) argues that any attempt to view overseas-trained teachers as a homogeneous group is inappropriate; rather, flexibility in program organisation, scaffolding and delivery is required.

1.2.2 Kachru’s theory of the diffusion of English and its importance for this research

Kachru’s theory of the diffusion of English was employed in this research, as it provides a theoretical base on which the different perceptions among AITE students about their main challenges can be addressed. Before explaining how the theory helped this researcher explore those different perceptions, it is necessary to have a quick review of Kachru’s (1985) theory of diffusion of English. Kachru argues that
the diffusion of English can be seen in terms of three concentric circles: *inner circle* (L1 [mother tongues] varieties), *outer circle* (ESL [English as second language] varieties), and *expanding circle* (EFL [English as foreign language] varieties). The *inner circle* consists of USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; the *outer circle* consists mainly of the (former) British Commonwealth countries, while non-British Commonwealth countries belong to the *expanding circle*. He argues that the three concentric circles of English have resulted in several English ‘languages’, and that this is now the linguistic reality of English (p. 5).

Kachru (1990) challenges the assumption that non-native varieties of English are primarily used for international purposes and contends that ‘in India, Nigeria, Singapore, and the Philippines, the localised (domesticated) roles are more extensive, and more important, than are the international roles, while, the interaction with native speakers of English is minimal in “the outer circle”’ (p. 10). He considers that those positions such as Quirk’s (1988), that reject the generally recognised dichotomy between *ESL* and *EFL*, have serious sociolinguistic and attitudinal implications and cannot be accepted, as they do not reflect ‘the sociolinguistic reality of world Englishes’ (1990, p. 8).

Kachru’s (1985) tripartite categorisation of English and the dichotomy between EFL and ESL, gave me concepts for differentiating between different groups of AITE students. However, very little research has been conducted on the differences in perceiving the challenges for AITE students from ‘the outer circle’ and those from ‘the expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1985). Thus, Kachru’s theory is used in this study to analyse evidence of AITE students as a non-homogenous group, in terms of their use of English, and particularly of their perceived challenges.
Equipped with this theory from Kachru, I position AITE students as a differentiated community belonging to different places on Kachru’s (1985) ‘inner circle’, ‘outer circle’ and ‘expanding circle’ of English speakers. AITE students’ perceptions of which community they ‘imagine themselves into’ are sources of the sense of success or failure as students/language users; ‘re-imagining themselves’ into another community can be a way of addressing struggle.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

The goal of this research is to disentangle the sources of AITE students’ challenges by unfolding the perceptions held by, and of, these students about their challenges. The main research questions are:

1) What are the key challenges which AITE students themselves perceive as confronting them in their course and particularly in their practicum?

2) Are these perceptions echoed by other key players such as their university lecturers or supervising teachers in schools? What are their perceptions about the students’ struggles, and do these perceptions match?

The project attempts to advance conceptual knowledge by providing new insights into the issues of education for AITE students and to broaden teacher educators’ understandings of these issues. Specifically, the project seeks to better understand the following contributory issues:

- the role, if any, of accent in spoken English, in the creation of their teacher identity;
- school supervising teachers’ perceptions of students’ struggles, and
- the adequacy of support in the practicum from both schools and universities.
One might ask why perceptions of students’ challenges held by AITE students, by their lecturers and school supervising teachers, are even important. It is the dynamic and interconnecting aspect of various perceptions that makes such an approach significant. It could, for example, throw light on a strong mismatch between what the students perceive and what other key players believe. In turn, this mismatch could itself throw light on what the challenges are. More importantly, perceptions can themselves be seen as barriers to joining a community—not only teachers’ and academics’ perceptions, but also the perceptions of students themselves. Studying perceptions helps one appreciate the complexity of the notion of belonging to a community.

The significance of this research can also be demonstrated in a number of ways. Firstly, while there has been some work on the perceptions of AITE students in their struggle to gain a teacher identity, it is not widely canvassed in the pre-service teacher education literature, and the particular theoretical frameworks I employ, attempt to address this issue in new ways. Secondly, given the urgency around teacher shortages in Australia, it is important to address reasons for the decreasing numbers and low enrolments of CALD students in teacher education courses. The experiences of AITE students and their perceptions of these experiences may be crucial in terms of solving this issue. Thus, this project aims to provide an empirically grounded, theoretically informed investigation of the needs of AITE students and of the demands of their courses, as well as of their orientation\(^5\) into Anglophone schooling cultures. It is hoped that the findings will inform higher

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\(^5\) By *orientation*, I refer to a guided introduction for AITE students with a view to adjusting themselves to new cultures and practices.
education policy-makers in government and universities in Australia about appropriate assistance to AITE students in the future.

Helping AITE students find solutions to their difficulties, especially in their practicum, may enhance their confidence in becoming teaching professionals in Australian schools and eventually lead to an increase in the employment rates of Asian pre-service teachers. Thus, it could encourage more international students to choose teaching as their career. In addition, with more adequate support for these international students, the quality of their education experience (Bradley, 2008, p. xi) could be enhanced and, at the same time, the narrow range of subject fields (Bradley, 2008, p. 87) currently chosen by international students could be expanded in the future.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical approach of this research is built on the notions of AITE students’ English language competence and their teacher identity, conceived of as membership of a community (Alpsup, 2004, 2006; Danielewicz 2001; Miller, 2009a, 2010). The key theoretical constructs of ‘community’ that I use are:

- communities of practice (Wenger, 1998);
- imagined communities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), and
- interpretive communities (Fish, 1980, 1989).

I argue that their ‘struggles’ can partly be understood through a consideration of their seeking to gain teacher identity through membership of particular communities and of how this is complicated by their already-existing membership of communities such as ‘native-like speaker’, ‘NESB speaker’, and ‘multilingual/bilingual user’ (Pavlenko, 2003). Students’ perceptions of success or failure as
students/teachers/language users are partly related to their perceptions of the community with which they identify/wish to identify.

Because ‘belonging to a community’ is considered a key issue that AITE students face (Miller, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), the concepts of language use, identity/teacher identity and imagination—alongside community of practice—are central to this theoretical framework. The link between these concepts is as follows. First, the relationship between language and identity is demonstrated by the description of language as a form of symbolic participation in particular communities of practice, which may result in the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context (Wenger, 1998). Second, imagination is also ‘a way of belonging’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 181) because imagination entails ‘unconstrained assumptions of relatedness’ (p. 181). Thus, relations of belonging and community of practice can be created anywhere, by imagination. Finally, Pavlenko’s and Norton’s (2007) notion of imagined communities (which itself draws on Anderson’s [1983] idea of an imagined community) provides a way of thinking about AITE students in terms of their seeing themselves as members of a particular community of practice’; viz., the community of teaching professionals, or indeed, of Australian teaching professionals (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, the concepts of identity, imagination, and language use are used together with community to explore the perceptions held by AITE students of their struggles to develop a teacher identity, and the relationship of that identity to a sense of belonging to a community.

1.4.1 Miller’s perspective on the issues of AITE students
The research of Miller on teacher identity is important for the theoretical framework used here for the following two reasons. Firstly, it is the view of Miller (2009a,
that a sense of belonging to a community is a challenging issue for AITE students overall. Secondly, Miller’s theories on teacher identity reveal the key obstacles created by the concepts of the native speaker/non-native speaker binary and, in particular, the power of the hearer on the construction of teacher identity. Teacher identity, NS/NNS binary, the power of the hearer, together with audibility and self-representation, are five concepts perceived as critical in AITE students’ creation of teacher identity (Miller, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). Thus, Miller’s research on teacher identity is employed as an important part of the theoretical framework of this thesis. These five concepts are detailed further in the following sections.

Teacher identity and language use

Over the last 10 years or so, the role of language use in determining the credibility of CALD English language teachers has been discussed by many researchers in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Cummins, 2001; Gee, 1996, 2004; Goldstein, 2003; Hawkins, 2004; Miller, 2003, 2009a; Norton & Toohey, 2004). One of the reasons why language use is associated with credibility and teacher identity could be that many CALD pre-service teachers’ ‘sense of control over their classrooms … was partially linked to their sense of control over English’ (Miller, 2009b, p. 45). This is the case not only for English language teachers; there have been some signs that language use being related to identity issues can also be found among those teaching in disciplines other than languages (Miller, 2009b). Since identity is ‘relational, negotiated, discursively constructed and socially enacted’ (Miller, 2010, p. 131), there is an explicit link

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6 The relation between teacher identity and language use has been stressed by Miller (2009, 2010). By employing the phrase ‘language use’ rather than ‘language’, I am referring to the social aspect of language, which is considered critical for disentangling the sources of AITE students’ struggles in this research. See further discussion in Chapters 8 and 9.
between ‘identity’ and ‘community’. From this perspective, teacher identity for AITE students can be seen as related to membership of a *community of teachers*.

Moreover, the relation between seeking membership of a particular community of practice and language use, has also been comprehensively investigated with the notions of *social interaction*, *power* and *agency* being some of the main factors involved in sociocultural contexts (Cummins, 2001, 2009; Miller, 2003, 2009a; Santoro, 1999). Miller (2010) argues that, in investigating the construction of AITE students’ teacher identity, other factors such as *social-cultural contexts*, *cultural differences* and *the native speaker/non-native speaker binary* need to be considered.

**Audibility**

*Audibility* refers to the way in which one is heard and, thus, access to interaction with English speakers (Miller, 2003). When AITE students are not granted *audibility*, their speaking competence is denied and devalued by other English speakers, ‘along with their embodied capital’ (Miller, 2003, p. 64). The significance of *audibility* lies in its capacity to provide new members with access to further legitimacy and agency in other social and institutional contexts (Miller, 1999, p. 165). While Miller’s use of the concept of ‘audibility’ initially was about migrant school students, it applies equally to AITE students, because they are highly dependent on being accepted by others, especially by their own pupils. Since one’s perception of oneself and the way in which one identifies oneself correlates strongly to how one is ‘heard’ (Miller, 1999, p. 163), *audibility* is vital for AITE students in their construction of their identities as legitimate teaching professionals.
**Self-representation**

*Self-representation* refers to the way in which one represents oneself in a particular social context (Miller, 2000, p. 69). The significance of the notion of self representation in this research lies in the ways in which AITE students identify themselves. Since their perceptions of which community they ‘imagine themselves into’ are a source of creating their sense of success or failure as students/teachers/language users, re-imagining themselves into another community can be a first step in successful adaptation to a new learning environment (Miller, 2000). For instance, one student participant in this research imagined herself as an *inspirational teacher*, while another one imagined herself as a *good teacher who could change her students’ lives* (see Chapters 6 and 8). This re-imagining helps the students enter into a new environment by providing them with enough legitimacy in establishing their teacher identity.

The connection of self-representation with language and identity is demonstrated by the notion of *economy of reception*. By this Miller (2003, p. 189) refers to the reciprocal relation between a language user, whom she calls the ‘NESB student’, and his/her social field, which involves specific politics of speaking and hearing and critically affects the conditions for the linguistic production of NESB students. Miller’s (2003) notion of *economy of reception* situates English language competence in a broader social and institutional context by associating the ways in which NESB students speak with the ways in which they are heard, and also by examining ‘the possibilities and conditions which enable or constrain the representation of their identities in social groups’ (p. 172). The notion of economy of
reception indicates that pupils\(^7\) can decide whether they confer *audibility* on ‘those who sound and look different’ (p. 189) or not. Miller (2003, p. 20) argues that this reciprocal relation cannot be properly dealt with without challenging social and institutional practices that otherwise limit the representations of these students.

*The notion of native speaker/non-native speaker binary*

The native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) binary concerns a division between native English speakers and native speakers of languages other than English. It developed from the phrase ‘native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992), which refers to the unfair treatment of non-native English teachers and to the dogma that suggests that ‘the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker’ (Maum, 2002). Then, based on this assumed virtue of nativeness, the term ‘non-native speaker of English’ is generated and defined against the ‘native speaker of English’.

The NS/NNS binary, which privileges native speaker competence, has been much debated, particularly in the field of TESOL (Marshall, 2010; Miller, 2010; Piller, 2002). It is highlighted by Miller (2010) as one of the important elements in investigating identity issues for AITE students (Miller, 2010, p. 131). Accordingly, this research considers the ways in which AITE students’ non-nativeness acts as a limitation on areas such as their classroom management and the association between AITE students’ constructions of teacher identity and their English language competence (Miller, 2009b).

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\(^7\) *Pupil* has been used throughout this thesis to refer to high school students while ‘students’ is used to refer to tertiary teacher education students.
The power of the hearer

Power usually refers to ‘what says no’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 140). By ‘power of the hearer’, Miller (2010) refers to a listener who has the capacity to ‘accept and legitimate or to deny both the message and the identity of the speaker’ (p. 132). For AITE students, this ‘listener’ could be a pupil in their class, a course lecturer or a practicum supervisor.

The importance of this construct lies in the two characteristics of identity. While an identity is a way of doing or being, it is also subject to particular conditions determined by others in a particular social context (hence the connection Miller makes between identity and belonging to a community; Miller, 2010). As a result, the success of AITE students’ teaching in their practicum depends very much on ‘the power of their students to grant or refuse a “hearing”’ (Miller, 2010, p. 132). Thus, identity as a classroom teacher for AITE students may be granted or withheld by the pupils in their classes, because of language issues. As Miller says, it is a question of ‘audibility’.

Using these five concepts: teacher identity and language use; audibility; native/non-native binary; self-representation, and power of the hearer) from Miller’s theories on teacher identity, I will detail further this issue of belonging by focusing on AITE students’ perceptions relating to their teacher identity in this thesis.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research in this thesis involved a qualitative case study with ten student participants, a group of academics and a group of school teachers supervising practicum. Individual interviews were used as the primary data-collecting instrument. Artefacts such as students’ assignments and practicum reports were used to supplement the interviews. Ten student participants were selected, based on the
criteria set for this research (e.g., being international students, having had to undertake IELTS before their enrolment in the course), and interviewed. All student participants were interviewed twice: once before their practicum (P1 or P2) and once afterward (see relevant discussion in Chapter 4). In addition to the teacher education students, lecturers and school supervisors also were contacted. Five lecturers and five school supervisors were interviewed individually. As well as the individual interviews, group interviews were also conducted with seven other student participants, to gain other perspectives.

Based on the guideline of ‘the fitness of purpose’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 461), this research used the data to search for commonalities, differences and similarities among the interviewees and in particular, the students’ perceptions of the challenges they faced in their course and practicum. To maintain a sense of the holism of the data (Cohen et al., 2007), the content analysis approach was employed throughout this systematic process.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Following this discussion in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on the experiences of AITE students. It includes an examination of national and overseas research addressing the orientation problems affecting these international teacher education students, with a view to identifying the major issues for them. It also gives an overview of the obstacles with which these students are confronted. These obstacles include ‘cultural differences’ and ‘language issues’, which need to be examined under the lens of teacher identity (Alpsup, 2004,2006; Clarke, 2008; Danielewicz 2001; Miller 2009a, 2010) and other relevant theoretical concepts, such as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and imagined communities (Pavlenko, 2001, 2003). Miller’s work seems to be particularly significant here, as she treats
AITE students’ identity issues and their problems with English as a question of belonging to a community.

With a view to testing Miller’s conceptualization, Chapter 3 identifies a range of relevant theoretical concepts—and elaborates others further—that were used to inform the processes of data collection and data analysis in this research. Drawing on the four theoretical categories from the theoretical framework, I discuss the issue of identity by conceptualising teacher education for these students as a question of belonging to a community—viz., to *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1983; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko, 2003) and to *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, I will explore some of the difficulties of belonging to communities by reference to Fish’s (1980, 1989) notion of *interpretive community*.

These key concepts were used to analyse the data collected and to enable the generation of new insights. Chapter 4 provides an outline and justification of this study’s research method by giving an explanation of the relationships between the research design and the research problems. The data collection and analysis principles and procedures are also detailed, and the rationale for these choices is provided. This chapter makes explicit the relationship between the research methodology, data collection and the procedures for analysing the evidence.

Chapter 5 presents the ten AITE students by providing a brief biography, followed by a summary of their interview answers to the interview questions. Chapter 6 offers a discussion of the data collected from the students’ interviews by employing content analysis. Recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim, then coded and finally categorised. This chapter analyses the challenges the students faced in their course and in the practicum. In this chapter, there is also a discussion of the group interviews of other students, which were used to gain a
broader perspective on the main challenges that the AITE students faced in the course. Chapter 7 analyses the interviews of academics who taught the courses and of schoolteachers who supervised some of the participants in their practicum. In order to complement the perspectives of the students, academics and supervisors, student assignments and practicum reports also were collected, with a view to compiling a richer picture. Chapter 8 is an evidentiary discussion in which all the data from the individual student interviews, schoolteachers’ interviews and academics’ interviews are brought together and analysed with concepts from the four theoretical categories in the theoretical framework. Chapter 8 also provides some new insights into the challenges AITE students face, based on the data collected and on relevant theories. The central argument is established in Chapter 8. In Chapter 9, key findings of this research, comments on the limitations of the research, implications for future teacher education policy and practice, and suggestions for further research are presented.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON AITE STUDENTS

This chapter attempts to address the background to the research questions identified in Chapter 1 by covering relevant issues and major concepts that are related to AITE students. These issues and major concepts include the processes of AITE students’ adaptation to both Australian higher education and Australian schooling. Additionally, since accents have been a key factor in the research on the construction of teacher identity in the TESOL/TEFL fields and are often considered challenging for CALD⁸ students/teachers, they are discussed in some depth here. The specific aims of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- to explore ongoing problems in the field of teacher education, specifically for international students;
- to unfold the different perceptions held by, and of AITE students, in relation to their struggles to be identified as teachers in the Australian context;
- to explore the latest developments in research, both theory and practical, on the construction of teacher identity for AITE students, and
- to put the process of AITE students becoming Australian schoolteachers under the microscope, with a view to exploring any gaps/or remaining issues in the field.

These aims are achieved through a review of government reports on teacher education in Australia, and of the literature on ongoing problems related to AITE students in teacher education. This literature review on AITE students identifies key problems as English language skills and cultural differences, which I had also

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⁸ CALD’ is used here because the reviewed literature covers a wide range of international students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including AITE students.
perceived as some of the main issues for students even before I started this research. Key issues that arise from these are: orientation into higher education in Australia and orientation into Australian schooling, especially into the demands of a one-year course; accent; credibility, and membership of the community of teachers. Among all these issues, membership of a community, which is closely associated with accent, is argued by this research as being particularly important for AITE students. Other issues in the following list, from 2.1 to 2.5, are just subsets of this issue. Accordingly, the literature review addresses the following six key areas:

2.1 Issues related to teacher shortages;
2.2 Acculturation research: definitions and complexity;
2.3 Orientation into Australian higher education;
2.4 Orientation into Australian schooling cultures;
2.5 Approaches and key issues with regard to CALD students, and
2.6 Accent and identity of AITE students as teaching professionals.

2.1 ISSUES RELATED TO TEACHER SHORTAGE

As indicated in Chapter 1, there have been many inquiries into issues related to teacher education. Among them, teacher shortage and the quality of teacher preparation are key, ongoing concerns (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). Three main issues have been identified in government reports (Bradley, 2008; Hartsuyker et al., 2007) in relation to these concerns:

- the low enrolment rates of CALD students;
- problem associated with the nature and demands of the practicum, and
- the need to strengthen English-language skills.
2.1.1 The low enrolment rates of CALD students

The low enrolment rates of CALD students in teacher education programs (Hartsuyker Report, 2007) and the resulting low numbers of CALD teachers in the teaching profession (Cruickshank, 2004; Han, 2006; Miller, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Phillion, 2003; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009) have been of concern in Australian teacher education. Of all the students enrolled in initial teacher education courses from 2001 to 2004, only about 2% were from non-English speaking backgrounds (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). Moreover, in Australia overall, only 13% of teachers were from non-English speaking backgrounds, compared with 23% of school students. Thus, the teaching force does not reflect the diversity of students in Australian schools, and any attempts to encourage and attract more CALD students into teaching would be of value (Hartsuyker et al., 2007).

It has been argued that more CALD teacher education students are needed, to reflect the growing diversity of Australian schools, because they can make a fruitful and fulfilling contribution to Australian teaching by developing strategies for negotiating cultural differences (Cruickshank, 2004; Hartsuyker et al., 2007). For instance, CALD students’ pedagogical knowledge and skills could well ‘enrich and empower local teaching practice’ (Han, 2006, p. 39). In addition, Phillion (2003) argues that, with more teachers of minority backgrounds joining the profession, the dialogue on education for immigrants and other students would be enhanced. As a result, diversification of the teaching workforce so that it reflects more truly the diversity of the Australian population, is the government’s policy in teacher education (Hartsuyker et al., 2007).

With regard to the possible reasons for low enrolments of CALD students, it has been suggested that international students’ expectations about the status and
remuneration of teachers and the demand for high levels of English competence for becoming a registered teacher are some of the main obstacles to their entering the profession (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). However, the low enrolment rate of CALD students in teacher education also suggests the necessity to provide more adequate support to these teachers in the induction period, as students who have not yet been enrolled in a course could be put off by what happens in induction: i.e., by what happens after enrolment. Induction is generally arranged after enrolment. Students are entitled to dropp units or even totally withdraw from the course they have selected before the census date, which is the official deadline for finalising one’s enrolment and fees for each teaching session, if they feel that they could not cope with particular demands such as the specific requirements of academic writing/literacy in Australian English in the course. This low enrolment rate of CALD students not only reflects their own concerns (Hartsuyker et al., 2007) but will also affect the supply of future teaching staff (McCluskey, 2009).

Therefore, reliable and valid data are needed, on why teaching appears to be an unattractive career option for CALD students (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). This research aims to contribute to knowledge in this area by investigating various perceptions held by AITE students about the sources of struggle in their teacher education courses.

2.1.2 School practicum

The practicum has traditionally been a much-debated component of teacher education, and there has been a persistence of practicum problems. These include: a
shortage of practicum placements, especially for CALD students; the weakness of the link between the practicum and the theoretical components of teacher education courses, and a shortage of high quality and experienced supervising teachers (Hartsuyker et al., 2007).

Although the practicum is generally considered the most useful part of teacher education courses by a majority of beginning teachers (Hartsuyker et al., 2007), it is also the most demanding component for CALD pre-service teachers in particular. One challenging aspect of the practicum is the need to have a good command of the English language.

2.1.3 Strengthening English-language skills

There has been an ongoing concern about CALD students’ English language competence, as it significantly affects both their academic studies in Australian universities (Benzie, 2010; Bradley, 2008; Foster, 2011) and their future employment (Australian Government, 2010; Benzie, 2010; Bradley, 2008). In fact, inadequate English competence has been suggested by many scholars as the major barrier confronting CALD students in their academic studies (Foster, 2011; Lebcir & Wells, 2008). For instance, recent research by Foster (2011) has found that CALD students ‘earn persistently lower marks at university than other students’ (p. 17). In addition, CALD students are considered to need more support, such as the integrating of English language tuition into the curriculum in order to develop and maintain high levels of English competence (Bradley Report, 2008).

Inadequate English language skill not only affects academic studies but also influences future employment. It has been reported that the English language skills of

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9 While Hartsuyker et al. (2007) revealed that ‘universities report having particular difficulties in finding practicum placements for international students’ (pp. 70–1) they did not point out why ‘international students’ in particular were experiencing such disadvantage.
some graduates of teacher education have failed to meet the expectations of prospective employers (Australian Government, 2010), who frequently find that some graduates of teacher education do not ‘have adequate communication skills’ (Australian Government, 2010, p. 29). This unsuitability of applicants might in part have contributed to the teacher shortages situation (see Chapter 1).

Thus, the Bradley Report (2008) argues that teacher education courses should ensure students have not only the English competence required for the course but, most importantly, competence that adequately prepares teachers for their future work. Strengthened English competence is critical for AITE students. Issues brought about for some students by their inadequate command of the English language can be demonstrated by focusing on their adaptation into Australian higher education and particularly into Australian schooling.

2.2 ACCULTURATION RESEARCH: DEFINITIONS AND COMPLEXITY

The term *acculturation* is used to refer to the *cultural changes* caused by encounters between immigrants from non-dominant ethnic groups and people from the mainstream of the dominant host society (Berry, 1997; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). For some, these changes might occur in either the non-dominant or dominant group, or both (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936; Sayegh & Lasry 1993)—thus, ‘acculturation’ refers to changes in only the ‘non-dominant group’ or ‘the acculturating group’ (Berry, 1997, p. 7). For others, acculturation is a ‘bidirectional process’ (p. 99) in which changes happen within both groups.

There are two central issues that confront cultural groups and their individual members in terms of acculturation (Berry & Sam 1997, p. 296):

- cultural maintenance: maintaining their own cultural identity and characteristics, and
• contact and participation: maintaining a relationship with the dominant society.

Four strategies identified by Berry and Sam (1997) in response to these issues are:

• assimilation;
• separation;
• integration, and
• marginalisation.

The assimilation strategy is defined as individuals seeking daily interaction with other cultures without maintaining their own cultural identity. By contrast, when the non-dominant group greatly value their original culture and refuse to interact with other people of different cultures, separation is the term applied. Integration is the option when the non-dominant group attempts to maintain a certain degree of cultural integrity while at the same time seeking to involve them in a larger social network of a multicultural society. Finally, marginalisation occurs when the non-dominant group are interested neither in maintaining their own cultural identity nor in having relations with people of different cultures (Berry & Sam 1997, p. 297). However, all of these definitions of these four strategies have put the onus for the relationship on the non-dominant group, and there is no responsibility on the dominant group to act in any particular way.

Berry and Sam’s (1997) acculturation framework attempts to systematise the process of acculturation from one point of view and to describe the manifestation of different forms of acculturation. The key point of their framework is to demonstrate the key variables that should be addressed in the acculturation process. All the variables are divided into two categories: group-level acculturation phenomena, and individual or psychological phenomena (Berry & Sam 1997, p. 299). Berry and Sam
(1997, p. 300) strongly recommend that any study should take into account the broad classes of variables, to achieve a better understanding of each individual who is experiencing acculturation.

This recommendation has implications for investigating AITE students’ adaptation to Australian higher education and schooling. That is, the perceptions of these students should not only be studied at the ‘group-level’, examining them as a whole, but should also be explored individually, by analysing the students’ trajectories into belonging to a community (see Chapter 8).

2.2.1 The complexity of acculturation research, and implications for the study

The field of acculturation research is full of complexity and ambiguities, of ‘varying conceptions and operationalizations’ (Lopez-Class, Castro & Ramirez, 2011, pp. 1-2). As indicated in the introduction to this section 2.2, central to these complexities and ambiguities are the changes when scholars shift their attention from an initial anthropological group level to a psychological individual level. Lopez-Class et al. (2011) argue that acculturation, which was initially defined as ‘a sociocultural process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviour of another group’ (p. 2) is now defined as a ‘multi-dimensional process’ in which groups and individuals of particular cultures experience stages of adaptation together with changes in multiple domains.

Another factor contributing to this complexity is confusion in the use of the two concepts: acculturation and assimilation. The latter originally referred to a process through which immigrants gradually shed their cultures and customs from their native countries and adopted the language and cultural traditions of the host country (Gordon, 1964). These two concepts have often been used interchangeably (Berry, 1997; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). For instance, sociologists, who were the first
to study the acculturation of immigrants, adopted the term *assimilation* instead of *acculturation* (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993).

Furthermore, the insistence of some scholars on the *linearity* of assimilation and the *bidirectionality* of acculturation (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993) strengthens this complexity, though there has been a tendency to prefer *acculturation* when referring to bringing about most changes in the non-dominant group (Berry, 1997).

However, some scholars still perceive *acculturation* and *assimilation* as two different processes. Sayegh and Lasry (1993, p. 99) consider assimilation as ‘conformity with a country in which one lives’ and argue that successful assimilation is full participation of immigrants in the ‘institutions’ of the host society and their complete identification with the society. They argue that assimilation is a one-way social transformation that is ‘largely determined by the host society’ (p. 99). Greenman (2011, p. 31) begins with *assimilation* as ‘the degree of difference between immigrants and the natives within the local context’ and argues that it refers to a process by which two distinct groups become similar to each other. *Acculturation* and *assimilation* are also conceived as different stages of people’s adaptation to new conditions in which all people who experience any kind of adaptation inevitably undergo the processes of acculturation and then assimilation (Gans, 2007, p. 161).

The term *assimilation*, as defined above by Gordon (1964), seems more appropriate than the term *acculturation* to explore the process of AITE students becoming schoolteachers in Australia, as the latter contains the connotation of *bidirectionality* (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). In the case of AITE students the process of assimilation entails two stages: adaptation to Australian higher education, and then to the Australian schooling context. These processes of adaptation are largely
determined by the host university and by school communities. Since these hosts set the expectations, the processes of adaptation are ‘linear’ rather than ‘bidirectional’. AITE students are expected to assimilate rather than acculturate, in terms of becoming schoolteachers in Australia. While acculturation has been politically promoted as an ideal, assimilation is indeed the reality.

Thus, while ‘integration’ may be desirable for immigrants, in this research the notion of assimilation, as suggested by Gordon (1964) and Greenman (2011), seems to be a relatively suitable term for studying the adaptation of AITE students into Australian higher education and Australian schooling, because ‘assimilating’ reflects the expectations of school supervising teachers for AITE students. Clearly, however, both acculturation and assimilation are loaded terms. I prefer therefore to use the more general term orientation, as defined in Chapter 1.

2.3 ORIENTATION INTO AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The challenges that international students face during their academic studies in Western countries have been extensively explored (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Pan, Wong, Joubert & Chan, 2007; Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). Three key challenges have been reported: English language proficiency, particularly the language of Western academic literacy (Pan et al., 2007); differences between different educational systems (Pan et al., 2007), and interactions between international students (Zhou et al., 2008).
Low English language proficiency has been generally considered a major ‘stressor’\textsuperscript{10} that causes poor adjustment and mental health for these students (Pan et al., 2007). Since English language competence is also perceived as highly associated with social efficacy in communicating with target language speakers, deficiency in English is a key obstacle that CALD students confront (Pan et al., 2007). Pan et al. (2007) points out particularly that ‘language proficiency is vital for successful integration into mainstream society’ (p. 741).

The differences between the educational system of the host country and that of the country of origin are also found to be a source of stressors. In a study by Pan et al. (2007) of Chinese students, the differences between the host country and the country of origin were, respectively, ‘depth versus breadth; introduction to theory versus hands-on experience, and authoritarian versus independent learning’ (p. 747). These are very fundamental differences.

Finally, a weak ‘host-sojourner interaction’ still remains among CALD students, though social interaction with host nationals can be of great benefit to them socially, psychologically and academically (Zhou et al., 2008). Some research has found that while Europeans and South American students were the best integrated, Asian international students were the least integrated on campus (Zhou et al., 2008). Zhou et al. (2008) argue that the concepts of cultural distance, prejudice and discrimination are three commonly perceived elements that contribute to this limitation.

\textsuperscript{10} Pan et al. (2007, p. 741) define the major risk factor that affects students as an acculturative stressor, a condition that increases the possibility that a student will develop disadvantageous health results. According to Pan et al. (2007, p. 741) an acculturative stressor is the reaction of an individual to life events, such as intercultural contacts that are beyond their capacity to handle; that is, conflicts and difficulties that are triggered during the process of acculturation.
Given all the issues of CALD students in their orientation into Western higher education, including their social adjustment and academic issues (Zhang & Dixon, 2001), obtaining a conceptual and practical understanding of their experience and ‘unique needs’ (Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007, p. 314) is deemed necessary. In particular, there is a problem when cultural variations in communication and learning result in different understandings of the same concept or manifest in a particular teaching or learning style (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997).

With regard to the implementation of viable assistance to these students, Cortazzi and Jin (1997, p. 88) argue that ‘mutual effort of both teachers and students to understand each others’ academic cultures, cultures of communication and cultures of learning’ should be made by all parties involved. They refer to this effort as *culture synergy* (p. 88). Zhou et al. (2008) echo these views but stress that a one-way and quick orientation into the host nation culture for international students is not desirable, since ‘these aspects of culture are deep-rooted, and change could be seen as a profound threat to identity’ (pp. 71-2).

### 2.4 ORIENTATION INTO AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING CULTURES

While there has been a great deal of research on the orientation of CALD students into Western higher education, there is a paucity of research information on the orientation of AITE students into Western schooling contexts. In addition, previous research on the orientation of CALD students has been mainly focused on international students in general, and there is little research on AITE students in particular. It appears that, it is the ‘TE’ (teacher education) in the term ‘AITE’ that makes these students’ adaptation to Australian high school education inevitable. The situation that AITE students face could be more complicated and more challenging than those faced by the majority of international students whose subjects are other
than teaching because of the practicum. Thus, this adaptation also means that, in
effect, AITE students are, indeed, required to *assimilate*\(^{11}\) into the local schooling
cultures. As a result, it is necessary to ask how schooling cultures have been
developing and how AITE students are expected to assimilate in Australian schools.

The study of life inside schools dates back to the 1930s, when Waller (1932)
noted that schools have their own identities, with rituals of personal relationships and
moral codes (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 132). Since then, a wide range of
definitions of school culture has been available, as a result of extensive studies of
cultural influences on organisational behaviour—definitions which Schoen and
Teddlie (2008, p. 133) find ‘characteristically ambiguous’. They argue that there is
no single universal agreement on a ‘best definition of school culture’, while there are
some ‘commonly accepted’ definitions. However, they offer a theoretical framework
for school culture, which consists of four overlapping and complementary
dimensions (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 141).

- professional orientation;
- organisational structure;
- quality of the learning environment, and
- student-centred focus.

As newcomers to an Australian school community, AITE students are
supposed to meet certain professional expectations within the existing school culture,
and to create a learning environment in which they effectively deliver the desired or
expected quality of teaching to their pupils. How to cope with the situation of a new
school culture is one of the biggest challenges that confront AITE students.

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\(^{11}\) The word *assimilation* has been deliberately chosen here to reflect the reality and the complexity
discussed previously. See Chapter 2, section 2.2.1
2.4.1 Pedagogy: teacher-centred versus student-centred

Teacher-centred pedagogy generally refers to a set of teaching methods in which the ‘teacher takes the initiative in imparting knowledge to students’, while student-centred pedagogy refers to a set of approaches ‘in which there is (broadly) more equality and sharing between teacher and student’ (Slethaug, 2007, p. 79) and particularly to the approaches that focus on the needs and interests of students (Slethaug et al., 2009). Slethaug (2007) argues that ‘teaching preferences are often deeply entrenched’ (p. 79) and that these preferences are not simply cultural, as they entail certain attitudes to learning. Teacher-centred approaches have been very popular in East Asia, Southern Europe, and Africa, while student-centred ones have been valued within North American education circles (Slethaug, 2007). Perhaps as a result of the fact that ‘institutional culture often perpetuates itself and those trained in particular organisational, disciplinary, and pedagogical forms often repeat them’ (Slethaug, 2007, p. 79), many CALD pre-service teachers struggle to keep a balance between the student-centred approaches that are employed extensively in Australian school classrooms and the teacher-centred approaches to which they have apparently been accustomed (Campbell et al., 2006; Han, 2006; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009). This phenomenon—the tendency to stick to a particular pedagogy—can also be seen from some of the challenges AITE students face in their practicum when specific teaching and learning methods advocated by teacher education programs in Australian universities collide with their expectations and experiences (Cruickshank, 2004). Such conflicts can often be broadly understood in terms of the two different teaching preferences mentioned above—i.e. the teacher-centred classroom and the student-centred classroom (Cruickshank, 2004; Han 2006; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). At least that is how, in this research, students spoke of different sets of approaches.
There have been various views on AITE students’ attitude to, and familiarity with, the two approaches. For instance, some researchers have argued that CALD pre-service teachers are generally more familiar with teacher-centred approaches, in which ‘a single teacher takes the initiative in imparting knowledge to students’ (Slethaug, 2007, p. 79), and have no idea about the meaning of ‘negotiating curriculum with the children in the Australian context’ (Campbell et al., 2006, p. 7).

Han (2006, p. 283) echoed this view and argued that ‘WES’\textsuperscript{12} student-teachers ‘preferred their home educational culture’, although they respected the student-centred pedagogy of Australian educational culture. Han (2006) challenges the popularity and applicability of the student-centred approaches in Australia:

This raises several questions. Is progressive teaching a universally advanced form of education? If WES student-teachers should give up test-driven, text-based pedagogy, then how does progressive pedagogy explicitly enable them to do so? Is equality in the power relations between teachers and their students guaranteed to be the one ‘best practice’ for enhancing students’ socio-academic achievement? (Han 2006, pp. 247–8)

Han (2006) claims that the student-centred pedagogy which is strongly recommended in teacher education programs—where it is considered to be an approach ‘in which there is more equality and sharing between teacher and student’ (Slethaug, 2007, p. 79)—fails to connect with and facilitate the knowledge that CALD teachers have. ‘WES’ student-teachers confront contradictions when teacher educators encourage student-centred progressive education and the student-teachers’ own knowledge of education through their experiential learning overseas, is often ignored (Han, 2006). Han (2006, pp. 247–8) therefore suggests that WES student-teachers have had student-centred pedagogy ‘imposed’ on them.

\textsuperscript{12} Han (2006, p. 3) uses the term ‘World English Speakers’ (WES) in her research, defined as ‘student-teachers from Asian, African and the Pacific Island nations who speak English plus another language’.
However, Spooner-Lane et al. (2009, p. 85) argue that a student-centred approach is vital for effective teaching in Australian schools and that international students should learn quickly about Australian educational cultures:

In Australian schools, meeting the needs of individual students is a key component of good teaching. In order to accomplish this task successfully, teachers must have a good understanding of children’s interests. The dilemma is, then, how do international students learn quickly about Australian school children’s cultural backgrounds? The authors found no evidence in the literature that this area is covered in pre-service education for international students.

A different, more neutral view, argues that different teaching methods are appropriate at different stages of schooling. For instance, Cruickshank (2004, p. 135) argues that ‘the notion of cultural inclusiveness [lies] more in the willingness to negotiate teaching and learning strategies than in the adoption of any specific approach to pedagogy’. In other words, teachers should keep an open mind in terms of adopting different approaches. Therefore, he suggests, teacher-centred and student-centred approaches should be used interchangeably, depending on the given teaching and learning situation.

2.4.2 Supervision of practicum students

Supervision of practicum students was a key concern in the Hartsuyker Report (2007). Issues in the Report associated with the supervision of practicum students and requiring attention included:

- inadequate assistance given to teaching staff to prepare them for supervising student-teachers;
- limited communication between school supervising teachers and the university before the practicum starts, and
- confusion among supervising teachers about the universities’ expectations of them in terms of the role they play in practicum. (Hartsuyker et al. 2007 p. 72)
It was also reported that the majority of universities were not able to request particular qualities or levels of experience in school’s teaching staff, and had little control over who took on the supervising role with practicum students. Hartsuyker suggested that, for many universities, finding placements for their teacher education students, CALD students in particular was difficult for them. This difficulty largely resulted from ‘an increasing reluctance on the part of teachers to take on the role of supervising practicum students’ (Hartsuyker et al., 2007 p. 70). This could, in turn, affect the quality of supervision of practicum students. In addition, in some research, the relationship between CALD pre-service teachers and their host teachers has been perceived as problematic (Han, 2006; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009). Some practicum students have suggested that their relationship with their supervising teacher hindered their practicum experience (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009), and some were confused by the contradictions between what they were told by their lecturers and what the schoolteachers told them (Han, 2006). Thus, it has been suggested that a component of study that provides CALD pre-service teachers with negotiation skills in the practicum is required (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009).

Struggling to meet supervising teachers’ expectations may be common among all practicum students regardless of their backgrounds (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012). However, for AITE students, it is the way in which they are being supervised that becomes salient: these students are being supervised ‘through the lens of cultural and linguistic difference’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58) and some supervising teachers ‘attributed [AITE students’] perceived deficiencies—a lack of ideas and creativity, not being firm enough, voice too soft, no fun, and a language problem—to [their] ‘Asian’ background’ (p. 58). It seems that school supervising teachers tend to form their perceptions about the performance of these students on their own
culturally normative views of what is expected in Australian school contexts.

Thus, the supervising teachers’ expectations of AITE students need to be further explored, because these are related to: how AITE students could be better prepared for the practicum; how these supervising teachers are expected to provide these student-teachers the adequate support they need, and what should be done to enable current practice in teacher education to deal with the complexity of AITE students constructing a teacher identity. In this regard, two directions are suggested by Nuttall and Ortlipp (2012): reframing the discourse of students’ assessment and providing AITE students with a positive environment.

2.4.3 The demands of a one-year graduate teaching diploma program

The one-year graduate teaching program has attracted considerable attention, due to the extra stress and anxiety it has imposed upon CALD students (Campbell et al., 2006, 2008; Spooner-Lane et al., 2007, 2009). It has been found that the shortened training time places great demands on student-teachers in general, but presents particular challenges to CALD student-teachers. For many AITE students, the gap between their actual language ability and the expectations of their school supervisors is so great that it is unreasonable to expect it to be bridged in such a short time period. As Cummins (1991, p. 43) points out, it could take seven years for CALD students to become proficient in academic English. In addition, these students face huge challenges during their practicum and, among these difficulties, their English and their classroom management are commonly perceived either by themselves or by schoolteachers and university lecturers as the key challenges. Gaining a good grasp of the language and, in particular, gaining the tacit knowledge required for being an
Australian schoolteacher, all takes time. As a result, the appropriateness of a one-year graduate diploma program for AITE students should be questioned.\(^\text{13}\)

As Cruickshank (2004, p. 129) argues, the conflicts that confront CALD pre-service teachers are partly due to the fact that ‘teacher education programs tend to have been developed for students who have recently graduated from local education systems and presume in-depth knowledge and recent experience of local secondary and primary education’. If Cruickshank (2004) is correct, then it could be inferred that that the one-year graduate diploma has not been designed for NESB students but for the native or native-like speaker of English. While a great deal of discussion has been focused on the stress and anxiety that NESB students suffer in the accelerated course, very few have questioned the length of such a program in terms of its appropriateness for AITE students. The length of a teacher education course for international students does need to be taken into account however, especially with regard to the need to provide adequate support relevant to the accelerated demands.

As novice teachers AITE students are said to experience much more anxiety and stress than their ‘local’ counterparts (Campbell et al., 2006, 2008; Spooner-Lane et al., 2007, 2009), and their challenges can be demonstrated through considering the following approaches to CALD pre-service teachers.

### 2.5 Approaches to, and key issues in regard to, CALD students

Over the last ten years, considerable attention has been given to the issues of CALD teacher education students (Benzie, 2010; Han 2006; McCluskey, 2004a; McCluskey,\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^\text{13}\) As the documenting of this research comes to an end, it is reported that the one-year graduate teaching program is being phased out in some Australian universities. I assumed that the unrealistic demands on, and the associated extra anxiety and stress for, CALD students could be some of the reasons.
2004b; Muir et al., 2010) and in particular, those in the one-year graduate diploma programs (Campbell, et al., 2006; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2007). The issues that arise most frequently include difficulties in dealing with the barriers of English language and cultural differences throughout their courses, with the practicum being a critical period. As Muir et al. (2010) indicate, ‘the linguistic and communicative requirements placed upon [AITE students are] significant’ (p. 70) in their practicum and ‘the cultural adjustment’ (p. 70) required of them is critical in terms of being an effective teaching professional in Australian schools. However, while the challenges these students face are commonly recognised, different explanations have been given for these challenges.

For instance, while some researchers are not quite sure whether CALD students are impeded mainly by their limited knowledge of Australian school culture, Australian culture in general or by their level of English language proficiency (Campbell et al., 2006; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2007), others are more definite that the challenges for these students are ‘triggered by cultural differences’ (McCluskey, 2004a, pp. 1–2). As stated earlier, English language proficiency has been often perceived by many CALD students (and their lecturers) as the major obstacle to their academic studies. However, there have also been suggestions that the concept of ‘English language proficiency’ has been incorrectly interpreted. For instance, Cruickshank et al. (2003, p. 246) argue that factors such as difficulties in ‘adjusting to different teaching/learning styles or to the Australian tertiary system have often been wrongly ascribed to “language problems”’.

Besides these two approaches, the cultural differences and the language competence and cultural difference approaches, mentioned above, two other approaches are identified in the literature: the credibility of CALD teachers of
English as ESL approach and the belonging to a community approach. While the credibility of CALD teachers of English as ESL approach mainly focuses on the credibility of CALD teachers of English as ESL in the field of TESOL, the belonging to a community approach reveals a recent trend in exploring the difficulties that CALD pre-service teachers face in terms of teacher identity as belonging to a community. The reasons for selecting these last two approaches in this research relate to the following considerations:

- the argument central to the credibility of CALD teachers of English has focused on the notions of nativeness vs non-nativeness, which affect not only the teacher identity formation of TESOL teachers from CALD backgrounds, but also CALD teachers of other disciplines.
- exploring these students’ process of learning to become a teacher in a social context represents a different perspective to the issues of these students, compared to the perspectives of previous research (Miller, 2010; Pennycook, 2010).

Overall, in the research to date, these foregoing perspectives are the four major approaches to studying the challenges that CALD students face, as identified in this research. Each approach features several key challenges, tabulated below in Table 2.1, and discussed individually in the following sections.
Table 2.1: Four approaches to the challenges that CALD pre-service teachers face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>The cultural differences approach</th>
<th>The language competence and cultural difference approach</th>
<th>The credibility of CALD teachers of English as ESL approach</th>
<th>The belonging to a community approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the challenges</td>
<td>‘cultural differences’/ ‘cultural shock’</td>
<td>recognises both cultural differences and English language as barriers for AITE students</td>
<td>the credibility of CALD teachers as English language teachers</td>
<td>teacher identity as a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main challenges that the students face</td>
<td>dissimilarities between two school systems</td>
<td>Anxieties language, communication and cultural differences (Australian school culture and school culture ‘at home’) relationships with their supervising teachers</td>
<td>‘native speaker fallacy’/ native/non-native English speaker binary accent discrimination racism</td>
<td>English language competence teacher authority power/power of the hearer tacit knowledge of particular community of practice negotiating space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5.1 The cultural differences approach

The first approach adopted by some researchers and scholars in the field is the one that explores these problems from the point of view of cultural differences (Cruickshank et al., 2003; Han 2006; McCluskey, 2004a; McCluskey, 2004b) or cultural shock (Spooner-Lane et al., 2007). These cultural differences include dissimilarities in the ways in which ‘the associated societies situate[d] education and the different cultural understandings of the workplace environment and its operation’, which are two ‘underpinning drivers [that] permeate the very core of the pre-service teachers’ experiences to affect them internally and externally in the conduct of the practice teaching component of their course qualifications’ (McCluskey, 2004b, p. 84). McCluskey (2004a) argues that there is a ‘paucity’ of information on the ‘cultural differences’ confronted by CALD students, since the focus of the literature seems to have been on the difficulties students face in learning English.

Such cultural differences can give rise to tensions within the professional environment, affecting both the teacher and the student (McCluskey, 2004a, p. 1). For instance, a study carried out by Han (2006) investigated the issue of the low retention rates of ‘WES’ student-teachers and found that issues of cultural difference affected ‘WES’ students’ retention and attrition in university more generally (Han 2006, p. 26). Han argues that the opportunity for ‘WES’ student-teachers to gain a legitimate teacher identity in the host culture is full of complexity and conflict. It is ‘part of a vibrant journey’ (p. 60). She also argues that the ‘WES’ student-teachers she interviewed were victims of the education system and of policy, and suffered from a mismatch between teacher education programs and school teaching practices. In her opinion, the factors that are vital for these students to become ‘Australian’
teachers lie in ‘pedagogy, student behaviour management, and teacher-student relationships and the inter-relations between these’ (pp. 292–293).

Another study, with a similar approach, was carried out by Spooner-Lane et al. (2007), who argue that CALD teacher education students are subject to a cultural shock during their practicum. The study investigated the viewpoints of CALD students during the practicum, examined the changing perceptions of student-teachers enrolled on a one-year teacher training program, and explored the issues they faced as they prepared for the practicum (Spooner-Lane et al., 2007, p. 2). It was found that a ‘mismatch’ between the students’ expectations and the school reality was challenging for these students (Spooner-Lane et al., 2007, pp. 2–3).

Of the studies that view the difficulties CALD students in terms of cultural differences, those carried out by McCluskey (2004a, 2004b) seem to me to be the most problematic in terms of dealing with CALD students’ difficulties. It was her views on the challenges with which ‘NESB’ students are confronted, that originally aroused my interest in starting this research. However, her concept of cultural differences as the source of the struggle of these students is too vague to help identify an exact area in which the perceived challenges of these students can be addressed. While ‘culture’ refers to the beliefs and practices that govern the life of a society (Hantrais, 1989), it also implies a particular language or languages. At the same time, language is a distinctive element of a community and plays a critical role in establishing membership of a community (Anderson, 1991). Dabeet, the Indian student who participated in McCluskey’s (2004a) research, spoke many languages, including English, as a child and ‘learned English in India as part of his own culture’ (p. 6). I believe that the term ‘cultural difference’ can be employed for students from ‘the outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985) but is inappropriate for students from ‘the
expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1985). I see it as inadequate to claim that ‘language issues [can be] considered under cultural differences as language and culture are inseparable components of each other’ (McCluskey, 2004a, p. 5).

In addition, the argument of ‘cultural difference’ is not identified with strongly by NESB students who feel that the English language is the major obstacle to the success of their academic studies in Australia (Chen & Short, 2010; Pan et al., 2007). For example, it is commonly recognised that accent is an issue for most AITE students, though their perceptions of the nature of their accents may be varied. Therefore, although Dabeet’s problem—his accent—could be considered as ‘cultural difference’, as McCluskey (2004a) argues, because English is part of India’s culture (Kachru, 1985), a Chinese student’s accent in speaking English in my experience is primarily an issue of ‘language’ rather than being ‘cultural’ in nature. Generally, in my view, a Chinese student whose first language was not English rarely, as Dabeet did, considered himself as having a ‘sense of personal identity as an English speaker’ (p. 6), nor would they rationalise the reason for being unable to get the message across as being due to the community's unfamiliarity with his accent (McCluskey, 2004a). This is because English has never been a part of mainland Chinese culture in the way that it has been in countries from ‘the outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985). So, the ‘cultural difference’ approach can be inadequate in dealing with the difficulties with which AITE students are confronted.

2.5.2 The language competence and cultural difference approach

The second approach seems to be the most widespread and is characterised by its focus on both cultural differences and language barriers (Campbell et al., 2006, 2008; Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006; Dlamini & Martinovic, 2007; Pailliotet, 1997; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009). For instance, Campbell et al. (2006, p. 2) found that
while CALD student-teachers had similar anxieties about the practicum to their Australian peers, they were also confronted with language, communication and cultural differences which may have hindered their successful completion of field experiences in schools.

In a study by Spooner-Lane et al. (2009), English language proficiency was considered one of ‘the major concerns’, while the impacts of cultural differences on CALD students’ performance during their academic studies were also taken into account. Spooner-Lane et al. (2009, pp. 84-90) identified three concerns of Asian pre-service teachers before and after their practicum in Australian schools:

- concern over their perceived lack of English language fluency (before the practicum);
- concern over their lack of understanding of Australian school culture (before the practicum), and
- developing supportive and productive relationships with their supervising teachers (after the practicum).

This approach comprehensively treats the difficulties that CALD students face in their academic studies in Australian universities. It is understandable that the challenges that the students face in their academic studies should include both language issues and cultural differences. However, the weakness of this approach is its failure to accept the perceptions that these students themselves have about their problems, when student participants in some of this research (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009) have told the researchers that their major challenge was their English.

2.5.3 The credibility of CALD teachers of English as ESL approach

The third approach is mainly represented by studies on second language teacher education (TESOL) in which the ‘credibility’ of NESB teachers of English has become an ‘emerging subject of interest’ (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson,
2005) within a wider field of attention to the professional identity of language teachers (Ilieva 2010; Miller, 2009a; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese et al., 2005). Two issues around the credibility of CALD teachers in the field of ESL/TESOL have been discussed frequently. The first is the discourse of the ‘native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992), which assumes that only native speakers of English can be good English language teachers. The second is the construction of teacher credibility, in relation to which CALD teachers face various challenges, most of which can be categorised as the ways they perceive themselves and the ways they are perceived as legitimate English language teachers within the non-native/native speaker (NS/NNS) binary.

The NS/NNS binary affects the ways in which CALD teachers as non-native speakers of English perceive themselves. They ‘can only ever be defined as in deficit within such a formulation’ (Benzie, 2010, p. 447), or they may experience a lack of social and cultural knowledge or a lack of authority (Miller, 2007). They also have self-doubt regarding teaching practice, ambivalence towards the NS myth, and linguistic insecurity (Reis, 2011). Their foreign accent is one of their major concerns because it involves the issue of (literal) ‘audibility’ (Miller, 2009b, p. 42).

The NS/NNS binary also influences how CALD teachers are perceived in various ways. For instance, issues of discrimination and racism (Brown & Miller, 2006; Santoro, 1999), foreign accents (Thomas, 1999), the impact of dominant and professional discourses (Ilieva, 2010; Varghese, 2006), and discriminatory employment practices against NNS teachers (Braine, 2010) all affect the construction of teacher credibility. In summary, CALD language teachers are often considered to face two critical issues: accent and teacher credibility (Maum, 2002) and the core factor impacting on the construction of their professional identity is the NS/NNS
binary (Braine, 1999, 2010; Llurda, 2005; Miller, 2007; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003; Reis, 2011).

2.5.4 The belonging to a community approach

The fourth—and most recent approach in the research on CALD students—focuses on the theme of ‘teacher identity as belonging to a community’ (Miller, 2010; McCluskey, 2009, McCluskey, Sim & Johnson, 2011). In this approach, the concepts of teacher identity, discourse and power (relations) are brought to the fore (Cummins, 2009; Morgan, 2004; Miller, 2009a) and examined in a sociocultural context. The difference in this approach, compared to the other three, lies in its focus on how to provide interactions between established members of a community of practice and those who are new to the community (McCluskey, 2009; McCluskey et al., 2011), in order to assist the establishment of these new members into the community (Miller, 2010).

In one research study using this approach, attention was given to CALD beginning teachers’ positioning (McCluskey, 2009) within a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1998), which has the function of transferring tacit knowledge to new members. McCluskey\(^\text{14}\) (2009) indicates that there are three alternatives with regard to the positioning of CALD teachers:

- positioning of self at the edge of the community of practice,
- accepting positioning by others at the edge of the community of practice, and
- being positioned as legitimate peripheral participants of the community of practice.

\(^{14}\) McCluskey has apparently changed from an earlier approach to the challenges of CALD students and teachers (see the first approach in 2.6.1 of this chapter).
The three alternatives in these positionings can be summarized as: who does the positioning, and what are the results or statuses of positioning. The first and second indicate the same status: CALD teachers are outsiders. However, the first indicates action from the CALD student themselves, while the second is more passive. Comparatively, the third one is different from the other two, because CALD teachers are considered legitimate, as potential ‘insiders’ in this passive positioning. While the third consequence could be the desired outcome for many CALD beginning teachers, each positioning is ‘a unique reality peculiar to a specific participant’ (McCluskey, 2009, p. 7) and then ‘the causes of the positionings can not be generalized’ (p. 7).

This approach shows that more attention has now been given to understandings of how AITE students engage in the process of becoming legitimate members of particular communities of teaching practice. It recognises that interaction between ‘old-timers’ and newcomers to a community of practice, which allows for an informal transfer of knowledge, is an essential element of any effective organisation to promote the development of practices that will achieve organisational goals (Wenger, 1998). Engagement therefore depends heavily on the interaction through which AITE students can cultivate their confidence in communicating with the insiders—the established members of the community. In addition, interactions between members, which allow ‘informal transfer of knowledge’, are critical to providing CALD teachers with ‘a clear and logical space’ for a smooth transition into school environments (McCluskey, 2009). Without such a space, attempts to participate fully in a community of practice are hindered (McCluskey et al., 2011).
2.6 ACCENT AND IDENTITY OF AITE STUDENTS AS TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

Accent has been a key issue for CALD students/teachers, as it plays a critical role in the construction of their teacher identity, particularly for teachers of TESOL (Dlamini & Martinovic, 2007; Maum, 2002; Miller, 2009b; Miller, 2010; Thomas 1999). In fact, CALD students are often embarrassed by their accented speech, which frequently results in being discriminated against in various social interactions (Dlamini & Martinovic, 2007; Maum, 2002; Miller, 2009b, 2010; Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Thomas 1999).

Although the issue of CALD students’ accent is considered differently in each of the approaches discussed in Section 2.5, most challenges that students face have some relationship to their foreign accent, to a certain degree. For instance, in the ‘cultural difference’ approach (Table 2.1), accent does not seem to be a major concern and it is considered a ‘cultural issue’ in some research. In the ‘language competence and cultural difference’ approach, accent is reflected in the issues of discrimination, racism, acceptance, or blending in. Foreign accent here acts as a language barrier for practicum teachers, because it positions them as ‘deficient’. In the ‘credibility of CALD teachers of English as ESL’ approach, and in light of ‘the native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992), the accent and credibility of the language teacher are considered to have been the two major issues confronting CALD teachers of English (Maum, 2002). In the ‘belonging to a community’ approach, accent is demonstrated in the issues of the NS/NNS binary, English language competence, the power of the hearer, and audibility.

The ‘native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992) holds that only native speakers can be good language teachers. The model of ‘the idealised native speaker’ (Leung,
Harris & Rampton, 1997) is used to shape the identity of non-native teachers of English. It is the ‘buying into’ the binary by the AITE students and allowing the binary to dominate their perceptions that itself dominates their sense of identity. Accent, as a key component of language use, is deemed to have contributed to the formation of barriers in the construction of the teacher identities of these students. Therefore, accent and identity, and their relationship, are discussed in detail in 2.6.1, as they are of critical importance in understanding the challenges that AITE students face.

2.6.1 Obstacles to communication: re-evaluation of accents

Accent is often considered an obstacle to effective communication, due to the loss of intelligibility, which is defined broadly as the degree of a listener’s actual comprehension of an utterance (Derwing & Munro, 2009). In addition, Derwing and Munro (2009) argue that although people are ‘sensitive to the presence or absence of a foreign accent’ (p. 477), ‘accents do not cause discrimination—the fault is with intolerant, often monolingual interlocutors’ (p. 486). These factors may contribute to barriers to effective communication between AITE students and established members of the school communities.

Everyone speaks with an accent; accents are various ways of producing speech and no accent should be considered as inherently better than any other (Derwing & Munro, 2009). In addition, just because accents are easily detected, does not necessarily indicate it will inevitably result in communication breakdown (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Derwing and Munro (2009) argue that it is not accents that cause discrimination but the intolerance of listeners who fail to understand even the most comprehensible messages from English as second language (L2) speakers due to a prebuilt mind-set that accented speech is unintelligible. Derwing and Munro
also argue that it is unfair to blame L2 speakers whenever there is a communication breakdown, and emphasise that the listener’s attitude is another key for effective communication. This perspective echoes Miller’s (2003) notion of ‘the power of the hearer’, in which the hearers have the power to accept or refuse the speaker(s) or the messages.

Accent can also be understood by exploring two other concepts: accentedness, and comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2009). ‘Accentedness’ is used to refer to how differently a pattern of speech is pronounced compared to the local variety, while ‘comprehensibility’ is associated with the listener’s perception of how easy or difficult it is to comprehend a particular utterance (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Thus, ‘accent’ is about ‘difference’, ‘comprehensibility’ is associated with efforts of the listeners, and ‘intelligibility’ is the final result (Derwing & Munro, 2009). The comprehensibility of the total linguistic input from the non-native speaker to the native speaker is considered the most vital element, since comprehensibility can be greatly facilitated by the listener’s familiarity with L2 speech (Gass & Varonis, 1984) and particularly by their perceptions of non-native utterance.

2.6.2 A native-like model versus a model of easy intelligibility

With regard to the style of English that many language learners/users are supposed to learn, there are in general two models: the native-like model (Benzie, 2010), and the model of easy intelligibility. The native-like model has been very much desired by many CALD students, and is the perceived ‘final destination’ in their journey of learning English. However, the goal of achieving native-like speech is often considered a ‘painful’ one (Pavlenko, 2003) and ‘clearly unrealistic’ (Benzie, 2010; Braine, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2009). This painfulness, as identified by Pavlenko
(2003), reveals the fact that, for many AITE students, accent is a very sensitive and disturbing issue, as it is related to the issue of who they are (Miller, 2009b).

Instead of promoting the goal of nativeness, the model of easy intelligibility focuses on intelligibility in pronunciation and emphasises the function of pronunciation instruction in improving intelligibility. The reason why intelligibility is stressed is because it is quite possible that accent will be modified without improving intelligibility or comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2009). To improve intelligibility, issues such as segmental errors, stress errors, monotone and lack of vocal projection should be addressed (Derwing & Munro, 2009). The model of easy intelligibility is more realistic than a native-like mode, as it provides these students with a way of becoming a competent English language user without having to address something they may never be able to achieve.

2.6.3 Accents and AITE students’ identity construction

The issue of CALD students’ accents can be approached in different ways, two of which are the themes of teacher credibility and membership of a community. The former has been a central topic in ESL/TESOL research (Ilieva 2010; Marshall, 2010; Miller, 2009a, Miller, 2009b; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese, 2006; Varghese et al., 2005), while the latter has been researched with regard to teacher identity for CALD teacher education students in Australian schools (Miller, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010).
Table 2.2: Accent and its position in the four approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>The cultural differences’ approach</th>
<th>The language competence-cultural difference approach</th>
<th>The credibility of NNS teachers of English approach</th>
<th>The belonging to a community approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on accent</td>
<td>generally not an issue, if so, it is only an issue of cultural differences</td>
<td>accent is reflected in the issues of: discrimination/racism acceptance/audibility a disappointment for schoolteachers who are supervising student-teachers, as they will have to reteach their classes.</td>
<td>accent is reflected in the issues of: native speaker fallacy native/non-native English speaker binary</td>
<td>accent is reflected in the issues of: NSNNS binary English language competence teacher identity power of the hearer audibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>a deficit model/a language barrier</td>
<td>the credibility of language teachers</td>
<td>the construction of teacher identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 shows that most of the approaches to CALD students’ teacher identity are associated with students’ foreign accents, by the writers in these fields, though the issues related to accent may be different.

The concept of accent is important with regard to CALD student-teachers, because accent involves the issue of *audibility*—in both its literal and figurative sense (Miller, 2009b)—and speaking competence can be denied or devalued by native English speakers (Miller, 2003, 2010). In addition, CALD students often make connections between their teacher identity and their communicative competence. A
foreign accent causes embarrassment and humiliation (Dlamini & Martinovic, 2007), partly because of this relation to identity. The issue of the accents of AITE students is associated with the NS/NNS binary because both native speakers and non-native speakers of English consider the accent of ‘native English speakers’ to be critical. The power of ‘nativeness’ defines the significance of the role of the language held by both sides (Kachru, 1986). A ‘native speaker accent’ is equated with ‘native-like competence’.

Thus, for AITE students, to have a ‘strong command of English’ (Brown & Miller, 2006, p. 127) can mean ‘to speak like a native speaker’. Finally, the pursuit of ‘nativeness’ in English for many foreign language speaking students is a trap, because such native-like-competence seems to be a pursuit without an ending (Pavlenko, 2003). Therefore, addressing the desire for nativeness or a so-called ‘native accent’ seems to be important in enhancing the construction of teacher identity for these students.

2.7 CONCLUSION
Six key areas in teacher education have been reviewed in this chapter, with a view to pinpointing outstanding issues associated with AITE students and to identify potential gaps in the field. Orientation into local cultures is a critical issue for all AITE students. Teacher educators, institutions and supervising teachers in schools should be aware of the cultural and linguistic differences among AITE students. Such awareness is vital for understanding AITE students’ perceptions. Adequate scaffolding and support for these students’ adaptation to Australian higher education and particularly Australian schooling, is required. In this regard, the one-year graduate teaching diploma program, which often results in some extra anxiety and
stress for AITE students, should be reconsidered, especially as it was probably designed for native English speakers, originally. Thus, this research helps to explain exactly why the one-year graduate teaching diploma programs are inadequate for AITE students. In addition, additional considerations such as extra assistance to these students would need to be taken into account if they were to be reviewed.

Through analysis of the different approaches to the issues of AITE students in this chapter, key problems and issues have been identified. Finally, accent was singled out as an independent topic in its own right, because it severely affects the construction of teacher identity. Other key concepts, such as language within culture, identity and teacher identity as membership of a community, were also considered, in relation to the problems that AITE students face. These concepts are further explored in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3: THEORISING TEACHER IDENTITY AS MEMBERSHIP OF A COMMUNITY

Chapter 3 explores a range of inter-related theoretical concepts, some of which were initially identified in Chapter 1, with a view to informing the data collection and data analysis. These concepts function as lenses through which this project’s key research questions and data collected can be explored, to enable the generation of new insights into perceptions about AITE students’ challenges. Furthermore, using these theoretical concepts, I test Miller’s conceptualization of identity as belonging to a community: Does Miller’s conceptualization of identity explain what my student participants actually perceived? Does it offer a way of understanding what they perceive?

This chapter is divided into five sections. After discussing the concept of theory and the theoretical framework in Section 3.1, the concepts of language and culture are examined together in terms of their role in identity formation, in Section 3.2, under ‘lenses’ borrowed from Williams (1958), Goodenough (1971) and Anderson (1983, 1991). At the end of Section 3.2, I bring in Pennycook’s (2010) recent approach to language as local practice as a tool for examining the challenges AITE students face. Then, in Section 3.3, identity is discussed in general before the discussion is narrowed to teacher identity. Section 3.4 therefore brings together some key concepts from the recent proliferation of research on the formation of teacher identity, its processes and significance for pre-service teachers. In this section, teacher identity as membership of a community, the key theoretical category of all, is investigated through relevant theories from Alsup (2004, 2006), Danielewicz, (2001),
Varghese et al. (2005), Wenger (1998) and Pavlenko (2003). In the concluding section of this chapter, section 3.5, the relations between all the concepts used, and their relevance to this study, are discussed.

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMING OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The role of theory in research is vital, as it affects the way a researcher approaches their studies and penetrates almost every aspect of a study (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Four theoretical categories form the conceptual framework for this research:

1. language use
2. language within culture
3. identity
4. teacher identity as membership of a community

Language use has been initially discussed in Chapter 1, while the other 3 theoretical categories (in bold in Figure 3.1) form subheadings in this chapter. Among the four theoretical categories, teaching identity as membership of a community is the key term, of those set up by this research. The conceptual framework outlined in this chapter guided the structuring of the project, the formation of the research questions and the ways in which the data were collected and analysed. As the project proceeded, I continued to refine the conceptual framework used in this research by referencing more specific theoretical formulations from various theorists and researchers, to help analyse the data and interpret the findings. The role of theory in this thesis is to interrogate the data, while the data will help modify the theoretical framework.

Most of the questions asked in the individual interviews with the students (Chapter 6) and in the interviews with the academics and schoolteachers (Chapter 7) can be linked to this theoretical framework. In Chapter 8, the data collected is also
analysed with concepts from this theoretical framework. Before outlining the key elements built into the conceptual framework for this study it is useful to consider the question, ‘What then is theory’?

### 3.1.1 Theory: definition and its significance in research

There is a variety of ways to define ‘theory’ in academic disciplines (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). For instance, Kerlinger (1973, p. 9) defines it as ‘a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena’. For Mouly (1978, p. 35), ‘theory is a convenience, a necessity, really—organizing a whole slough of unasserted facts, laws, concepts, constructs, and principles into a meaningful and manageable form’. Silver (1983, p. 4) argues that ‘theory is a unique way of perceiving reality’, and that it is an articulation of one’s insights into a particular aspect of the world. Most importantly, I have followed the conceptualisation of theory by McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 7), who argue that theory is associated with research in two ways:

- a guide that suggests possible questions or answers to questions posed, and
- a conceptual framework that affects the research process in the selection of what and how to observe.

Theory thus acts upon and informs the research questions, the research design, and the analysis of data. The metaphor of theory as a ‘lens’ describes the process during which theory frames and shapes what a researcher looks at, in terms of evidence. Empirically, theory can inform the scope of a study and decide how a study might be conducted. Theory contains a series of ideas that provide an ‘analytical and interpretive framework that helps the researcher make sense of what is going on in the social setting being studied’ (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. xxv). For Mouly (1978),
theory serves two main purposes in research: it ‘synthesizes isolated bits of empirical data into a broader conceptual scheme of wide applicability and predictability, and acts as a guide to discovering facts’ (p. 35).

3.1.2 The theoretical framework for this research

No theoretical framework can possibly provide a perfect explanation of what is being studied (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Instead, a conceptual framework is a tool with which a researcher makes reasoned decisions about how the data can be understood in a given study. As argued in Chapter 2, the main issues commonly perceived by AITE students as barriers to their academic studies are their English competence, cultural differences and teacher identity. However, here the theoretical concepts of language use, identity/teacher identity, imagination, and community of practice, are employed in order to conceptualise their perceived challenges in more depth.

![Diagram of theoretical framework]

Figure 3.1 The theoretical framework
As explained in Section 3.1 in this Chapter and shown in Figure 3.1, there are four main theoretical categories in this theoretical framework. Within this theoretical framework, the theoretical category of *teacher identity as membership of a community* is the key theoretical category, with the other three categories feeding into it (See further theoretical discussion in Chapter 8).

As explained in Chapter 1, Miller’s (2009a, 2009b, 2010) concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘language use’ are employed as entry point for the theoretical framework, Miller also led me to other key concepts, such as:

- *teacher identity* (Alsup, 2006; Clarke, 2008; Danielewicz, 2001);
- *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998), and

As Clarke (2008) argues, the discourse and the communities that teacher education students work within are ‘intimately related to’ (p. 9) the formation of their teacher identities. A central issue for teacher education students is their identity as teachers, which is relational, constructed and negotiated through social interactions (Miller, 2009a; Johnson, 2003; Norton, 2000). In this view the notion of identity connects to belonging, and in turn, to that of *community of practice*, and thus leads to a way of conceptualising teacher identity as membership of a community.

This framework is located at the intersection of AITE students’ English language competence and their teacher identity as a sense of belonging. As we have seen, English language competence is a major concern for many AITE students (Miller, 2009a, 2010). Teacher identity is a core issue for all teacher education students, not just AITE students, but the intersection with English language competence for AITE students allows us to view the question of identity in ways that connect with language use importantly. The concepts of *language use, identity,*
teacher identity and communities of practice provide an integrated conceptual framework throughout this research at the levels of theoretical principles, methodology, analysis and interpretation. These concepts are further examined here. As language use has been explained in Chapter 1, the discussion in the following sections of Chapter 3 focus on the three other theoretical categories in this framework.

3.2 THEORISING LANGUAGE WITHIN CULTURE

The aim here is to develop further from Chapter 2 the concepts of culture and language so that we can see which one of them is more likely to influence AITE students’ constructions of their teacher identity. Then, they can be used to analyse the evidence of such constructions.

3.2.1 Culture and language: their relationship and roles in identity construction

Culture refers to ‘a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual’ (Williams, 1958, p. xvi) and also includes the beliefs and practices that govern the life of a society or a community, and for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression (Hantrais, 1989).

In addition, Wierzbicka (2006, p. 5) argues that any language is embedded with certain cultural assumptions and values, and that English is no exception. For Wierzbicka (2006), language is ‘a historical shaped universe of meaning’ (p. 19), which is ‘a key to understanding culture’ (p. 16). In this sense, language is important to culture and, as Wierzbicka shows, if people speak different languages, their perceptions of the world may be quite different. Thus, it can be inferred that a language within a culture is one entry to an understanding of people’s worldviews—
and knowledge of, and competence in language can only enhance an understanding of a culture and its people.

Additionally, language is integral to maintaining and transmitting a body of customs and beliefs (Goodenough, 1971) and one important thing about language is its ability to create communities—even imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). It is through language that the social production of meaning takes place, social relations are established and maintained and, eventually, social identities are created (Clarke, 2008). Moreover, a language also carries the tacit knowledge that is required by those who intend to become a member of a particular community of practice (Wenger, 1998; Fish, 1989). We now turn to discuss another approach to language.

3.2.2 Language as a social practice

Language teaching in general, and EFL teaching in particular, was heavily under the influence of Chomsky’s Generative Grammar, particularly during the 1960s through to the 1980s (Rajagopalan, 2005). However, changes in perceptions about language have been taking place recently, from a traditionally linguistic perspective to a holistically social one (Wierzbicka, 2006). Language is associated with certain societal power relations, which can ‘operate’ through discourses that position individuals and groups in subordinated relationships’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 261). So teacher educators should have appropriate pedagogies of choice in order to challenge coercive power relations operating in classrooms and communities and to assist pre-service teachers to reposition themselves as agents in their construction of teacher identity (Cummins, 2009).

In order to establish a framework through which students’ academic expertise could be built, Cummins (2009, p. 264) argues that ‘the focus on language [in this framework] involves promoting not just explicit knowledge of how the linguistic
code operates but also critical awareness of how language operates within society’. Cummins’s view, which emphasises the social aspect of language as practice, is also in tune with Wenger’s (1998) views on the concept of practice, which refers to ‘doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. [So] practice is always social practice’ (p. 47).

Recently, Pennycook (2010) has theorised language as a local practice as well as a social practice. This approach appears as a radical departure from the common accounts of language, in which it is viewed as a system (Chomsky, 1971). In contrast with this ‘traditional’ approach, in which a language is viewed in context, Pennycook (2010) instead looks at how a language creates the contexts in which it is used. This perspective views language as ‘an integrated social and spatial activity’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 3) and considers how language, space and place are related, how language creates the contexts where it is used. Pennycook (2010) argues that the construct of language as a local practice necessitates thinking about the following factors in language use:

- how language, space and place are related
- how language creates the contexts where it is used
- how languages are the products of socially located activities, and
- how languages are part of the action.

Accordingly, here, three concepts: language, locality and practice, are addressed and explored with respect to their interrelatedness (Pennycook, 2010).

**The notion of locality**

Pennycook (2010) claims that the notion of locality entails not only ‘embeddedness in time and place but also in relational terms: [… such as] regional, national, global […]’. For Pennycook (2010), locality includes the notions of space, history and society (p. 140). Furthermore, ‘the locatedness of language is not just about being in
a place at a time, but also about producing that place’ (p. 140). This view of locality echoes that of Wenger (1998), who also discusses the concept, with a view to developing a framework by which to articulate the scope and limits of the concept of community of practice. Wenger (1998), who also refers to ‘practice’ in relation to language, argues that ‘practice is always located in time and space because it always exist in specific communities and arises out of mutual engagement’ (p. 130). Since ‘the relations that constitute practice are primarily defined by learning’ (p. 131), localities are also being constantly created by shared learning (Wenger, 1998).

Thus, the notion of the local is no longer a synonym for the static, traditional, immobile, but rather is dynamic, fluid and mobile. The approach to viewing language locally acknowledges that ‘being local is not only about physical and temporal locality; it is also about the perspectives, the language ideologies, the local ways of knowing, through which language is viewed’ (p. 128). Therefore, ‘locality’ in ‘language as local practice’ is viewed differently from language use in context because the former argues language as a product of mediated social activity, while the latter lies in an assumption that ‘languages are akin to tools employed in predefined spaces’ (p. 128). For Pennycook, ‘context’ is not a pre-determined ‘given’ into which language is poured, but, rather, language creates context. Thus, for both Wenger and Pennycook, the notion of locality is significant in investigating language as practice.

**Viewing language as local practice**

With the perspective of ‘language as local practice’, language itself is not viewed by Pennycook (2010) merely as a tool but also as product of social action. Pennycook (2010) employs the singular form ‘language’, rather than its plural. He argues that the plural form of language and the term language use both indicate ‘a prior object
that can be taken up and employed for certain purposes’ (p. 8). Pennycook’s (2010) view on locality presents a way of thinking the local as a constituent part of language practice:

A focus on language practices moves the focus from language as an autonomous system that pre-exists its use, and competence as an internal capacity that accounts for language production, towards an understanding of language as a product of the embodied social practices that bring it about (Pennycook, 2010, p. 9).

This view of language practices serves as an important shift from the approach that approaches language as a system to one that investigates instead ‘the doing of language as social activity’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 9).

*The notion of ‘relocalization of language practice’*

By ‘relocalization’ of language practice, Pennycook (2010) refers to a linguistic instantiation of a particular practice. Pennycook (2010, p. 77) argues that the ‘notion of relocalization of language practices is central to an understanding of relations between language and locality’. As the concept of relocalization ‘inverts the relationship between language and practice’ (2010, p. 77), local practices are prioritised over their linguistic instantiation without the assumption of the ontology of a particular language and its local variations. Thus, Pennycook (2010) argues that language does not produce discourse but on the contrary, that discourse produces language.

Seeing language as a social practice, Pennycook (2010) is able to relate languages, cultures and identities, because ‘the possibilities of being something not yet culturally imagined mobilizes new identity options’ (p. 85). Anderson (1983, 1991) also argues that one of the key functions of language is to create identities. *Identity* is the subject of the following section.
3.3 THEORISING IDENTITY

There are multiple points of view about the concept of identity within disciplines such as psychology, culture, politics, economics, philosophy and history (Alcoff, 2003). For instance, Castells (2004, p. 6) contends that identity is a people’s source of meaning and experience. Hall (1990, p. 225) argues that ‘identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past’. Identity, which is generated in particular cultural and historical contexts, is usually seen as being produced under circumstances that are beyond people’s control (Alcoff, 2003, p. 3). On the other hand, however, Castells (2004, p. 7) points out that while identities are constructed, the key issue is how, from what, and by whom. Norton (2000) echoes the view of West (1992) that identity includes ‘the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety’ (p. 8).

3.3.1 Identity: agency and social structure

While there are multiple views on identity within sociology, agency and social structure are, not unusually, two areas that need to be carefully discussed (Stets & Burke, 2003). This view also departs from ‘the recognition that all social behaviour is the result of a combination of “structure” and “agency”’ (Waring & Bray, 2006, p. 11). Individuals as agents can be thought of as making or creating a role by making behavioural choices and decisions and engaging in negotiation of different roles, often fostering psychological well-being. Stets and Burke (2003, p. 133) indicate that the better people feel about themselves, the more role identities they take on.

Social structure, on the other hand, refers to patterned arrangements or relations in society (Abercrombie et al., 2000). Such arrangements or relations both emerge from, and determine, the actions and agency of individuals.
As agents, AITE students might be expected to make or create roles by making choices in how they perceive themselves as users of English and by engaging, in effect, in negotiations over their teacher authority with the pupils in their classes. Generating evidence of the nature of the interactions between AITE students and their own pupils will make it possible to address questions of agency: the roles AITE students can play in their construction of teacher identity.

### 3.3.2 Main approaches to identity in education

Three ‘global investigative approaches’ for dealing with the issue of identity have been identified by Mantero (2007, p. 2): social-psychological, social-interactional, and post-structural.

The social-psychological approach closely relates language use to membership in groups. Most of the research framed by the social-psychological approach is ethnomusicological in nature and often investigates the development and negotiation of an ethnic identity. The social interactional vision of identity frames dialogue in multilingual communities in terms of language choice (code switching) and introduces a strong version of multilingualism. (Mantero 2007, p. 2)

Mantero (2007), who is interested in the relationship of identity to language, considers that the foci of the social-psychological, social-interactional approaches are too narrow to investigate factors such as language proficiency, and argues that the post-structural position offers a more critical view of identity in relation to language. He argues that the post-structural view provides opportunities to better frame and understand the construction and elements of identity of all of the participants involved in language learning and second language education (p. 3). According to Mantero, there are three different forms of identities available vis a vis language and education (Mantero, 2007, p. 4). First is imposed identity, which is not negotiable and which cannot be resisted. Second is assumed identity; Mantero’s definition for this is ‘stereotypes that people feel at ease with’ (p. 4). The key
distinction here is that identity is pre-existing. Third is negotiable identity, which language learners may find in their opportunities to access target language communities. L2 users need to understand the important roles that the notions of language and power relations play in the construction of their negotiable identities (Mantero, 2007). These concepts are used in this research to analyse evidence of the ways in which AITE students could conceive of who they are as users of English—particularly, how they can move from imposed identities to identities that are more negotiable. This will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

3.3.3 Power, language use and identity formation

Nobody can be free from power or alternatively, outside power (Foucault, 1980). A critical approach to studies of the learning experiences of international students takes the position that relations of power have a significant impact on these students (Cummins, 2009). ‘(T)he exercise of power by a dominant individual, group, or country to the detriment of a subordinated individual, group or country’ is ‘coercive power’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 263).

These relations of power appear in the identity construction of CALD students (Mantero, 2007; Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012). For instance, relations of power are associated with the notion of ‘subjectification’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 57) through which CALD students as ‘successful’ teachers are being constituted by their supervising teacher’s normative discourses of school teaching (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012). In addition, CALD students are often considered to be ‘suffering from linguistic and cognitive handicaps’ and most attention has been paid to what they lack (e.g. Standard English) rather than what they possess (Cummins, 2009, p. 265). Norton (2000, p. 7) argues that ‘language teaching is not a neutral practice but a highly political one’ because of the involvement of relations of power, which are
constantly being negotiated among individuals, institutions and communities in their everyday social encounters (Norton, 2000).

Inequitable relations also ‘occupy the social space in the wider society and directly influence pedagogical spaces created within classrooms’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 261). CALD students may suffer from racism or coercive power that places them in subordinated relationships. The students who might ‘reposition themselves as agents in their own identity formation’ might challenge this coercive power (Cummins, 2009, p. 261).

Such challenges are quite possible for teachers who can exercise choice in how they manipulate classroom activities ethically and pedagogically, in spite of institutional constraints (Cummins, 2009, p. 261). In addition, teachers may also ‘empower’ their students through affirmation of their cultures and languages. From this perspective, the agency of a CALD student in his/her construction of teacher identity then depends on the degree to which he/she is empowered, not as an entity but as a product of mutual interactions with others. This is termed as collaborative relations of power. ‘Within collaborative relations of power, “power” is not a fixed quantity but is generated through interaction with others The more empowered one individual or group becomes, the more is generated for others to share’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 263). So an ‘empowering classroom’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 263) is such a ‘positive environment’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 59) in which the students’ power of self-expression is amplified and their voices are ‘heard and respected’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 263) instead of being silenced.

In a similar vein, AITE students’ identity negotiation and identity investment in such positive environments, or safe spaces (Pavlenko, 2001) are critical for promoting their academic expertise. In this regard, developing a positive social
space in which these students are empowered is important, in order to ‘explore and rehearse their subjectivity as “successful” [school] teachers’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 59). A social space can be created when interactions are generated within the learning community. In the case of AITE students, this social space could include their tutorials and their practicum. Thus, it is within this social space where identities are negotiated that ‘learning will be optimized when these interactions maximize both cognitive engagement and identity investment’ (Cummins, 2009, p. 264).

3.4 THEORISING TEACHER IDENTITY AS MEMBERSHIP OF A COMMUNITY

Having examined the concept of identity in general, this section focuses on the formation of teacher identity, particularly in terms of the roles of teacher educators in the process. Teacher identity formation has been receiving considerable attention in the field of teacher education over the last 10 years (Alpsup, 2004, 2006; Danielewicz, 2001; Flores, 2001; Miller, 2009a, 2010). This section outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the formation of teacher identity as a process of constant becoming, by examining the way in which becoming occurs and how this process can be fostered.

In addition, this section also explores teacher identity as membership of a community and what kinds of communities are available to provide AITE students with identity ‘options’. The process of becoming an Australian schoolteacher is considered challenging for all student-teachers. A question for AITE students is, ‘What communities give AITE students their identity?’ For AITE students, obstacles to becoming a member of the community ‘Australian schoolteachers’ are inevitable

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15 Here, social space is used specifically to refer to physical or virtual locations/areas/zones on campus or at schools where AITE students may gather and interact with members of relevant communities.
because they, as beginning teachers, are not only constructing themselves as teaching professionals, but are also being ‘constructed by others’ (McLean, 1999, p. 60). The concept of community is next discussed. In a later section Imagination is another concept discussed, in relation to how it provides a framework for thinking about identity.

3.4.1 Identity formation of pre-service teachers

Becoming a teacher is a process during which individuals not only come to know and name themselves as teachers, but they are also recognised and regarded as such by significant others, such as other teachers, students and parents (Danielewicz, 2001). The process of becoming a teacher entails the formative processes of ‘internal-identification and external-identification’ (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 3). Danielewicz (2001) argues that becoming a teacher is not a simple matter of playing a teacher but requires a personal investment where ‘one’s identity must be on the line’ (p. 3). The classroom is a key place where pre-service teachers risk their investment in becoming a teacher. For Danielewicz (2001), the classroom is a ‘compelling and serious place where the stakes are high’ (p. 3). For instance, Alsup (2004) recalled her early days as a new teacher, when she ‘struggled with assuming a teacher identity’ (p. 35). As an NS pre-service teacher, she ‘felt disoriented and a little off balance’ (Alsup, 2004, p. 35).

A teacher’s identity is adaptable, subject to invention by individuals and others. Danielewicz (2001) argues that teacher educators may assist their student-teachers’ identity construction by structuring pedagogies that create intellectual space for facilitated interactions. This means considering what educational experiences might enhance the process of becoming a teacher. Danielewicz (2001) argues that
becoming a teacher entails adopting a teacher identity through integration into a community of practice. This differentiates becoming from simply playing a role. Danielewicz (2001) also points out that a teacher’s identity is generated through participation in ‘teacherly’ discourses.

3.4.2 Wenger’s (1998) ‘community of practice’

Wenger (1998, p. 52) argues that: ‘practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life’ and meaning is located in a process, which involves the interaction of two basic processes: participation and reification. It is through these processes that meaning is negotiated. Figure 3.2 illustrates how the meaning of the image of a teacher can possibly be constructed through participation and reification.

![Diagram of Community of Practice]

**Figure 3.2 The image of a teacher: processes of meaning**

How do these concepts fit into my thesis? To answer this question, it is necessary to define the relevant concepts and then explore some of their applications in this research, in terms of the construction of professional identity.
Participation and legitimacy

Wenger (1998) employs the term *participation* to refer to the social experience of living in the world, with regard to membership in social communities and active engagement in social activities. The significance of participation lies in its production of *legitimacy* with regard to certain membership of a community of practice as shown in the last section.

Granting Asian pre-service teachers’ legitimacy is important. Wenger (1998, p. 101) argues that *enough legitimacy* is the prerequisite for newcomers to overcome all those ‘inevitable’ obstacles, which then will be turned into ‘opportunities for learning, rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion’.

Reification and projection

*Reification* is often used to refer to the process of understanding an abstraction as a concrete entity. Wenger (1998, p. 58) uses the term to refer to ‘the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into *thingness*’. Reification is a way that we imagine our meaning to the world as if it were an existing object in the world. As Wenger (1998, p. 58) argues: ‘Whereas in participation we recognise ourselves in each other, in reification we project ourselves on to the world, and not having to recognise ourselves in those projections, we attribute to our meanings an independent existence.’

Thus, the concepts of *participation* and *reification* will be used to discuss how the students engaged in their academic studies and in their teaching practice, in order to shed some light on providing the students with legitimacy.

Forms of participation: peripheral and legitimate participation

Participation can be divided into two types: *peripherality* and *legitimacy* (Wenger, 1998). As shown in Figure 3.3, while *peripherality* provides a closeness or proximity
to full participation by tailor-made activities, *legitimacy*, which can be in varied forms, is a prerequisite before a newcomer is placed on an ‘inbound trajectory’ (Wenger, 1998). As argued by Wenger (1998, p. 154) some peripheral participation never leads to full participation.

![Diagram of participation levels](image)

**Figure 3.3 Inbound participation and full participation**

Newcomers should be provided with legitimacy in order for the peripherality of their initial participation to be achieved. For Wenger (1998), peripherality is a positive thing, a stage towards full participation and, most importantly, a critical stage of legitimacy. It is the task of teacher education to provide *enough legitimacy* for AITE students. Wenger (1998, p. 100) indicates that teachers and supervisors and specific role models can be important, but in fact, it is in their membership in the community jointly that they can play one of their parts: as facilitators. Thus, school supervising teachers have a role not just to be gatekeepers, but to assist the journey towards peripherality, participation and legitimacy. The first step here is an *inbound trajectory* towards *enough* legitimacy.

By *inbound trajectory*, Wenger (1998) refers to the sense of identity for newcomers who are joining the community with the prospect of becoming full
participants in its practice. Can the practicum experience of the AITE students here provide them with some access to the local community of teaching practice, and is this practice significant enough to contribute to their future identity as a schoolteacher in Australia?

**Participation and non-participation**

People’s relations to communities of practice involve both participation and non-participation, and their identities are then negotiated by combinations of the two (Wenger, 1998). People know who they are not only by what they know, but also by what they don’t know. In a similar vein, people’s identities are generated through both the activities they are engaged in and the practices they are not engaged in (Wenger, 1998).

The AITE students’ experiences of non-participation may have various impacts on their sense of self. When AITE students try to become a member of another community of practice, ‘participation and non-participation interact to define each other’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 165). Successful participation in this context is of importance for them. Being excluded from a specific community of practice does not necessarily have any impact on one’s sense of self if inclusion doesn’t matter to the person (Wenger, 1998). However, non-participation is regarded by AITE students as ‘failure’, because they do want to be included.

Nevertheless, experiences of non-participation are of importance when participation and non-participation do interact to define each other. For instance, when a novice (e.g. AITE student), does not understand a conversation between insiders (e.g. teaching staff), this experience becomes significant, as the experience of non-participation is aligned with an unsuccessful attempt to participate, which can be a critical moment for a new member.
3.4.3 The complexity of CALD teachers’ identity formation

Much of the foregoing discussion about teacher identity formation, in subsection 3.4.1, focuses on NS teachers in a review of the work of Danielewicz (2001) and Alsup (2004, 2006). Comparatively, Miller’s (2009a, 2009b; 2010) work focuses on the identity formation of CALD teachers. Miller’s (2009a, 2009b, 2010) research focuses on the dilemmas of teacher identity construction for CALD pre-service teachers and their ‘teacherliness’ identity. Miller’s (2003) concepts of audibility and the power of the hearer become very important for these student-teachers when their practicum classes are their ‘hearers’.

Among Miller’s key concepts for analysing evidence of CALD student-teachers are the NS/NNS binary; identity and language use; audibility, and the power of the hearer. The ‘NS/NNS binary’ is expressed in the assumption that a qualified teacher of English is white and Anglophone, leaving some CALD teachers of English seeing themselves as deficient (Miller, 2007). The ‘NS/NNS binary’ presents CALD teachers with three problems during their practicum: being a non-native speaker of English; lacking the social and cultural knowledge they assume native speakers possess, and lacking teacherly authority (Miller, 2007, p. 162). The ‘NS/NNS binary’ has been mostly studied in the field of TESOL as one of the important elements in the CALD teacher’s identity issue (Miller, 2010, p. 131).

Evidence of the relationship between identity and language use in TESOL has been analysed using the concept of social and institutional power in various socio-cultural contexts (Miller, 2009a, 2010; Norton 2000, Pavlenko, 2003; 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Teacher audibility is important, as it relies on pre-service teachers’ ongoing negotiation with pupils in their classes.
As discussed in Chapter 1, the notions of *audibility, non-native accents* and *power of the hearer* are critical for the formation of these students’ teacher identities, particularly compared with other student-teachers. Therefore, CALD students’ identity as teacher is partly ‘accomplished’, and partly ‘accredited’ by their pupils. Thus, it is not surprising that they are often subject to stress and anxiety, as their identity as an English language-speaking teacher is partly in the hands of the listeners, the schoolchildren (Miller, 2010). Again, this could apply to NS teachers, but the language situation is brought more to the fore for NNS teachers, because it is so obvious and ‘visible’. It is also central to identity, and therefore there is more ‘riding on it’ than for NS teachers.

While teacher identity is an individual issue (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 39), it is also a social process through which the formation and negotiation of identity takes place in specific institutional settings, such as bilingual teaching. For Varghese et al., (2005), bilingual teaching is conceptualized ‘not as a set of standards but as different ways of being and engaging’ (p. 29).

### 3.4.4 Sources of identity construction

The concept of ‘imagined communities’ is considered a way to better understand the relationship between second language learning and identity (Pavlenko & Norton 2007). CALD students’ actual and desired membership in their imagined community of teachers influences their learning trajectories and investment in the learning of English. Pavlenko (2003) argues that imagination is a vehicle to transform one’s attachment to certain social groups, and this transformation might be realised through pedagogical choices. In Pavlenko’s (2001) case, such a transformation can be achieved through the written texts of some bilingual writers ‘for whom English is a second language’ (p. 317). Classroom discourses are conceived to be central in
constructing CALD students’ memberships in imagined communities and constituting new identity alternatives (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 266). For instance, written texts of live story narratives can provide uniquely ‘safe spaces’\(^{16}\) in which new identities can be created (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 325) because in these ‘spaces’, CALD students’ ‘accents may be erased and [their] voices [are] imbued with authority’ (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 317).

Wenger’s (1998) concept of learning broadens Anderson’s (1983) view of imagined communities, to any community of practice; Wenger (1998) argues ‘communities of practice are everywhere’ (p. 6). All people belong to several communities of practice at any given time, and such communities are inseparable from our daily lives (Wenger, 1998). Accordingly, learning to become Australian schoolteachers can be conceptualised as social participation, which operates within certain communities of teaching practice. This involves the construction of their teacher identities in relation to these communities. The concepts of meaning, practice, community and identity can be used to analyse the evidence for interconnections and mutuality. In this study, Wenger’s concepts are used to analyse the existence of such communities of teaching practice and the construction of teacher identity among the cohorts of AITE students.

3.4.5 Imagining as a valid way of thinking about identity

Imagination is a concept used to explain the ways through which meanings are allocated and new identities are created (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Wenger, 1998).

It is a concept that names a process through which new images are produced and new

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16 By ‘safe spaces’, and in line with Pavlenko’s (2001) definition in this research, I refer to the environments in which AITE students’ efforts to construct their teacher identity are, instead of being discouraged or considered risky, encouraged and facilitated by their lecturers or school supervising teachers.
relations are generated (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) argues that imagination, as one of the models of belonging, creates relations of belonging that expand identity through space and time. In addition, the concept of imagination is also used to create different types of communities, which include the practice ‘of affinity, of taste, of interest, of economic status, of profession, of geographical proximity, of experience … and so on’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 182). Membership of a certain community, in return, can result in imagining new identities for those involved.

Norton’s (2000, 2001) concepts of imagination and imagined communities are used to analyse evidence of CALD students’ perceptions when talking to members of native speaker communities that they want to access. Their actions and options reflect their investments in particular imagined communities. Norton (2001, pp. 163–4) agrees with Wenger’s (1998) conception of imagination as a creative process for producing new images of possibility and new ways of understanding one’s relation to the world. Participants in Norton’s (2001) research were two CALD students in her ESL class in Canada. Norton (2001, p. 164) conceptualises her participants as ‘communities of the imagination’, who were not limited to a classroom with four walls but who were imagined as a community across time and space.

Pavlenko (2003) conceptualises imagination from three functional perspectives: the ideological, identitary and educational functions. The ideological function views imagination as a domain of struggle between contradictory beliefs about language and identity in certain social contexts. The identitary function asks people to consider the adaptation of newly imagined identities as a substantial dimension of their learning trajectory. The focus of the educational function is demonstrated by the need for teacher education to provide identity alternatives for
pre-service and in-service English teachers. They imagine themselves and others as legitimate members of professional communities (Pavlenko, 2003, pp. 253-4).

Therefore, examining the concepts of *images* and *imagined communities* could be a useful way of approaching AITE students’ experience of struggle (s).

Identity is an amalgam of past selves and histories. However, imagination allows us to think about future identities as *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius 1986; Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo & Scabini, 2008). This is the *identitary* function of imagination (Norton, 2000, 2001; Pavlenko, 2003; Wenger, 1998). Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 954) refer to *possible selves* as ‘individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming’. In other words, they are perceptions of ‘desired and feared possible selves’ with respect to their future identity in a particular social context (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

Vignoles et al. (2008) argue that ‘possible selves’ are vital for self-regulation of behaviour and self-evaluation. Identity motives that refer to ‘motivational pressures toward particular ways of seeing oneself’ (p. 1166) are responsible for the construction of possible selves. Six discrete identity motives are conceptualised:

- People are generally motivated not only to see themselves in a positive light (the self-esteem motive) but also to believe that they are distinguished from other people (the distinctiveness motive), that their identities are continuous over time despite significant life changes (the continuity motive), that they are included and accepted within their social circles (the belonging motive), that they are competent and capable of influencing their environments (the efficacy motive), and that their lives are ultimately meaningful (the meaning motive) (Vignoles, et al. 2008, p. 1166).

With a view to better understanding the processes and principles underlying the construction of ‘possible selves’, Vignoles et al. (2008, p. 1168) analysed evidence of the link between the identity motive and possible future selves. Concepts of self-
esteem, efficacy, meaning, and continuity are four identity motives that are directly reflected in individuals’ possible selves, and the belonging motive is reflected indirectly via self-esteem related to one’s possible selves. Vignoles et al. (2008, p. 1171) argue, ‘belonging concerns might be a “first cause”, but self-esteem concerns [are] the more proximal influence on identity construction’.

3.4.6 Obstacles to joining a community of practice readily

The process of becoming a schoolteacher in the Australian context is complex (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009) and there are many different obstacles in the way of AITE students becoming legitimate members of that community of practice. Joining a community of practice is firstly a question of possessing certain tacit knowledge and undergoing rites of apprenticeship to particular ‘interpretive communities’ (Fish, 1980, 1989). Fish (1980), coming from a background of both literary criticism and law, argues that the interpretive strategies readers use, pre-exist the action of reading. Because of this, new members of an interpretive community are required to become orientated to relevant cultural traditions and practices. This is relevant to my work here. Fish (1989) conceptualises ‘rules’ as having to be read within the contexts of practice. Rules are also ‘constrained by the assumptions and categories of understanding, which have been internalized in the same practice’ (p. 127). To acquire certain tacit knowledge, one has to be ‘deeply inside a context’ with constant ‘thinking with and within the norms and standards, definitions, routines’ (Fish, 1989, p. 127). Thus, tacit knowledge is seen as important for newcomers, as well as being an indication of how difficult it is for ‘outsiders’ to ‘gain’ this knowledge.

Second, becoming a legitimate member of a community of practice is also subject to one’s ‘audibility’ and to ‘the power of the hearer’ (Miller, 2003). Miller (1999, p. 163) maintains that one’s perception of oneself and the way in which one
identifies oneself, correlate strongly to how one is ‘heard’. The ‘hearers’, in the case of AITE students, as well as the pupils in their classes, include the supervising schoolteachers who, as ‘gatekeepers’ to the community of Australian teachers, supervise them in their practicum.

So, finally, AITE students’ construction of their identity of ‘teacher’ also relies on their ongoing negotiation with pupils in their classes. Their teacher identity is ‘accomplished’ and is also ‘accredited’ by their pupils, who have ‘the power to accept and legitimate or to deny both the message and the identity of the speaker’ (Miller, 2010, p. 132).

3.5 CONCLUSION

My aim in writing this chapter was to present concepts that could cohere into a theoretical framework that would guide my data collection and analysis, clarify my thoughts, unify my work and justify my research methods. As a researcher, I needed to find conceptual lenses that could help me filter the evidence and develop a defensible interpretation. The theoretical framework discussed in this chapter provides those conceptual lenses that were used to analyse the evidence, and in turn were tested against that evidence and affected the most basic aspects of my research.

I use English language competence, teacher identity and community of practice as three overarching concepts to analyse the primary evidence of AITE students’ use of English in the process of their assimilation into Australian schooling. These three concepts are derived from Miller (2003, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), Pavlenko (2001, 2003), Pavlenko and Norton (2007), Wenger (1998), and Pennycook (2010). These concepts are used to analyse evidence of AITE students’ agency, motivation and investment in their efforts to gain membership to the imagined community of teachers.
Teacher identity is relational, negotiated, and constructed in social contexts (Miller, 2009a, 2010). Identity is then connected with belonging, with teacher identity thus being related to membership of a community. Identity issues for AITE students mainly result from their language use, particularly from the NS/NNS/binary, as one’s identity is closely related to one’s language use (Miller, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). This study intended to investigate whether, how and to what degree, AITE students’ identities were subject to the NS/NNS binary and/or to their foreign accents. Accent is problematic for AITE students, because it involves the issue of literal and figurative audibility (Miller, 2009b). As a result, accent affects their membership of the teaching community.

There are various ways of conceptualising communities, which can be seen as means of analysing evidence about AITE students in regard to their desired identities. For instance, there are communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and imagined communities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Wenger’s (1998) concept of a community of practice can be used to analyse evidence in terms of how identities are created through imagination. The strength of the concept can be tested in teacher education in terms of the ‘process of becoming rather than how it has traditionally been viewed, exclusively as what teachers should know’ (Varghese et al., 2005. p. 31). In addition, this concept allows the analysis of evidence about AITE students as a process of ‘belonging’ that brings with it conflict and difficulty. By using the concept of desired memberships in three different imagined communities (Pavlenko, 2003), this study analyses evidence of AITE students’ learning and teaching trajectories in Chapter 8, their orientation into Australian teacher education and schooling, and their struggles as a function of identity formation.
However, two issues arise. The first is whether ‘imagining’ is a useful way of theorising identity (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Vignoles et al., 2008). In addition to the identititary function of imagination, identity is tied up with the concept of an *imagined community*; that is, one that a person has not yet joined, and this is related to the concept of *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Vignoles et al., 2008). From Miller’s (2010) work on identity and the work of Vignoles et al. (2008) and Markus and Nurius (1986) on ‘possible selves’, this tests whether imagining a future identity is fruitful for these students.

The second issue relates to overcoming the prevailing obstacles to seeking membership of a community of practice, since joining a community is not straightforward. Barriers to one’s membership of a community include tacit knowledge, rites of professional initiation (Fish, 1989), audibility and the power of the hearer (Miller, 2003), and lack of legitimacy (Wenger, 1998). This study investigates and analyses evidence in relation to these concepts. This study will also ask whether there are any possible solutions to problems with the construction of teacher identity, and what they might be.
CHAPTER 4: THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Seeking to discover various perceptions about challenges that AITE students face requires a methodological approach that explores such perceptions, and the nuances of the process of becoming an Australian schoolteacher. This chapter provides a description of the research method underlying the investigation reported in this thesis. Its purpose is to provide an explanation and justification of the methodology. The methodological theory that shaped the research strategy will be explained, along with the principles and procedures of data collection and analysis and its ethical stance.

The methodological perspective of this research is qualitative and interpretive (Cohen et al., 2007). Here, I explain the methodological stance used to investigate the research questions and the data collection and analysis procedures employed to classify and interpret the evidence. Each of the design elements—the methodology, research strategy, data collection and analysis—is established on this foundation of qualitative and interpretive research.

There are five parts in this chapter. Section 4.1 provides an overview of the theoretical perspectives of this research, which underpin and determine the other design elements. Section 4.2 describes the rationale that informed the research strategy. Sections 4.3 & 4.4 provide details of the procedures used in data collection and analysis. Section 4.5 records particulars of the research ethics.
4.1 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

The term *Methods* is used to refer to a range of approaches to collecting data, while *methodology* properly refers to the theoretical analysis of methods appropriate to a particular field of study, or to a body of methods (Cohen et al., 2007). Anfara and Mertz (2006) posit three different views on the links between theory and methodology in qualitative research: ‘non-existent’, ‘relatively modest’ and ‘paradigmatic’ (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. xx). Here, my views are in accordance with what Anfara and Mertz (2006) suggest about theory as ‘paradigm’ in qualitative research, viz., that it serves to drive the methodologies used in the conduct of the research, and the epistemologies underlying these methods.
The notion of ‘paradigm’ used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) can be seen as a link between methods and epistemology. ‘Theory’ is established on a ‘paradigm’, which is ‘a systematic set of beliefs’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15), which Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 31) describe as a ‘guide’ for all research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that there are epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions in paradigms, which researchers employ to guide their research. People look at the world through a belief system, and the linkage of theory to methodologies is established by the premises or assumptions located in the paradigms. Thus, there is a close link between theory and method, and the former ‘plays a key role in framing and conducting almost every aspect of the study’ (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. xxiii).

Researchers select their research paradigms for their own particular purposes, with the guiding principle being ‘fitness for the purpose’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 5). That is to say, research methods depend on the research question(s), which structure the organisation of the research (Stake, 2010). Thus, the theoretical perspective of any research proposal informs the selection of research strategies (Creswell, 1994; Crotty, 1998).

There are two key competing views that ‘stem in the first instance from different conceptions of social reality and of individual and social behaviour’ (Cohen et al., 2007 p. 7) in educational research: the established, traditional view and an interpretive view. Cohen et al. (2007) indicate that while the ‘traditional’ view maintains its focus on discovering natural and universal laws, the interpretive view ‘emphasizes how people differ from inanimate natural phenomena and, indeed, from each other’ (p. 7). In other words, the interpretive paradigm focuses on people, their actions and perceptions and aims to explore and interpret the world in terms of its actors. Studies that are based on interpretive approaches require the researchers to
make sense of their participants’ perceptions of the world around them. Since this study set out to deal with perceptions held by, and of, AITE students in terms of their struggles to be identified as teachers, a qualitative, interpretive methodology was selected. My major task was to ascertain the perceptions of these AITE students as ‘actors’ (p. 21). This research began with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. This interpretive perspective drove my research strategy, which was case study-based and interview-based.

The key task of a qualitative and interpretive paradigm is to ‘understand the subject world of human experience’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21). Thus, efforts are needed to ‘get inside the person and to understand from within’, with a view to retaining the completeness of the perceptions being investigated. In addition, interpretive approaches emphasise ‘action’, which Cohen et al. (2007, p. 21) view as ‘behaviour-with-meaning’. Researchers in this paradigm work directly with experience and attempt to understand and interpret the data generated, which will include the meanings and purposes of those people who are their source (Cohen et al., 2007). The role of an interpretive researcher therefore is to try to understand the views of the world that are held by the subject individuals.

4.2 EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

First of all, the notion of ‘strategy’ needs to be defined. Denscombe (2010, p. 3) argues that strategy is ‘a plan of action to achieve a specific goal’ and when this notion is applied to social research, it still contains the basic components: a research paradigm, a research design and a research goal. While there are different strategies that can be chosen in social and educational research, such as a survey strategy—a case study strategy, an experimental strategy etc.—certain criteria need to be
satisfied, when it comes to selecting a particular strategy that is ‘fit for purpose’ in relation to a specific goal that research aims to achieve (Denscombe, 2010, p. 4). Denscombe (2010) argues that these criteria are: suitability, feasibility and ethics.

4.2.1 Suitability, feasibility and ethics of a case study approach in this research

For the purposes of this study, the research focus is the perceptions held by, and of, ten Asian international teacher education (AITE) students in relation to their struggles to be identified as teachers in the Australian context. As a result of gaining an understanding of these perceptions, the researcher developed explanations for their struggles, which involved the process of becoming a member of a particular community of teaching practice. Denscombe (2010) argues that the appropriateness of a research strategy can be demonstrated from these criteria: suitability, feasibility and ethics.

First, to suitability, case study approaches are suitable for a research that aims to ‘understand the complex relationship between factors as they operate within a particular social setting’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 5). Case studies provide a depth of understanding of each ‘actor’, because this is important in investigating their perceptions. Secondly, appropriateness is also shown, from the feasibility of the research. This research took into account factors such as access to the necessary data sources, time constraints and the research community within which the researcher was working (Denscombe, 2010, p. 6). For this research, access to data collection was conveniently available, and the case study was practicable with regard to its time-span. Finally, for ethics, relevant measures were taken to ensure no-one would suffer any harm as a result of participation in this research. Thus, case study was chosen as the research strategy for this research, as it satisfied these three requirements.
The research strategy was a qualitative case study with interviews and documentation as instruments for data collection. It was a case study in which the students’ assignments and practicum reports were used, where possible, to supplement the interviews. Denscombe (2010, p. 53) argues that one of the characteristics of the case study approach is that insights that can have wider implications can be gained through looking at several individual cases in depth. In brief, the purpose is to explain the general by examining the particular. There are five characteristics of a case study approach:

- a focus on just one—or a small number—of instances of the subject investigated;
- an in-depth study of a particular problem/subject;
- a focus on relationships and processes;
- naturalness, and
- the possibility of using a variety of methods (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 52–4).

The selection of a case study approach as the strategy for this research project was based mainly on the first three characteristics, which match the aims of this research and the assumption that ‘individual instances rather than a wide spectrum’ (Denscombe 2010, p. 53) could be most useful in investigating the challenges that AITE students face.

The research questions here were about the key challenges that AITE students face. The set of relationships between the pre-service teachers and their lecturers, between the pre-service teachers and their supervising schoolteachers and between the pre-service teachers and their school students are interconnected and interrelated. To understand one particular factor, such as the AITE students’ image of teaching, it is necessary to understand many others: their previous and present learning experiences, and, crucially, how various factors are connected and have affected each other. A case study approach works well in this respect (Denscombe, 2010, p. 53)
because it offers more opportunity than other approaches to gain sufficient detail to disentangle the complexities of how AITE students need support in their course, particularly on their practicum (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009).

As Denscombe (2010, p. 53) argues: ‘case studies tend to be holistic rather than deal with isolated factors’ and a case study has the opportunity to deal with a single instance, as this research does. One real value of a case study approach for researchers is its emphasis on process, as well as outcomes: it focuses on offering an explanation of why these outcomes occurred, instead of simply providing detail of what these outcomes are (Denscombe, 2010). In summary, the suitability of case study in this research lies in its capacity to deal not only with the perceptions of these students but also with the complexity and subtlety of the process of becoming an Australian schoolteacher.

4.2.2 What is the ‘case’?

The ‘case’ in this research included ten individual students and schoolteachers and lecturers who were involved in these students’ pre-service teacher education—the teachers as supervisors of practicum. The students themselves were Asian international pre-service teachers who were enrolled in an end-on teacher education (secondary) course at an Australian university. The case was established by five components (as also seen in Chapter 5; Table 5.1) as a ‘self-contained entity’ with clear boundaries. These five components are:

- the background and interview summaries of 10 student participants;
- students’ assignments (discussion in Chapter 7);
- practicum reports (discussion in Chapter 7);
- school supervising teachers’ interview summaries (discussion in Chapter 7), and
- interview summaries with relevant academics (discussion in Chapter 7).
The student participants for the case study were selected from different Method courses within the Secondary Master of Teaching course at an Australian university, based on two main criteria:

- participants were NESB students, and
- had been required to take the IELTS test (or equivalent) before their enrolment.

This university was chosen on the grounds that it had substantial numbers of such students in its teacher education programs. These students were recruited for the research in a lecture, where the researcher introduced his research project. Students participated in the project voluntarily. It happened that all the participants were from Asian countries, and this result actually helped to create a more focused research.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION: STRATEGIES, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

‘Strategy’ is different from ‘method’: while the former illustrates an action plan, the latter provides a tool for the collection of empirical data (Denscombe, 2010). Even within case study approaches, a variety of methods are available for qualitative researchers to choose from, for collecting information (Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2010). Here, I move to a more detailed account of methods for collecting data: what methods were selected, why they were the appropriate methods for this research, and how they were used.

4.3.1 Interview—a justification

Individual and group interviews, audio-recorded, together with collecting students’ assignments and practicum reports, were selected as the methods for the research. Since the key research question was about the challenges that AITE students face, an in-depth interview was chosen, because it can be attuned to the complexity of the
situation that the students face. This is the desired option when dealing with people’s opinions, emotions, experiences and related sensitive issues (Denscombe, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were selected as the main method. The decision to use semi-structured interviews was based on the following considerations:

- flexibility in terms of the order in which topics are arranged;
- the opportunity for the interviewees’ development of ideas and freedom to speak more widely on issues raised by the researcher, and
- open-ended questions allowing for a range of perceptions.

The individual interview was the main instrument to collect primary data for the case study, while group interviews of local students of Asian backgrounds were employed as a way of testing whether students in similar, but not identical, circumstances were experiencing the same problems.

Besides the students and relevant lecturers in the MTeach course, some of the students’ supervising schoolteachers were also interviewed, as ‘they can provide very informative external assessments’ of these students in their practicum (Llurda, 2005, p. 132). My views about such externality are in tune with that of Llurda (2005), who states that externality ‘constitutes one of the primary values of the research’ (p. 132). School supervisors are the most authoritative persons in the students’ practicum. Their insights into the role played by the language and teaching skills of AITE students may provide different perspectives on the students’ challenges.

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17 Here, ‘local student’ is used to refer to Australian citizens/permanent residents of Asian background, who obtained their first degree in Australia.
Table 4.1 Interview schedule (12 April, 2010-17 July, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (Individual interview)</td>
<td>IELTS or similar/first degree outside Australia/ L1 not English</td>
<td>20 interviews</td>
<td>All the students were interviewed twice: One was after P1 and the other was after P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (group interview)</td>
<td>Not required to undertake IELTS, but home L1 not English</td>
<td>6 interviewed</td>
<td>Interviewed twice: once before their first practicum and once afterwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Lecturers who teach/taught the course</td>
<td>5 interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolteachers</td>
<td>Schoolteachers who supervised the 10 students on their practicum</td>
<td>5 interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Nature of interviews adopted in this research

Interviews were arranged for student participants to elicit information in three key areas:

- participants’ perceptions of the challenges of their course;
- their experience in practicum, and
- their confidence about becoming an Australian schoolteacher.

All the student participants in the case study were interviewed twice: There was one main interview and a follow-up interview. Because this thesis is about perceptions, it was necessary to check with participants that their perceptions had been accurately captured. The main interview was conducted after Practicum 1 of the two practicum experiences in the course: I wanted to capture perceptions about the course when they were in a position to compare their attitudes to the course, pre- and post-
practicum. The follow-up interview was after Practicum 2 of the two practicum experiences in the course, with the following aims:

- To clarify any questions/confusion/misunderstandings I had about the main interview;
- To engage in formal member checking of main interview—did I get it right? I read answers back to them from my notes, and
- To determine whether they in fact, had changed their attitudes to the course/teaching after their second practicum.

Hence, the questions of the follow-up interview remained the same. Where the interviewee expressed different answers or attitudes after practicum 2, these are discussed in Chapter 5. As it happened, I had one volunteer who at first interview had had no practicum experience; I decided to interview her anyway. She was a student who could therefore be asked her perceptions about course experiences before any practicum and then, in a follow-up interview, compare these perceptions to her post-practicum attitudes. One can not make any grand claim about difference on the basis of only one person, but as I was given the opportunity, I thought it worth taking advantage of. This student was Aleve. As it turned out later, while she was upset after her first practicum, about how she had fared, her answers were not greatly different from the others.

In addition to individual interviews, group interviews were also planned and conducted. This decision was not driven by a ‘quantitative incentive’, which is concerned with increased numbers and improving representativeness (Denscombe, 2010), but rather by a qualitative one. These local students from Asian backgrounds went to high school in Australia and had a good command of English. They provided some opportunity to test the idea of ‘cultural difference’ as a key factor, as opposed to ‘command of English’ as the key factor—especially in their acceptance by school
students (as their ‘hearers’) on practicum. Thus, they provided a useful comparison group. Group interviews were carried out at two stages during the students’ course: before May, 2010, at which point most participants were preparing their first practicum, and again at the end of June, after their first practicum finished.

In this research, individual interviews seemed to work much better than the group interviews with regard to the depth, richness and scope of the data collected. I chose the group format for reasons of efficiency, not wanting to interview ‘comparison’ students in a series of interviews. However, while some of the initial considerations for using group interviews were justified, weaknesses in the group interview were also found. First, it was difficult for the students to talk about some sensitive issues in front of others. Second, it was difficult to control the contribution of each individual, and there was a tendency for one or two students to dominate the whole discussion. Finally, there were limitations to the depth of discussion, due to the number of people involved.

Five academics that were teaching the course, or had taught the course in the past, also participated in the research, and five schoolteachers who supervised some of the case study participants were also interviewed. I had planned to interview all the supervisors of the students in the case study, but many of these schoolteachers were not available when they were contacted.

Cohen et al. (2007) point out that having a highly structured interview with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent is one way of controlling for reliability, as changes in wording, context and emphasis would result in having different questions for each respondent and potentially undermine reliability. Silverman (1993) suggests that careful piloting of interview schedules is one of the ways to enhance the reliability of interviews but, unlike Cohen et al.,
argues that open-ended questions, which enable important but unanticipated issues to be raised, are vital in terms of enabling respondents to show their particular way of looking at the reality. In fact, I tried to have minimum amendments to the interview questions for the semi-structured interviews. I had well-planned interview schedules (see Appendixes C, D & E), but was willing to allow the answers to go into areas that the interviewee deemed important. I then carried out a ‘member check:’ checking the accuracy of the transcript with the informants. This is normally considered an initial check on the accuracy of the data.

4.3.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is a technique used to gain a check on the situation under investigation by combining different ways of looking at the research problem (Cohen et al., 2007). This practice of viewing things from more than one perspective is made possible by a variety of methods and sources of data within a study (Denscombe, 2010). Triangulation helps ensure the researcher’s confidence that the data generated are not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection. To enhance the validity of this research, two forms of triangulation then, were employed: informant triangulation and methodological triangulation. While informant triangulation is used to compare data from different informants, methodological triangulation is a type of triangulation that employs ‘either the same method on different occasions, or different methods on the same object of study’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 142).

To help corroborate data collected through the student individual interviews, data were also gathered by interviewing lecturers and school supervising teachers. Thus, corroborating data by using interviews, focus groups with students or lecturers or schoolteachers as the subjects of these interviews, constituted informant triangulation in this research.
As well as interviews, documents were also employed as a method for collecting relevant information on the experiences of the AITE students in their course. Using documents added to this methodology constituted *methodological triangulation.* Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 64). I here use the term ‘document’ to refer to the students’ assignments and practicum reports, collected as part of the case study.

The students were asked to provide their assignments and practicum reports. Some of the students’ assignments and practicum reports were collected, to allow the findings from interviews to be compared to findings from these documents. However, for many AITE students, some documents, such as practicum reports, through which their capacity to use English could be disclosed, were apparently sensitive. Therefore, only five reports were collected out of the ten student participants. The reason why so few assignments and practicum reports were forthcoming could be due to a reluctance driven by a sense of privacy.

**4.3.4 Strategies and issues in collecting data**

Although the interviewer’s neutrality is a ‘chimera’ (Denscombe, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 150), the onus is on the researcher to maximise accuracy and minimise distortion. In other words, reliability is an issue for interviews in terms of the impact that the interviewer and the context have on consistency and objectivity. The data collected are, to some degree, contextualized and subject to the interviewees involved. Therefore, relevant strategies were used in an attempt to reduce possible distortion during the process of data collection, by monitoring potential sources of distortion.
In conducting the research, I have attempted to avoid or at least minimise distortion, by using several strategies. Firstly, no attempt has been made to hide what had been found in this study, nor has anything been highlighted in a way that disproportionately misrepresents its significance. In addition, I have not selected highly biased samples of participants, nor used an inappropriate interview schedule, nor deliberately drawn wrong conclusions that are contrary to the evidence.

Furthermore, the human element in interviews is also of importance for the validity of an interview (Cohen et al., 2007). It is generally considered that ‘the main purpose of using an interview in research is that in an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 153). Thus, to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere in which interviewees would feel comfortable and tend to be more openly themselves, was the first thing I aimed at before each interview started. During the interviews, I tried to allow the participants to take their time and answer the questions at their own pace.

An interview is not just a situation of collecting data, but is also a shared, negotiated and dynamic social interaction (Cohen et al., 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) argue that ‘inter-view’ is a view between people mutually. However, generally, an interviewer usually stands in an advantaged position, as the interviewer tends to define the situation, the topics, and the course of the interview. This is what Denscombe (2010, p. 178) calls the ‘interviewer effect’. Accordingly, being aware of this interviewer effect, I made efforts to provide the interviewees with more opportunities to discuss their challenges by allowing them to discuss freely without interruption.
4.4 DATA ANALYSIS: AIMS, APPROACH, PRINCIPLES AND STAGES

There are generally three aims for analysis: description, explanation and interpretation (Denscombe, 2010, p. 235). While description focuses mainly on providing the basis for research in its own right, it has also another function: to serve as a prelude to further investigation, which includes explanation and interpretation (Denscombe, 2010, p. 235). Analysis in this research entails description, which is used as a platform for further interpretation. The selection of the term ‘interpretation’ instead of ‘explanation’ lies in the consideration that I see my analysis as ‘a matter of providing an understanding rather than providing something that is an objective, universal truth’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 236).

In addition, the approach to analysis in this research is qualitative, because ‘words/text’ rather than ‘numbers’ are used as the unit for analysis. While different approaches are available for analysis of qualitative data, three principles articulated by Denscombe (2010) can be considered the key features of qualitative data analysis (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 272–3). Broadly speaking, qualitative analysis is:

- researcher-centred: the values and experiences of the researcher are considered as factors affecting the analysis;
- inductive: working from the particular to the general, and
- iterative: data collection and analysis happening alongside each other.

Germane to researcher-centredness and the inductive nature of the research, two features can be seen in this research. First, the principle of being researcher-centred is reflected in the self-description of my research role as an ‘ELF researcher’ (see Chapter 1 for discussion of the terms ‘NESB’ and ‘ELF’). This demonstration of researcher-centreness is also recognition of my belonging to a particular ‘interpretive community’ (Fish, 1980, 1989). Second, this inductiveness was shown in the
methodology of this research: interpretation was generated from analysing each individual’s perceptions. This process is also demonstrated in Figure 4.2, ‘A code-to-interpretation model’. With regard to having an iterative nature, the data collection and analysis were not iterative, in the sense that my questions did not change radically from one interviewee to another.

4.4.1 Content analysis and its procedures

As the data produced by semi-structured interviews are not pre-coded but end-loaded, (Denscombe, 2010), the amount of information collected, as well as the open format or non-standard responses, presented challenges for this data analysis. A tension in data analysis is between maintaining a sense of the holism of the data and the tendency for analysis to atomise and fragment the data—to separate them into constituent elements (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 470). Based on this, content analysis was employed because it is ‘a process by which the many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories’ (Weber, 1990, p. 12).

Content analysis mainly deals with the reduction of copious amounts of written data to manageable and comprehensible proportions, and can be undertaken with any written material (Cohen et al., 2007). Content analysis is a strict and systematic process which involves coding, categorising, comparing and concluding (Cohen et al., 2007). Ezzy (2002) also argues that content analysis is useful for testing a pre-existing theory against empirical data. Content analysis was useful for me in both these senses since, as well as interrogating the data itself, I was also testing the viability of interpreting it in terms of an overarching notion: students seeing themselves as members of particular communities.

The content analysis in this research followed a set of procedures based on the suggestions given by Denscombe (2010, pp. 272–3):
• select an explicit transcript of the student interviews;
• develop relevant categories for analysing the data;
• code the units in line with the categories;
• count the frequency with which these units occur, and
• analyse the extract in terms of the frequency of the categories and their relationship with the theoretical framework.

Based on the above principles and procedure, this research attempted to use the data to discover commonalities and differences in the AITE students’ perceptions of their challenges. Data analysis in this research started with the transcripts of the students’ interviews, which had been transcribed verbatim by the researcher. These transcripts were first coded and then categorised (see next section 4.5.3). The categories were then used for analysis. The following section shows the actual execution of this approach.

4.4.2 The execution of content analysis: the process of coding and categorising

In the execution of content analysis in the research, with a view to testing pre-existing theories and providing some generalisation from particulars, Saldana’s (2006) streamlined codes-to-theory model was adopted. The whole process of content analysis in the research, which helped to clarify and refine the research questions, could be summarized in the following three stages: coding, categorizing and interpreting.

All the extracts were mainly coded using ‘Descriptive Coding’, because I needed a code that ‘summarises the primary topic of the excerpt’ (Saldaña, 2006, p. 3) in a word or short phrase. Saldaña, (2006, p. 72) argues that ‘Descriptive Coding leads primarily to a categorised inventory… summary, or index of the data’s content’. In employing descriptive coding, I aimed at helping the reader to hear what I heard in the interviews. Thus, this coding was essential for further analysis and interpretation.
An example is provided below, in which one of the students in the case study (Aleve) described to the interviewer her experience in the course and her practicum. These data were collected from two questions asked in one of her interviews. The purpose of showing the following tables is to demonstrate the process of coding and categorising overall. All the individual interview transcripts were coded in the same way; the tables of the coded transcripts of these two questions for other students, can be found in Appendix I.

Table 4.2: Perceptions about practicum before practicum (P1)
Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before the practicum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Code category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure in terms of whether my image of teaching matches the reality here because, you know, language is still a struggling point for me</td>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>ENGLISH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BARRIER</td>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily communicate with you (the interviewer), and other people especially who have backgrounds not Aussies, not the English not Americans. All my friends are Indians, Pakistanis, Iraqis and Lebanese. Like this, I can communicate easily</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>NS/NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATING</td>
<td>BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I cannot speak, I cannot communicate the system people, the Aussie people because many places (are) empty for me, you know I cannot put the right information into the right file into my brain.</td>
<td>EFFECTIVE</td>
<td>TACIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATION: VOCABULARY</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t speak to the native speakers because they have strong accents</td>
<td>ACCENT</td>
<td>NS/NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are impatient, they don’t want to be tolerable for you, and they are not waiting for your response. They just close the door</td>
<td>NON ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>NS/NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is their attitude, they insist not talking to people They are making a barrier and I don’t feel comfortable talking to them.</td>
<td>NONACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>NS/NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BINARY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3: Perceptions about practicum after practicum (P1)

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in the practicum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know in my mind that I am not speaking like a native speaker. It is a conflict about me. I always conflict that I am not speaking like them</td>
<td>NNS: DEFICIT MODEL</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of this I am creating some barriers for (by) myself.</td>
<td>PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t move and the language doesn’t mean everything</td>
<td>INNER STRUGGLE</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyway, challenge, eh, when you start talking to other teachers, sometimes, what I can say, all the teachers, I want to be a teacher like this, but…</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>LABELLING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but…. after the first two second, they are realizing (that) I am an overseas (student)...</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>LABELLING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So after five minutes, I am struggling with my language, I am saying something different. They realize I am (from) overseas and they are asking you: ‘Where are you from?’</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the teachers are being so little, so….. They don’t care me. They just, they can’t see me, you know, they are not recognizing me, they are not… they are just looking like this….</td>
<td>INVISIBILITY</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we were talking on the table, they are not looking at me, … they are not making a face contact, they are just not interested in you. Just this one is a big challenging.</td>
<td>INVISIBILITY</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extracts (1) and (2) for Aleve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Competence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/Non-Native Binary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacit Knowledge And Cultural Differences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labelling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher authority</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Evidentiary Extract (1), the NS/NNS binary is the category that occurs most frequently. As seen in Evidentiary Extract (2), the NS/NNS binary again is the category that occurs most frequently, and it is followed by *invisibility*. All these subcategories are about ‘belonging’ or ‘not belonging’. In Aleve’s case, these subcategories are associated with how Aleve identified herself and how she was perceived. Miller (2010) connects belonging to identity. These categories can also be seen as connecting a sense of *belonging* to identity. In this case, it is teacher identity or teacher authority. It can be argued that the most problematic issue for Aleve is indeed the construction of her teacher authority in an Anglophone school. All questions asked in the individual interviews, and their relationships to the theoretical framework in the research, are shown at the beginning of Chapter 6.

The above tables have shown the process of content analysis: from code to category, to interpretation, conducted in this research. In addition, the processes of coding and categorising are summarised in Figure 4.2. A code in this qualitative research is ‘a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data’ (Saldana, 2006, p. 3). This code functions to symbolise and highlight a datum’s primary content and core. Similar codes that shared characteristics were
grouped together and became categories. This enabled me to organise and group the coded data into categories. Then, when the major categories were consolidated in various ways and analysed (Chapter 6), the codifying process went beyond the interviewees’ words (Saldana, 2006, p. 11) and progressed toward a thematic and conceptual interpretation of the data. At this level, concepts are more general, higher-level and more abstract constructs. The purpose of showing this coding sample is to demonstrate the whole process of coding in the research. This is the process that I used for all interview transcripts.

![Figure 4.2 A code-to-interpretation model](adapted from Saldana, 2006)

**4.4.3 Analytic commentary**

Having demonstrated the coding and categorising processes in the previous section (4.4.2), I here explain another technique used in my data analysis: *analytic commentary*, adopted from Emerson et al. (1995). Emerson et al. (1995, p. 182) argue that an analytic commentary, which is ‘field-note-centred’, has three main tasks:

- focusing on a particular analytic point;
• illustrating through a descriptive excerpt by relevant orientating information, and
• developing ideas through commentary based on the details of the excerpt.

An excerpt is a passage or extract from a larger work, and the excerpts chosen for analysis were from the individual interviews. An excerpt commentary unit then, entails the following components: analytic point, orienting information, excerpt and analytic commentary. There should be a cohesive link between the excerpt and the commentary: the ideas presented and the descriptive details must support each other (Emerson et al., 1995). This analytic commentary begins with an analytic point, with relevant orienting information acting as a bridge to the excerpt provided. The reader is provided with possible ways of interpreting the excerpt by having attention directed to certain of its features (Emerson et al., 1995). This technique was employed mainly in Q20 (‘Is identity/sense of belonging still an issue for you? Why?), where the excerpts from each participant’s interview were analysed by focusing on the issue of a sense of belonging, with a view to developing ideas through the commentary. The reason why Q 20 was chosen is that teacher identity is directly targeted in this question and is central to this research.

4.4.4 Content analysis and its limitations

There are several useful features of content analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). First, it focuses on the meaning of what is being said, in context. In addition, content analysis is systematic and verifiable in terms of the use of codes and categories, due to the fact that the rules used are explicit. Finally, texts can be seen as permanent data, which means that verification through reanalysis and replication can be done at a later stage if necessary.
However, like any other approach, content analysis has its drawbacks. For instance, focusing on the meaning of what is being said could be a double-edged sword, as this approach might displace ‘the units and the meaning from the context in which they were made, and even the intentions of the writer’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 283). To overcome this shortfall, three methods were put in place to safeguard the legitimacy of the students’ intentions. First, during the interviews, I was able to clarify the intended meanings if necessary, because I was concentrating on answers and not taking notes (all the interviews were recorded). Second, as mentioned previously, there were two individual interviews for each participant. So, in the second interview I was able to check on anything that wasn’t clear in the first. Finally, I followed up both interviews through email (including the process of member checking).

4.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical issues may arise from the kinds of problems investigated by researchers, and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data. It is believed that ethical issues inhere at each stage of the research sequence (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 51): the context for the research, the procedures to be adopted, methods of data collection, the nature of the participants, the type of data collected. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 51) argue that striking a balance between the demands placed on researchers as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects’ rights and values potentially threatened by the research, is an ethical dilemma for researchers, and that ethical problems for researchers can multiply surprisingly when they move from the general to the particular, and from the abstract to the concrete.
In this section, several ethical issues are reviewed. These constitute a set of initial considerations that I addressed in planning this research project. Then, a conspectus of the main issues that confronted me is presented.

4.5.1 Main ethical issues involved in the research

The dilemma between the efforts made in the search for truth and the requirement of respecting the rights of the participants, was a concern during my data collection. For instance, after the first interview, some of the participants repeatedly postponed their second. Although the information they would provide in the second interview was critical, the student participants were asked to be interviewed again, but were not coerced in any way.

Another issue was collecting assignments, practicum reports and semester results from the participants. These documents appeared to be very sensitive. It is possible that these documents were considered highly private by many AITE students, since so few were forthcoming. I understood the difficulty and did not do anything to ‘push’ the issue, though the documents were important for the research. I gave up further attempts after the first followup inquiry failed. Thus, only five practicum reports were collected.

4.5.2 Informed consent, privacy and anonymity

As part of the right to self-determination, I acknowledge that a participant has the right to refuse to take part, or even to withdraw at any time. Therefore, it was incumbent on me to make sure the participants were capable of making appropriate decisions if they were given the relevant information. I needed to apply the principle of informed consent, and all the participants were asked to take part voluntarily in the
research. I needed to ensure the participants were fully informed by certain guidelines, and let them be fully aware of the nature of the research project.

In this research, the participants were given written information that explained the research project and how relevant it was to their situation. It was their decision about whether or not to participate (see Appendix A). The research participants were made aware of the general type of information needed from them, why the information was being sought, and how it might directly or indirectly affect them. They were free to seek clarification on any issues about the project. Data collection for this project was based on informed consent. There are two main ways of protecting a participant’s privacy: *anonymity* and *confidentiality*. Specifically, it was important that all the information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. The anonymity of participants was maintained by the use of pseudonyms for each individual and their institution.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter clarifies and justifies some important aspects of the case study approach employed for this project by detailing the methodology used to guide the processes of data collection and analysis. Through a description of what was carried out in the research process, an explanation and rationale for the actual conduct of the research process has been provided. The justification of the research strategy, its ethical stance, the principles and procedures of data collection and analysis and the relationships among them, have paved the way for a further evidentiary investigation of the challenges AITE student face. This investigation begins with a full description in Chapter 5, with a view to building ‘the case’ of this research: a case study of 10 AITE students.
CHAPTER 5: THE TEN STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE CASE STUDY

As indicated previously, this research design was a case study of ten student participants in an MTeach course at an Australian university, along with associated participants such as lecturers and schoolteachers supervising the practicum. Here, a series of snapshots of the students’ biographies introduces the student participants, describing their learning/teaching experiences prior to starting their course and giving their accounts of the impact of previous education and work experience. This is followed by a summary of the individuals’ answers to the interview questions. In order to create a composite picture of each participant, whenever possible and appropriate, the answers to the same question for the two individual interviews are collapsed into the one response in each of these summaries.

5.1 PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

The focus of this research project was on postgraduate (secondary) international teacher education students whose first degree was completed in a non-Anglophone culture, and who were completing an end-on course in pre-service teacher education. Such a course was chosen in a large metropolitan university in Australia with relatively high numbers of such students, to form a case study of 10 individual students. This course, which is referred to as the MTeach course throughout this thesis, has three duration modes: accelerated full-time mode (1 year), full-time mode (1.5 years) and part-time mode (2 years). Of the 10 student participants, nine were in the 1.5 years full-time mode and one was in the 2 years part-time mode. There are
two intakes for the course: start-of-year intake (February) and mid-year intake (July). The 1.5 years full-time mode takes place over three semesters, with a practicum built into each semester. The practicum experiences that the participants undertake are called respectively in this thesis ‘P1’, ‘P2’ and ‘P3’.\textsuperscript{18} For Start-of-Year Intake students, Practicum 1 (P1) is usually taken during May to June for 4 weeks and practicum 2 (P2) is taken during September to October, for the same duration. Practicum 3 (P3) is normally taken after the completion of P1 and P2, during the last semester. Prior to the students’ practicum, there is an orientation to schools, which is called focus week, during which students are not required to teach but rather to observe what a schoolteacher does daily in the classroom. This is not a special arrangement for AITE students.

5.2 THE TEN STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

The ten portraits that follow give insights into the ten primary participants whose evidence is presented and analysed in this and subsequent chapters of this thesis. These ten student participants were: Cindy, Vivian, Linda, Alice, David, Jane, Yvonne, Rachael, Aleve and Riva (pseudonyms). Among them, Cindy, Vivian, Linda, Alice, David, Jane, and Yvonne are from China; Rachael is from Vietnam; Aleve is from Turkey and Riva is from India. The data in this chapter were collected from interviews conducted by the researcher with each participant and from related documents that were collected.

As shown in Table 5.1, 9 assignments were collected from each of 9 students. Students were asked to choose one assignment for analysis. In addition, only 5 practicum reports (P1 or P2) were collected, and 5 school supervising teachers were

\textsuperscript{18} P3 is not a traditional classroom teaching practicum, but a service learning experience in the MTeach course in which students may, for example, run homework centres in a school or mentor a group of school students.
interviewed. Not all supervising teachers were able to make themselves available, and the students may have been reluctant to produce their report if they perceived it as too negative. Five academics, who were lecturers in the MTeach course, were also interviewed. A summary of sources of data is contained in the following table.

Table 5.1 The profile of the case and data obtained from the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s name and country of origin</th>
<th>Background and summary of interviews</th>
<th>Students’ assignments (Discussion in Chapter 7)</th>
<th>Practicum reports (Discussion in Chapter 7)</th>
<th>School supervising teachers interviews summary (Discussion in Chapter 7)</th>
<th>Academics’ interviews summary (Discussion in Chapter 7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne (China)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachael (Vietnam)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleve (Turkey)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x (2)schoolteachers interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riva (India)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘X’ indicates an item received. Numbers in column reflect number of interviews achieved.

All questions asked in the student individual interviews are given in the following
### Table 5.2 Student Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where do you intend to teach after you finish the course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Please tell me your experience about your school and university in your country of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before this current course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before practicum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did these images match the reality of what you have encountered in Australia? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What would you say now were the biggest challenges you have in the course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are the particular strengths you bring to the course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What factors have assisted you in accessing, participating in, and achieving your academic and personal potential in this teacher education program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What tasks did you usually have most confidence about or most interest in, in your course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is this program successful in supporting you? What makes it so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How might this program be improved to assist you or similar students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Do you think your IELTS scores generally reflect your skills in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Have you found any differences among NESB students from different countries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, then what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Generally speaking, do you think that the students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over the students from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e.g. China) in terms of their academic performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What would you say are the biggest challenges you have had in practicum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. What tasks did you usually have confidence about or most interest on practicum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Are you confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher? Why/Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Is identity/sense of belonging an issue for you? Why? Do you have options other than NS and NNS for identity construction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. What are the most important elements for ‘becoming’ an Australian teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. If you feel that you have overcome big challenges in this course, what helped you create this resilience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following discussion, particular themes are focused on that arose from these questions. These themes are:
• the student’s background (Q1-2);
• their image of teaching (Q3-5);
• the MTeach course (Q6-11);
• the IELTS and differences among particular cohorts of students (Q12-14).
• practicum (Q15-16), and
• becoming an Australian schoolteacher (Q17-20).
Themes arising from Q 13-14 may need particular explanation. The reader will recall the work of Kachru (1985), referred to in Chapters 1 and 2. Kachru’s work, extrapolated to this research, would position some students in ‘the outer circle’ of English speakers, some in ‘the expanding circle’, etc., in terms of their use of English. This is important, because students from ‘the outer circle’ (e.g. Indian students) may perceive their ‘challenges from the course’ differently from those from ‘the expanding circle’ (e.g. Chinese students). Similarly, students from one ‘circle’ may perceive the challenges of students from another ‘circle’ as different. Thus, in this thesis, the ‘difference of students’ is mostly about Indian vs Chinese students. In a similar vein, Q18 referred to identity or a sense of belonging. This question put to them directly, the key issue of this research, viz:

• what groups they define themselves as a member of;
• the dominance of their teacher identity as based on membership of a language group, and
• the set of ‘options’ they see as available to them when defining themselves as speakers of English.

Q18 was one of the most important questions in the individual interviews. It goes to the heart of the thesis. This question partly issued from my own experience as a CALD teacher and researcher myself. Most importantly, it was the question that directly asked them to consider issues of identity and belonging, which are central to this thesis. It did, however, need to be explained to the students. Lecturers’ interviews, data from the students’ assignments, school supervising teachers’
interviews and students’ practicum reports are not discussed here, but are covered in Chapter 7. This chapter serves simply to introduce the students.

**Cindy**

Cindy was in her mid 20s at the time of the interview and was born in a southern province of China. Cindy studied at a Shanghai university after she finished high school. She graduated from there with a Bachelor’s degree in Sport Training before she became a yoga teacher.

Cindy loved teaching and she believed that teaching was a noble profession and that teachers gain a great sense of achievement when they stand in front of their classroom. However, she knew teaching in Australia would be tough for her as she was not a native speaker. She saw teachers as competent and confident professionals but, for Cindy, being such a person in her first practicum was difficult, as she did not have confidence in her communication. She said she was very nervous when she was talking to native English speakers.

Cindy said that language was the main barrier for her in the course and she was very upset, as she did not have a sense of belonging in Australia. She said that such a situation would change only when her English improved. Cindy held the view that her difficulties were not due to ‘cultural differences’ but ‘language issues’ that directly resulted in a sense of not belonging. Cindy thought some theories in the course were helpful but she did not like tutorials. She explained that her poor listening comprehension delayed her reaction to questions asked in tutorials. Although she did have opportunities to speak in tutorials, she said she was always in a state of ‘passive listening’.

Cindy said that her IELTS scores did not reflect her real skills in English, and she had expected higher scores. She believed that it was very hard for CALD
students to achieve 7 in IELTS, which was the prerequisite for applying for permanent residency. Comparatively, Cindy said Indian students’ English language skills were better than those of Chinese students and more adequate support was definitely needed for Chinese students. As there were very few Asian students in the course, their needs were easily ignored.

Cindy taught Geography in her P1 and Chinese in P2. The main issue Cindy had on her P1 was that she was struggling to find her sense of belonging. She said that at the very beginning of her practicum, her ignorance of the school culture in Australia overtook her fear about her English. Cindy managed to deal with all these challenges and she had good relationships with her supervisors. With regard to the experience and challenges she had during her practicum, Cindy said, initially the barrier she faced looked like ‘cultural issues’, with regard to Australian schooling, but at the end she found that it was indeed her English language competence that was the major issue for her.

Cindy said her first practicum left her very disappointed, and she even lost her interest in being a schoolteacher because of her problems in English. Her confidence came back when she was teaching Chinese in her second practicum. Cindy argued that ‘identity’ was a disturbing issue for her and she explained that her intention to ‘completely “melt” into the mainstream’ (Zhou, 1997, p. 976) was a continuous issue for her, which would last until she had fully mastered the English language, which, she believed, was one of the most important elements of becoming an Australian schoolteacher.

Since her major in her first degree was not English, the challenges Cindy faced in her academic studies in Australia were potentially greater than the challenges of the students whose majors in their first degrees were in English or
English related. Cindy perceived that English language was her biggest challenge in the course and on practicum, and she was one of the few who admitted that to ‘blend in’ was a disturbing issue for her. In one of the interviews she said: ‘Someone told me it would take five years to have a good command of English. But it is too long. How many five years do I have?’ Seeking native-like English competence or ‘nativeness’ still appeared to be one of her goals.

**Vivian**

Vivian is from China. She first came to Australia when she was in Year 10 at school as an exchange student to a college in Queensland for six months. In 2008, she enrolled in her current course. She intends to stay in Australia after the course but there is a possibility of going back to China to teach, because she is the single child in her family and her parents expect her to go back to teach at an international school near their home. Vivian has a Bachelor’s degree in education, majoring in Mathematics from a Chinese university.

Vivian’s favourite teacher was her Mathematics teacher at her primary school in China. Prior to having this teacher, Vivian was not good at Mathematics at all in primary school and always gained low marks for her Mathematics examinations. This teacher used the latest technology at that time to arouse her students’ interest in Mathematics, and it was this teacher who changed her perceptions about Mathematics and her attitude to her studies. She thought this teacher was a very ‘cool model’ for her and she made up her mind to be a teacher like her. However, Vivian said the image that she gained of teaching from this teacher, did not match the reality of the school culture in Australia.

Vivian thought the MTeach was very well-organised and said she did not find any difficulties in the course, as she felt that all the theories taught in the course were
the same as in China, and language was not an issue for her. But Vivian did imply that academic writing in general could sometimes be a problem for her.

Vivian seemed to be satisfied with the IELTS scores she gained: 7 overall, with 6.5 for Speaking, 8 for Listening and 6.5 for Writing. Vivian agreed that Indian students had a better grasp of English and that English was not an issue for many Indian students, in contrast to the case for many students from China.

Vivian taught Mathematics in her practicums. She claimed that before practicum she used to think that language was the main issue, but her biggest problem turned out to be ‘classroom management’. Vivian found it hard to control the class, as it was ‘noisy’, with some disruptive students, but Vivian claimed that the behaviour of these pupils was not related to her communication skills. Vivian claimed that she got on well with her supervisors and she enjoyed her practicum.

In answering Q18 (Is identity/sense of belonging still an issue for you? Why? Do you have other options other than NS and NNS?), Vivian implied that those students who were having problems of identity were ‘too sensitive’ and she was not that kind of person. Instead of claiming to be a ‘NNS’, Vivian claimed that she did not think too much about her identity, while indicating that she was ‘working towards bilingual’: i.e., towards being someone who was extremely confident about speaking two languages. Vivian admitted that she experienced some incidents in which she felt discriminated against, though she maintained that there had not been any difficult challenges for her in the course and on her practicum.

When asked what her biggest challenge was, Vivian claimed that she did not have ‘any problems at all’ in the course, because ‘most of the things here are similar to that of China’. Vivian was the only student who claimed that she did not have any
problems. In addition, Vivian also said that her main issue in practicum was not ‘language’ but ‘classroom management’, and felt these things were unrelated.

Vivian said that it was quite demanding for her to imitate her own Mathematics teacher as a model in an Australian classroom. She did imply that, as a teacher in an Australian classroom, she preferred ‘teacher-centred’ to ‘student-centred’ approaches. She felt comparatively confident about managing more lecture-oriented lessons.

Linda

Linda completed her Bachelor’s degree majoring in Business English in 2007. Both her parents were academics in a university in China and they wanted their daughter to carry out research in an Australian university. Linda really wanted to be a teacher because she wanted to help people and ‘make a difference’. During university holidays, Linda helped her parents work in the tutoring centre which they ran.

Linda considered herself a ‘born teacher’. When she was in junior high school, her favourite teacher was her English teacher. She loved the idea of engaging students by group work, and her graduation essay for her Bachelor’s degree was on group work. Linda explained that the reason why she preferred a more ‘student-centred’ approach to a more ‘teacher-centred’ approach was because her major was Business English19 and group work and engaging students were greatly encouraged in that field. On top of that, a lot of her teachers in her university were from Western countries and generally, foreign teachers of language have a tendency to use student-centred approaches frequently in their classes.

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19 In China, students whose majors are foreign languages are always taught in a smaller class compared to students of other subjects, and there are normally around 20–25 students in each class. Perhaps because of this, a student-centred approach is used more frequently in language teaching than other subjects.
Linda saw language as the biggest barrier in the course, and cultural differences also made the situation more complicated. Linda indicated that among all the components of the course, she liked the practicum the best, as it was very ‘practical’, and she was not satisfied with units of study that she thought were ‘not practical’. Linda said that she was very slow to understand and respond to questions asked in tutorials. She was not sure whether this was a language or cultural problem for her.

Linda undertook the IELTS test three times and she did not think the score reflected her skills in English. Linda agreed that Indian students were more confident about speaking English, even though they had accents. She did agree that Indian students were comparatively better at, and more confident about, their use of English. Linda stressed that the course should have provided more support for AITE students, and one of her arguments about inadequate support for international students was that the course itself was too obviously designed for native English speakers.

Linda taught Geography in her P1 and ESL in her P2. When asked whether language was the biggest challenge for her in her practicum, Linda distinguished between practicums. In her P1, in which she was teaching Year 7 Geography, language and content were both challenging for her. Linda indicated that she had to think of the content first in Chinese and then translate it into English. P2 involved teaching ESL, which was much easier for her. There are some possible factors that made Linda feel teaching ESL easier than teaching Geography. First, Linda’s major was English. In addition, teaching Geography meant that Linda had to teach native English students, while she dealt with non-native speakers like herself in her ESL class. Linda claimed that the practicum was very beneficial for her and that it was the most important and useful thing in the course.
Linda confessed frankly that she was not confident about teaching high school students unless she was to teach ESL to junior students, because she thought language and cultural differences were both problematic for her. She said she could manage, especially with junior students, but it was difficult for her to teach senior students. She said that identity was not a problem for her and she considered herself ‘bilingual’. With regard to being an Australian schoolteacher, Linda thought the most important element was awareness of the ‘safety of pupils’, while language, personality and discipline were also vital factors for these prospective teachers. Linda, as a language student herself, had had opportunities to experience a student-centred approach to teaching with which many of her Chinese counterparts might not have been familiar. In China, students whose majors are foreign languages (in particular European languages) in universities are considered the most ‘Westernised’ of university students. Linda considered that language was her biggest barrier in the course proper while both language and cultural difference were challenging in her practicum. During her practicum, her main concern was ‘classroom management’, as ‘the students were controlling the classes’. After her P1, Linda felt that teaching at high school was a ‘disaster’ for her, and she preferred the possibility of being an academic in TESOL.

Alice

Alice graduated from a teacher training university with a Bachelor’s degree, majoring in Science. After she finished her first degree in China, her former Chinese teacher in her high school suggested that she continue to do a Masters degree, at a university in Shanghai. However, Alice thought that she had a good command of
English—with which I agree—and so she decided to undertake her Masters degree in Australia.

The idea of becoming a teacher did not occur to Alice until near the end of her high school. Encouraged by her parents and her Chinese teacher, Alice made up her mind to become a ‘good teacher’ like her Chinese teacher, who ‘had changed so many lives of his students’. Her image of teaching before practicum was that teachers should be respected and they should be able to use different student-centred approaches.

Alice believed that her biggest challenge in the course was her English. She said that there was much terminology she did not understand. She enjoyed attending her lecturer Paul’s tutorials, as he always encouraged his AITE students to practise their English, and provided opportunities for them to demonstrate their abilities. Alice was worried about her English initially, but Paul focused on the ideas the students presented and their minor language problems were deliberately downplayed. Alice believed that Paul’s approach inspired her to share her ideas in front of her class, and convinced her that she did have something to contribute.

Alice did not think her IELTS scores reflected her real language skills. She said that this was mainly due to her usual poor performance under stress in examinations. Alice also believed that Indian students had an advantage over Chinese students, and she felt that Indian students were favoured compared to their Chinese counterparts, when she was studying English in her language school before she enrolled in the MTeach course. Alice did not think enough attention had been given to the differences between different groups of international students in the MTeach course, and she felt that more academics like Paul were needed.
Alice taught Science in her practicums. She claimed that the biggest challenge for her in practicum was her language, and that she had problems in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and understanding what her pupils said. Australian slang was also very challenging for her. While she had a good rapport with supervisors in her P1 and P2, she did find her second practicum was disappointing, and she lost her confidence in teaching, particularly at public schools. Apart from her problem with English, classroom management was another big issue for her.

Alice lost her confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher after her practicum, as there were so many obstacles that she had to overcome. Of these, her permanent residency (PR), was one of the prerequisites she needed to overcome before she could be employed as a schoolteacher in NSW. Alice believed that her PR was her first priority. Alice was very conscious of her Chinese identity and believed that it was extremely hard for Chinese international students to thoroughly blend into the mainstream teaching culture in Australia.

Despite her attitude to her English skills at the beginning of the course, Alice indicated after her practicum experiences that her biggest challenge was English, both in the course and her practicum, and because of that she did not have confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher. Classroom management was also a big issue for her. Although she did want to be viewed as an Australian schoolteacher, she did not have the confidence, which she thought would very much depend on her English competence.

David

David graduated from a university in Shanghai, majoring in Sports Training (swimming). David had been swimming since he was four. He was a swimming
coach in China before he arrived in Australia. With a view to obtaining a coaching licence in Australia, David enrolled in the MTeach course. To become a swimming coach in Australia was one of his dreams.

David said he did not have any prior image of teaching, as he had disliked his schoolteachers. He claimed that he had not met any ‘good teachers at all’ in China. David implied that he was often ignored by teachers, as he was not good at his studies. He disliked teachers in China and the education system there. Comparatively, he liked the Australian education system and it was easier for him to appreciate Australian school culture.

The biggest challenge that David faced in the course was the issue of ‘being accepted’ by the host society. He often felt isolated due to his skin, his accent and his ethnic background. David complained that his opinions were often ignored, in particular in group work in tutorials. So the biggest challenge for him was to ‘blend in’ and to be accepted into ‘this group’, ‘this class’, and the mainstream community. He always had the feeling that he was isolated and that people were reluctant to talk to him. For him, the barriers for successful assimilation were language and cultural differences. He believed that international students would win respect if they had particular strengths. In his opinion, successful assimilation depended on one’s overall capacity: language skills, working ability, working experience, and professional skills.

David did not think that Indian students had any advantage over other students, as they too had strong accents that were not always clear. He argued that all the students were enrolled in the course by passing the same IELTS instrument, so he did not think Indian students had any advantage. However, he conceded that Indian
students speak English more fluently than many Chinese students, as English was one of their national languages.

David taught Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) in his practicum. He argued that the biggest challenge in his practicum was not his English but ‘the differences between the two educational systems’. Not language but teaching approaches were his main problem in the practicum, in particular for sports. David said he had good relationships with his supervisors.

David was not confident about becoming a schoolteacher, and he said the main barrier was language. He said it was very difficult for Chinese students to find a teaching job, even if they had graduated, and English proficiency was the most important element of being an Australian schoolteacher. With regard to the identity issue, David believed that once he was granted permanent residency and had a house, he could find a place where he belonged.

David was the only male participant in this research. When the first interview was being conducted, David had just started a new course—Sports Management—at a different university in the same state. David was very stressed by the English language demands of this new course. However, David claimed that the biggest challenge for him in practicum was not language but ‘different teaching approaches’ (the differences between the Chinese educational system and the Australian one). This claim seems to be quite opposite to what was described by his school supervising teacher (see Chapter 7). David claimed that his biggest difficulty was still the question of whether he could eventually assimilate into the local mainstream society. He believed that ‘successful assimilation’ should include the following three aspects:

- having a good grasp of the target language (native-likeness);
• understanding and adapting to the local culture, and
• being accepted as a member of Australian society.

David believed that it was very difficult for Chinese pre-service teachers to be employed as a teacher, because of the language barrier.

Jane

Jane was in her early twenties and had just finished her second practicum when she was interviewed. She had graduated from a teacher training university in Northern China with a Bachelor’s degree in English Education. She came to Australia in 2008 and finished a one-year MEd (Psychology) in a university in Sydney before she enrolled in the MTeach course. Choosing teaching as a career was not her initial plan; it did not occur to her until she was in her third year of university in China, when she found a part-time teaching job by chance. From then on, she felt that teaching was ‘not a bad idea’ and her parents were very supportive of her decision to become a teacher. Jane said that she did not rule out the possibility of going back to China in the future after she had obtained some teaching experience in Australia.

Jane loved engaging students by various activities, and she learned that method from an American teacher who had influenced her greatly at her Chinese university. This teacher often talked to her students about different cultures, and Jane loved her teaching style, which meant ‘really having fun’ in her class.

Jane indicated that while language was an issue for all international students, the biggest challenge for her in this course was her unfamiliarity with the educational system in Australia. She further explained that in general, the challenges that she faced were 40% language and 60% cultural differences.

Jane had sat the IELTS test twice since she arrived in Australia and she thought the scores awarded to her were worse than what she had expected. She said
that the scores did not reflect her skills in English, in particular in writing. Jane found that Indian students and students from the Middle East were more willing to talk in classes. English did not seem to be a problem for many of them, though they too had heavy accents. Jane thought the reason why these students were so confident about their use of English was mainly due to the fact that English was part of their culture. Jane totally agreed with the suggestion that Indian students were more skilful in using the English language than other Asian students.

Jane taught Chinese in her P1, and ESL in her P2, and she believed that her biggest challenge on practicum was language. She explained that if her English had been better, she would have taught her pupils more and done more activities with them. So it was her English that had limited her teaching capacity. Jane admitted that her students’ slang was also an issue for her. Overall, Jane had very good relationships with her two supervisors.

After her practicum, Jane was confident about becoming a schoolteacher, especially teaching Chinese, and she even believed she would do a much better job than her supervisors. The issue of a sense of belonging occurred to her from time to time, but Jane believed that she could manage it. In terms of her identity, she felt that she was a ‘foreigner who was trying to be accepted as a legitimate member of the mainstream’. Jane argued that the most important element of being an Australian teacher was one’s courage: ‘to meet or face difficulties and challenges courageously’.

Though she was a graduate in English Education, Jane still believed that English language was the main challenge in her practicum and that it ‘limited her teaching capacity’. Jane did not see that the issue of classroom management had anything to do with language; rather, it was about the way in which a teacher
engaged students. Jane was one of the few participants who felt very confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher.

**Yvonne**

Yvonne was the only one among all the students interviewed who had permanent residency. So she was not, strictly speaking, an ‘international student’ according to the selection criteria. The reason why she was still included in the case study is that I believed Yvonne’s data might be beneficial for the research, as it may shine some light on the issue of ‘belonging to a community’ between those who were granted PR and those who were not. Born into a teacher’s family, being a teacher used to be the last thing Yvonne wanted to do, though all her other family members are teachers. Yvonne’s parents are lecturers in a Foreign Language Institute in China. Her father teaches French and Spanish, while her mother teaches Japanese and Russian. Yvonne also has an elder sister, who is a kindergarten teacher. After Yvonne graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Arts, majoring in Chinese Literature, she started working as an editor in a newspaper and in a magazine, and then she changed her career from the media to advertising before she came to Australia. She is married and has a nine year old son, who is still in China with his father. Yvonne considered that she could manage to deal with all the challenges of the course because she was doing it for her son. She enrolled in the MTeach course with a view to becoming a teacher of Chinese in Australian schools.

Yvonne’s desire to be a teacher came largely from the advice of her parents, and her uncle in Australia. Before she came to Australia, her parents and her uncle, who is an Australian citizen, convinced her to become a registered teacher in Australia. Her parents believed teaching in Australia was a good career for their
daughter. Although Yvonne did not have any teaching experience before the course, she was quite confident about becoming a Chinese teacher in Australia. She thought it would be easy for someone like her to teach Chinese in Australia.

Yvonne believed that the English language was her biggest challenge in the course. At the beginning, she was ‘totally lost’ in tutorials and had to read the handouts given by her tutors repeatedly at night. Although Yvonne disliked lectures, which she found a bit boring, she liked some tutorials, as she thought they were ‘practical’. Yvonne believed that the course helped her greatly; in particular, the practicum she found very helpful.

Yvonne did not do IELTS but an equivalent English for Academic Purpose (EAP) course in TAFE, as she was already a permanent resident, and she said she was satisfied with the scores she achieved in the course, as they reflected her skills. Yvonne found it was difficult to talk to a native English speaker, because she felt it was hard to approach them. Yvonne felt Indian students had some advantages, as English was a ‘second language’ for many of them. She said many Indian students in her class performed much better than other international students, who spoke the language as a ‘foreign language’.

Yvonne taught Chinese in her practicums. She said that classroom management was the main issue for her in practicum, and one of the factors could be that she was not a ‘local—a native speaker—and sometimes it was hard for her to understand what her students were talking about. Yvonne indicated that the most important element in practicum was how to engage students, and that language was certainly involved in this engagement. Yvonne claimed that using student-centred approaches was her biggest challenge, as she was not familiar with these methods.
She claimed she had ‘a good rapport’ with her supervisors, in particular with her P1 supervisor, though she believed that her P2 supervisor gave her a ‘lot of pressure’.

‘Try my best’ seems to be a motto for Yvonne. It was both her faith in her abilities and her family that supported Yvonne to face challenges in the course. Yvonne claimed that identity was not an issue for her, and she was confident about teaching Chinese at schools after her practicum. She claimed that good teaching depended on one’s experience and on the actual time one spends on teaching. For Yvonne, being an Australian schoolteacher was an issue of how to satisfy the needs of students.

While she said she was ‘confident’ about teaching Chinese in Australia, Yvonne definitely did not have confidence in passing a particular systemic English assessment, which is required before she is qualified to teach in Australia. She perceived that her challenge was how to engage students and that the reasons why she failed to do so were due to her English language competence, particularly when student-centred approaches were required. Yvonne had to employ specific strategies to compensate for her language weaknesses, such as video and games. This strategy could significantly reduce the amount of oral English she had to use. Yvonne found her English language competence was always a barrier to her efforts to establish her teacher authority in the class she was teaching.

**Rachael**

Rachael is from Vietnam and was in her early 20s when she was interviewed. She graduated from a university in Ho Chi Minh City with a Bachelor degree in Science, majoring in Mathematics. Rachael was the only participant who was going back to her country to teach after the course. She then planned either to do research in
Vietnam or to continue her studies in another country. Her image of teaching came from her school in Vietnam, which was a public school where what she called a ‘teacher-centred approach’ had been the popular way of teaching. Rachael regarded teaching as a ‘very nice job’, based on her experience in Vietnam, because teachers were respected and students were well behaved there. However, for her the reality of teaching in Australian schools was not like this. Everything that Rachael was familiar with from her own schooling failed to match her experience in Australian schools.

She considered that the English language was her biggest challenge, both in the course and in the practicum. She found two subjects particularly difficult because of the amount of reading. Rachael also found paraphrasing challenging. Rachael liked to attend tutorials, as she understood most of the conversations, though she did not talk much herself, due to her accent. However, Rachael was satisfied with all the assistance available for international students in the course. Rachel did not think her IELTS scores had reflected her ‘real skills’ in English, especially for writing, as these scores were lower than she had expected. However, she admitted she was having problems in speaking and reading. Rachael could not comment on the suggestion that Commonwealth students may be better off in the use of English, as she did not know much about them.

Rachael taught Mathematics in her practicums. She believed that her English was her biggest challenge on practicum. She said that explanations in English were a big issue, such as explaining concepts like ‘triangle’ and ‘congruency’. The slang that the pupils in her class used was a big issue too, and Rachael felt that the pupils were talking so quickly that she failed to understand what they meant. Pronunciation was another issue for her. For instance, she had problems in pronouncing words like
prove and say. She thought that this was why her students did not understand her well.

Rachael claimed that she never thought of the issue of identity. She was very happy that she was being recognised as an ‘NESB’ student by her supervisor, as this recognition indicated that her supervisor understood her. As indicated in Chapter 1, the term ‘NESB’ is quite disturbing for some AITE students, while it does not affect others. Rachael was one of the latter. The significance of such differences for this study lies in the different ways in which the students perceive themselves. Thus, different reactions to the term ‘NESB’ indicate that AITE students have various ways of self-positioning, in terms of their sense of belonging to certain communities of teaching practice. Rachael said that her dream to become a teacher was always the motive to drive her forward. If she were to teach in Australia, for her the most important element of being ‘an Aussie teacher’ would be her improvement in English language, rather than her knowledge of Mathematics.

Rachael was really struggling with her English, particularly in productive skills. From her point of view, her biggest struggle was obvious. One major difference Rachael had from other participants was that she was going back to her country to teach after the course. Thus, she did not seem to have the pressure that most international students had, such as struggling to obtain permanent residency status, and facing the pressure of becoming a registered teacher.

Aleve

Aleve is from Turkey.\textsuperscript{20} She had been a kindergarten teacher in Turkey, and had a Bachelor’s degree in Science, majoring in Industry Design. Aleve is very passionate

\textsuperscript{20} Turkey is strictly Eurasian, of course, though most of the land mass occupies what was formerly Asia Minor.
about teaching, and she considers herself an inspirational teacher. Aleve also has talents in classical music, dancing, teaching and drama. Her idea of teaching is not just about passing knowledge to her students but, most importantly, about becoming a life model for her students.

With her skills in Industry Design and English, in the interviews, she said that she hoped that she could obtain some teaching experience in an Anglo country, and then travel and teach around the world. Her dreams were: to improve her English; to know the Australian educational system so as to be able to teach in Australia, and then to travel. She loves children, so she also intended to enrol in a graduate entry Primary teacher education course. However, she could not do so, because, like many international students, staying in Australia and obtaining permanent residency was also a priority. Having been a schoolteacher and a kindergarten teacher in Turkey for over 15 years, Aleve’s ambition was to become an ‘inspirational’ teacher again, in an Australian school. Aleve talked about her concerns about her English both before and after practicum. She said that her pre-practicum image of being an ‘inspirational’ teacher was partly realized on practicum.

Aleve found academic writing difficult for her, in particular when she was required to conform to aspects such as APA referencing. She said that she mixed Turkish with English sometimes, and realised that her age was a disadvantage for her learning English. She felt disappointed with the course, as she claimed it did not ‘give her anything’, and she wished more assistance had been provided for her. She did not find the content of the course particularly difficult, though English was challenging for her.

Aleve did not do the actual IELTS test but entered the MTeach course through a pathway offered by the university. She obtained a score that she said was
equivalent to 7.5 in IELTS overall, but she did not think her level was 7.5 because she thought that the score did not reflect what her real skills were, which she considered at a level lower than 7.5. Aleve agreed with the suggestion that Commonwealth-background students had an advantage over other students from countries where English was spoken as a foreign language.

Aleve taught Technology (Metals and Wood), Graphics, Timber, and Design and Technology in her practicums. Interviewed before her first practicum, she said she was worried about her English and about teaching high school students. After practicum, she said that communication had not been a problem for her, though she indicated that it had been challenging for her to talk to other teaching staff. She claimed that the biggest challenge she had in her practicum was to establish relationships with other teachers, though she did have a very good relationship with her immediate supervisor. Although she admitted that language was a factor that hindered her from building up such relationships, she said language was not her ‘first priority’; instead, other professional skills were. After practicum, she no longer wanted to be a schoolteacher but wished to become an academic at university.

Aleve saw English as an important element in being an Australian schoolteacher. Another important element was to have a ‘wise man’—a head teacher or supervisor—who completely understood her potential and ignored her weaknesses in language but valued her other skills. Aleve valued relationships with other teachers very highly, though she found establishing these difficult on her practicum.

Aleve perceived English language proficiency as the main obstacle to her academic success, and this concern was demonstrated and confirmed in the assignment presented for this research, her practicum report, and the interviews with her two school supervising teachers. While she said identity was not an issue for her,
she did care very much about establishing rapport with other teaching staff, and hoped that she could always have a ‘wise man’ such as Jeremy—her P1 supervisor—who could see beyond her linguistic weaknesses and appreciate her other strengths. To fulfil her dream of being an Australian schoolteacher, there were three big obstacles in front of her: passing the course, becoming registered, and obtaining permanent residency. All these three obstacles, in effect, have the critical element of English language competence. In addition, she wished to be seen as an ‘inspirational teacher’ by her students.

**Riva**

Riva is from India. She has three brothers and one sister, and is the eldest of her family. Her father used to serve in the Air Force; he retired in the 1970s. All her brothers and sisters were married, with children, except her. She came from a big family with four generations living together. Because of her father’s work, the family needed to travel around the country, and lived in various states in India. So, she had opportunities to be exposed to different cultures, which was something she loved. Besides English, Riva speaks Hindi and a local dialect of Punjab.

With a Bachelor of Arts from a university in India in 1991, she had been a secondary schoolteacher for 12 years before she came to Australia in 2008. Riva came to study teacher education in Australia because she needed the teaching experience in an Anglophone country and knowledge of its education system. After the course, she intended to apply to be a registered teacher in NSW. She would stay in Australia for about 5-6 years then would go back to India, as she wanted to open a school in India with one of her brothers.
Riva considered teaching was a passion for her. Her concept of teaching was not limited to delivery of content from textbooks but, most importantly, was a mission, how to turn her students into good human beings. Contradiction also appeared in Riva’s narratives about her experiences in Australia. For instance, Riva claimed that she did not find much difference between Australian schooling and Indian schooling, except the technology used in an Australian classroom. However, she also said that she had encountered a lot of difficulties at the outset of her practicum.

Riva admitted she came across many difficulties in the course, especially with regard to the educational system in Australia. The biggest challenge she had was completing assignments, and she found academic writing was very challenging for her, as she had never done the sort of writing that was demanded before. However, Riva claimed that she was having difficulties understanding the requirements of assignments. She considered that the problem she had in her academic writing was both a language issue and a ‘cultural one’ for her.

Riva achieved 7.5 overall in IELTS, and she said this reflected her skills in English. Riva argued that there was not too much difference among international students, and that ‘they all started from the same platform’. In particular, she disagreed with the idea that Indian students were advantaged, in terms of the use of the English language. She indicated that she was struggling with her writing too, and she did not think she was advantaged compared with other international students.

Riva taught Geography in her P1, and Geography and Hindi in her P2. She disclosed that there were two challenges during her practicums. The first was classroom management. The second one was how to prepare new teaching resources every day. Riva had very good relationships with her supervisors, especially the first
one. However, on one occasion, Riva took a History class when her supervising teacher was on leave. Riva needed to show a video to the class but she found that there was no TV when she arrived at the classroom. When she asked the teacher who was in charge of the electronic equipment, so she could borrow a TV set, instead of being supportive, this teacher criticised her for not having been responsible. Riva perceived this incident as an example of discrimination.

Riva was very confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher after practicum, as she knew how to deal with students, and she felt she now knew the system. Riva had had a feeling of being an ‘outsider’, especially in the first couple of weeks. However, such feelings were gone after she gained a rapport with her students. Instead of feeling like a foreigner, she felt that she was attached to her class emotionally and professionally, and saw herself as multilingual. Riva believed that confidence was an important element in being an Australian schoolteacher.

Riva was the only participant who denied that Indian students had an advantage over other international students. She was also the only participant who claimed that s/he was confident about passing any English tests required. Riva was proud of being multilingual, and said she was desperate to become an Australian schoolteacher, though she had had a feeling of being an ‘outsider’ in the first few weeks of her practicum. However, it did not take long for her to find a sense of belonging and to attain the authority of being a teacher. Unlike other AITE students, whose key barrier to becoming a legitimate schoolteacher was often their English language, she considered confidence was the most important element for her to become a legitimate professional in Australian schools. Such confidence probably attaches strongly to language ability.
5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has established the case study by introducing the 10 student participants’ backgrounds, a snapshot of their experiences in the course, and their views on aspects of teaching. For these participants, the role of their English language competence in establishing their sense of belonging to the community of Australian schoolteachers was a major issue, particularly in practicum. A full analysis of the students’ interviews, discussed across all interviewees, now follows in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6: STUDENT PARTICIPANTS’ INTERVIEWS

This chapter provides a comprehensive report on all questions asked in these interviews. The main purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the results of the data analysis of student interviews, in which codes and categories were generated.

These student interviews are divided into two parts: *individual interviews* of the 10 participants and *group interviews*, which were used as a form of triangulation (as discussed in Chapter 4). Of the participants in the group interviews, there were two sub-groups: Group A and B. Group A was composed of local students who were born in families of CALD backgrounds and finished their high school in Australia, while students in Group B were AITE students from ‘the outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985): countries of the British Commonwealth.

With a view to providing a clear and logical illustration of the whole process, the discussion of individual interviews is organised by question and by category across all the students interviewed. Each question from the individual interviews is first discussed according to the responses from each student, and then examined in terms of the relevant categories generated. There are five Parts in the Individual Interviews (Section 6.1): *students’ backgrounds; images of teaching/or a teacher; the MTeach course; IELTS; practicum*, and *being an Australian schoolteacher* (see also Appendix C). Because Part I, which includes Questions 1 and 2, has been analysed in Chapter 5, the analysis in this chapter begins from Question 3 in Part II.

6.1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Here the discussion starts from Part II and is generally organized around each question, though some of the questions are combined, for efficiency. Each discussion
covers all interviewees in terms of the categories found. Twenty-four categories were generated through coding of the students’ data. Eighteen questions in the individual interviews are discussed in this chapter (from Q3-Q20). Table 6.1 shows all the questions and how they are related to the theoretical framework of this research.

**Table 6.1 Questions and their relations to the theoretical framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>How it relates to theoretical framing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where do you intend to teach after you finish the course?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Please tell me your experience about your school and university in your country of origin</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before this current course?</td>
<td>Relates to how the student imagines the community of ‘successful teachers’ prior to the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before practicum?</td>
<td>Relates to how the student imagines the community of ‘successful teachers’ prior to the practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did these images match the reality of what you have encountered in Australia? Why or why not?</td>
<td>Relates to how the student imagines the community of ‘successful teachers’ and how his/her personal practicum experience allowed them to identify as part of that community (or not)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What would you say now were the biggest challenges you have in the course?</td>
<td>Relates to what difficulties the student had, which may be (associated) issues of language, teacher identity or cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are the particular strengths you bring to the course?</td>
<td>May relate to the student’s level of self-confidence in their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What factors have assisted you in accessing, participating in, and achieving your academic and personal potential in this teacher education program?</td>
<td>May relate to the student’s level of self-confidence in their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What tasks did you usually have most confidence about or most interest in, in your course?</td>
<td>May relate to the student’s level of self-confidence in their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is this program successful in supporting you? What makes it so?</td>
<td>May relate to factors that enhance or hinder their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How might this program be improved to assist you or similar students?</td>
<td>May relate to factors that enhance or hinder their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Do you think your IELTS scores generally reflect your skills in English?</td>
<td>Relates to their perception about who they are as learners or users of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Have you found any differences among NESB students from different countries? If yes, then what are they?</td>
<td>Relates to ways in which they perceive their challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Generally speaking, do you think that the students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over the students from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e.g. China) in terms of their academic performance?</td>
<td>Relates to the perception of Asian students as a linguistically or culturally homogeneous category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What would you say are the biggest challenges you have had in the practicum?</td>
<td>Relates to what difficulties the student had in practicum, which may be associated with the issues of English, teacher identity or cultural differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. What tasks did you usually have confidence about or interest in, on practicum?</td>
<td>Relates to the level of confidence that a student has in terms of becoming part of the community as a legitimate classroom practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Are you confident in becoming an Australian schoolteacher? Why or Why not?</td>
<td>Relates to how AITE students perceive themselves in terms of becoming a legitimate Australian schoolteacher and the potential difficulties of obtaining such membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Is identity/sense of belonging an issue for you? Why? Do you have other options other than NS and NNS for identity construction?</td>
<td>Relates to the impact of the NS/NNS binary on their construction of teacher identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. What are the most important elements for ‘becoming’ an Australian teacher?</td>
<td>Relates to the student’s priorities in the process of ‘community becoming’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. If you feel that you have overcome big challenges in this course, what helped you create this resilience?</td>
<td>Relates to the student’s strategies for dealing with their challenges in the process of ‘community becoming’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.1 Part II (Questions 3 to 5): Images of teaching/or a teacher

Q3. What was your image of teaching (including of school and of being a teacher) before this current course?

As described in Chapter 4, the interview data first were generated into codes and then summarised into categories. In the following discussion, ‘N’ represents the number of participants whose answers fell into a category. In Question 3, the most common (N > 3 students) categories generated were:

**Category 1:** Source of the image (N = 10)

**Category 2:** Models of Teacher/Teaching (N = 5)

In this case, the categories generated above are perhaps predictable, in terms of the question asked. However, what is of interest is the elaboration of each category. The most frequently mentioned sources for their image of teaching were: relationships with particular teachers, their own former experiences of being a teacher (Riva, Aleve and Alice), and family influences. The latter included: parents choosing for them (Alice), or being the child of a teacher (Linda) or of an academic (Yvonne). In terms of models of teacher/teaching, there were interestingly varied answers. Riva, for example, said:

Teaching is a passion for me and it is something I don’t have to work hard for. I consider teaching is a kind of knowledge flow which get transferred to younger generations, improve them and then it would be transferred to next generation. My concept of teaching is that reading a book is not important but teaching the students to become a good human being is the most important job for a teacher.

Riva here partly displays a model of herself as Barnes’ ‘transmission’ teacher (Barnes, 1975). She sees teaching as a mission aimed at moral development. Interestingly, however, she sees teaching as ‘something I don’t have to work hard for’ and perhaps here demonstrates a confidence that comes from having the highest IELTS scores among the student participants, but also of being one of Kachru’s
(1985) ‘outer circle’. She was also the only student who felt confident about her English competence, and one of the few who were confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher.

Alice and Linda also emphasized changing pupils’ lives, with Alice comparing a teacher to ‘an actor’. Jane focused on the need to engage pupils’ attention, while Aleve claimed that she did not want to be an ordinary teacher but an ‘inspirational’ one:

I want to be [an] inspirational teacher, I don’t want to deal with stationary item [lesson plans, for example], I want to be a model for the students. I want to be a perspective for youth, the world is not Sydney, not Paris, and the world is a big world where you have to define your mission. You have to get some ideal [purpose of life] (Aleve).

Firstly, this quote has Aleve positioning herself within a very specific community. She seeks membership of a community of ‘inspirational teachers’. Like Riva, she sees teaching as broader than the subject-curriculum, and as being about widening pupils’ horizons.

Q4. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before practicum?
The purpose of asking these two similar questions—Q3 and Q4—was to explore whether the students had had any changes to their images of teaching during their course, before the practicum, and whether the course itself (or other factors that had occurred during the course) had had any impact on their original images of teaching. While no major changes were found in their image of teaching before practicum, some serious concerns over their communication in English were shown from many of them. These concerns may have compromised their previous images of teaching to some degree. When they were responding to Q4, some (N = 6) compared the classroom culture ‘at home’ with that in Australia. The most common categories
which were discussed in answer to this question were: *contrasts with home culture* and *teachers as competent communicators*.

**Category 3:** Contrasts with home culture (N = 6)

Six interviewees (Jane, Rachael, Linda, Riva, Yvonne and Vivian) compared their home culture with that of Australia. Vivian said:

> Some of my friend did the teaching degree here they kind of told me the school here is pretty different from what in China, it is like kind of a lot of misbehaved students, so I kind of get nervous (Vivian).

What Vivian became concerned about was her teacher authority, which is normally not an issue in China, even for student-teachers. For her practicum, Vivian then tried to go to a school where there were many students of Asian backgrounds, with a view to avoiding conflict with potentially misbehaving students.

However, the impact of cultural difference on these students was varied. For instance, Linda seemed to have been consciously aware of some of the differences before the MTeach course started:

> However, I did not expect the same thing happening in Australia because my English major when I was in uni, I had a little bit of image about what is in Australia (Linda).

Linda’s awareness of these differences mainly resulted from her learning experience in her Bachelor’s degree in Business English. Graduates from a Foreign Language Department at Chinese universities are generally considered more ‘Westernised’ than students from other departments, in terms of their awareness of Western culture. Teaching in Australia did not seem to be so ‘foreign’ or different for Riva either, compared with other participants, who were from countries where English is spoken as a foreign language. While many participants found language was a key difference, the first difference Riva mentioned was the use of technology in the classroom.
Category 4: Teachers as competent communicators (N = 4)

For many participants, a teacher was perceived as a competent communicator who had absolute authority in the classes they taught. However, their inadequate mastery of the English language seemed to weaken their sense of such authority, and caused a gap between their image and reality. It was this gap that often made them uneasy and worried.

For instance, before her practicum Rachael anticipated that language would be a big issue for her, based on her experience during the course, and she was deeply disturbed by her accent. Cindy and Aleve also shared similar concerns, and they expected that practicum would be a ‘tough period’ for them because of not being native speakers:

I am not sure in terms of whether my image of teaching matches the reality here because, you know, language is still a struggling point for me. You know I cannot put the right information into the right file into my brain (Aleve).

Aleve’s perspective reflects a conflict between two schooling systems—Turkish and Australian—and the difficulty an ‘outsider’ faces, particularly in terms of the language barrier and the tacit knowledge needed when they are in the process of entering ‘membership’ of a new community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Aleve’s English as a tool obviously hindered such information transfer.

Q5. Did these images match the reality of what you have encountered in Australia? Why or why not?

Here, ‘the images’ refers to participants’ visions, before the course, of what teaching was like. Some of them carried these images they had had before the course into their practicum, though some participants were no longer as confident about becoming a teacher in an Australian school as they had been before their practicum, due to the impact of cultural differences and to worries about their language proficiency during
the course. The responses to the question can be divided into three main codes: expectations met (Linda, Jane and Riva); expectations partly met (Aleve, Alice) and expectations not met (Yvonne, Vivian, Rachael and Cindy), and these generated two categories: cultural shock and pedagogies preferred.

**Category 5: Cultural shock (N = 6)**

For Jane, Linda and Riva, while cultural differences certainly remained, there was generally no surprise for them during their practicum in terms of what teaching would be like in practicum. As Jane indicated:

> We were informed the situation of the local schools from our focus-week\(^{21}\) and we were given enough information to be aware of in terms of the current school situation here (Jane).

In contrast, other participants underwent a ‘culture shock’ to some degree during their practicum. For instance, Vivian was considering changing her course, and Yvonne and Cindy were even thinking of leaving teaching because of their experiences. Yvonne had previously thought that it would be very easy for someone like her to teach Chinese in Australia but the reality was not what she had imagined:

> The difficult is how to do the classroom management in Australia. The kids have more freedom, and they are more (naughtier) than the students in China, not easy to let them concentrate on study (Yvonne).

What Yvonne called ‘classroom management’ is actually about her teacher authority, which, according to what Yvonne said, student-teachers in China usually did not have to worry about, even on their first day of practicum. Without such authority, Yvonne found it hard to think of herself as a teacher or even to work in a classroom confidently. Vivian also experienced some ‘culture shock’:

> During my practicum, I taught one Yr 12 General Maths class and most of the students are not interested (in Maths) and just doing something else. But compared to China, everyone in Yr 12 [in China] is so focusing and everyone just wants to get something out of it. However,

\(^{21}\) *Focus week* is a program run by the university as an orientation to practicum. AITE students’ feedback from the program was varied in terms of the adequacy of the information provided in this program.
compared to that General Maths class, everyone a kind of wish[es] to have fun and they don’t want to learn Maths.

This ‘cultural shock’ resulted from the expectations that AITE practicum students had of their pupils. Like Yvonne, Vivian found it odd that Australian students, particularly senior students, still needed to be motivated by their teachers, as she perceived that motivation was not an issue for Chinese students, in particular for Year 11 and 12 students.

Category 6: Pedagogies preferred (N = 3)

When asked, Aleve revealed the ‘surprises’ she had in an incident regarding her tutor in Industrial Design:

I would like to give you an example. Last week, [my tutor] showed us her portfolio for Industrial Design which may help graduates apply for jobs. She brings us her portfolio like this big and I opened it, it was all writing. When I saw it, it was so surprising, because we never do this. My portfolio would (be) a drawing of chair, a TV [Incident 1]…

[This tutor] went to high school here and she is a high schoolteacher and she is [also] our casual tutor of Industrial Design. But when she was teaching she was only talking to other Aussies in the class and she did not have eye contact with us [Incident 2].

Aleve’s surprise could be based on the following issues. First is the content of a portfolio of Industrial Design, which Aleve thought should have been something like info-graphics, rather than written texts only. AITE students bring expectations about something as basic as content. The second issue is the attitude of the tutor, whom Aleve perceived as ignoring the presence of international students in the classroom. Aleve’s use of ‘she’ and ‘us’ vividly describes the gap between two potentially different communities of teaching practice. Aleve’s perception is that her tutor is excluding her membership of a potential teacher community, as this tutor thought she might not get the feedback she had expected from Aleve. The third issue is about the tutor herself, who is a current schoolteacher—a ‘model’ of a schoolteacher of Industrial Design. Aleve perceived that becoming a teacher like this tutor seemed to be a ‘mission impossible’, because these represented two totally different teaching
styles. Finally, being taught by ‘a schoolteacher’ is something beyond her comprehension as a Masters student at university. This is another ‘culture shock’ that shows how different Aleve is from local students. All these surprises let Aleve feel strongly the distance between her image of an ‘Industrial Design teacher’ and what she then perceived as reality.

Alice said that whether her image of teaching matched reality or not depended on which practicum was being referred to:

The thing is I do P1 in a (private) school and it’s student-centred (that) all Paul’s theories can use (there). It is a girl school and they use interactive white board and (students) use their laptops to do their research and everything is so idealistic (Alice).

What Alice perceived as difference was not only because of being in a girls’ school or in a private school, but her key matching criterion was based on whether there was gap between what she was taught in the course and what was being practiced at school. This gap in pedagogy is commonly perceived in relevant literature (Campbell et al., 2006; Han, 2006, Hartsuyker et al., 2007), and is just as true for native speaking students. However, a difference exists between native speaking students and AITE students in terms of the impact of the gap on both groups. For AITE students, the impact is potentially much bigger, due to their ignorance of Australian school culture and their inadequate command of English (see further discussion in Chapter 10). Comparatively, her P2 was very disappointing:

But P2 is just opposite, it is like so teacher-centred, for my experience, it is quite different for others I just go to extremely different school. Even my supervisor in P2 asked me to use teacher-centred approach. It doesn’t work if you use student-centred (method), it is a disaster. It is no use to build up positive environment because students don’t want to learn. In my second practicum, my supervisor told me if you don’t do this and that, he will fail me (Alice).

Alice’s P2 experience surprised her, as it was not what she was taught by Paul, who encouraged his students to use student-centred approaches as much as possible. It was shocking for Alice that she was forced to use teacher-centred approaches only.
Furthermore the pedagogy at this school ran against her criteria for being a ‘good teacher’ (see Chapter 5: Alice). It also reflected a long term perceived problem in teacher education for all students, viz., a perceived mismatch between teacher education programs and school teaching (Hartsuyker et al., 2007). Finally, what made Alice more confused was the issue of students’ motivation, which she said she did not have to worry about when she was a teacher in China.
6.1.2 Part III (Questions 6 to 11): The MTeach course

Q6. What would you say now were the biggest challenges you have in the course?

The most common category in answer to this question was ‘English language proficiency’. Most of the participants (Aleve, Alice, Cindy, Linda, Rachael, Yvonne, and Riva) believed that language was the biggest challenge they had in the course and practicum, while Jane agreed that language was an issue for her as well, though it was not the ‘biggest’ issue for her in the course proper. David and Vivian were different from other participants, and they said that language was ‘not an issue’ for them. However, when they continued to talk about the problems they had during their course, they did talk about their English as a barrier for them in their practicum. Another common category discussed in answer to this question was language and cultural difference.

Category 7: English language proficiency in the course proper (N = 7)

Yvonne was ‘totally lost’ in tutorials and had to read the handouts given by her tutors repeatedly at night. Rachael said that English was her biggest problem, both in the course and in the practicum, and using English to explain concepts in Mathematics such as ‘triangle’ and ‘congruency’ was a big issue for her. Rachael argued that she understood concepts in Mathematics but what she was really struggling with was explaining the concepts to the pupils in English. She further argued that it was not the ‘Australian way’ of teaching Mathematics which made her struggle but it was using English as a tool to illustrate the concepts of Mathematics and their relationships that gave rise to her frustration. In addition, the use of Australian slang in the class, also severely affected her communication with the pupils. So the ‘language issue’ for Rachael consisted of teacher language (classroom registers) and pupil language (Australian teenage slang) aspects.
Category 8: Language and cultural difference (N = 6)

Riva claimed that her academic writing was her biggest problem, and she had difficulty in understanding the requirements of the course assignments:

For instance, doing assignments is something which I find very challenging for me because I have never done assignments in my life and that was the first time. I struggled with that and I am still struggling with academic writing which are both a language issue and cultural issue (Riva).

While it was not clear what kind of ‘cultural issue’ Riva was referring to with regard to her difficulty in academic writing, her positioning of her problem in academic writing was unique among the AITE students, in claiming that her difficulty was both ‘a language issue and a cultural issue’ (Riva’s attitude towards her writing was not alone among students from the ‘outer circle’, as the researcher had similar feedback from another Indian student and a Pakistani student). It may be that students from ‘the outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985) have more of a tendency to not see their problem as a ‘language issue’, though it’s a common perception among the students from the ‘expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1985).

While very few students denied they had challenges in the course, they did view the nature of these challenges differently. For instance, David claimed that language was not an issue for him, while ‘being accepted’ was. He said that the biggest challenge for him was the question of whether he could be eventually accepted by the larger host society as a legitimate member:

Emotionally, it is the feeling that we are being isolated due to our hair, our skin, our pronunciation and our ethnic background. International students’ opinions are often ignored, in particular in group work in tutorials and when I raised this issue in a tutorial, my marks of the course even were deducted by the tutor. So the biggest challenge for me is whether I could completely ‘melt’ into the host society—it is whether I could be accepted into this group, this class and the mainstream community as a legitimate member (David, translated by the researcher from Mandarin).
What David indicated by using the word ‘emotionally’ was the struggle he experienced when he attempted to be accepted by native speakers of English in the host society. This rejection even affected his construction of his identity as a swimming coach in Australia. For many Chinese international students, to ‘completely ‘melt’ into the mainstream’ (Zhou, 1997, p. 976)—to assimilate into the host society successfully—is their dream. David felt that gaining acceptance by the dominant culture depended on how well he spoke the language, which was a prerequisite for a successful ‘melting-in’.

Q7. What are the particular strengths you bring to the course?

The most common category discussed in the answers to this question was knowledge learned at home. Other strengths mentioned included mother tongue, confidence, attitude and interpersonal skills.

Category 9: Knowledge learned ‘at home’ (N = 6)

The view that knowledge learned ‘at home’ was considered an advantage for their teaching was shared by many participants, and this knowledge included that learnt during their studies at university and in previous work. For instance, Alice argued that cultural difference was to her advantage. Alice claimed that in solving problems or equations, Chinese students tended to think about more ways of solving a problem. Rachael was confident about her knowledge of Mathematics and she said that she was able to solve a problem in different ways. Jane also believed that the advantages she had included her ability to apply what she learned to practice in different subject areas, and her multicultural background. Linda said her business and commerce knowledge could enhance her teaching, while David indicated that his efforts in coaching and attitude towards coaching could make a great contribution to his future
coaching/teaching profession. Both David and Linda believed their own language was to their advantage too. Riva was quite confident about her interpersonal skills, which included having an ‘inner spirit’ to explore new things, and being patient:

If I talk to a student for a few minutes I am able to tell what kind of person he/she is. If he listens to me, he will start having an attachment to me as I could show him that I care him. I am very good at human interaction.

By revealing what they can do, the students are actually positioning themselves in certain positive ways. However, how this knowledge from ‘home’ can be perceived and made use of by lecturers and school supervising teachers in the course, particularly on practicum, still remains a question.

Q8. What factors have assisted you in achieving your academic and personal potential in this teacher education program?

Q9. What tasks did you usually have most confidence about or most interest in, in your course (assignments, academic writing or tutorial)?

These two questions were designed to investigate the participants’ opinions of the course. Although the participants were asked about positive factors in the course, many of them also talked about some negative factors that had hindered their access to achieving their academic and personal potential in this course. The two most positive factors in the course were tutorials/favourite tutors while the most negative factor was language as barrier.

Category 10: Tutorials/Favourite tutors (N = 4)

It was found that the students’ performances in tutorials were often affected by their listening comprehension. Cindy, Alice, Yvonne and Rachael were among those who argued the difficulty of understanding spoken English in tutorials. Compared with lectures, tutorials appeared to be a favourite form of academic study for the participants. The reason why Alice liked tutorials, in particular Paul’s tutorials, was
because Paul established a relaxing, fear-free atmosphere in which AITE students felt safe, as their linguistic weaknesses were deliberately ignored and their personal strengths were maximized. Alice said that Paul provided each student with an opportunity to present their ideas, to display their individual talent and let them feel that their efforts were worthwhile.

I think whatever I teach in Australia or China, Paul’s teaching strategies will influence whole my life because his teaching really consider(s) what kind of student-centred, what is student-centred. I am lucky and Paul taught me two Science Methods. Here, it seemed that what Alice preferred appeared to be not so much tutorials per se as Paul’s ways of teaching. Thus, a tutorial as a form of teaching context may have been irrelevant, but the way in which a tutor handled a tutorial and, most importantly, his/her attitude to students’ differences, was critical:

I talked a lot in Paul’s lessons, I even confident, stay in front of the class to teach them Physics. I was quiet in others’ tutorials but in Paul’s tutorials even my English is not good, maybe the students could not understand me, but the first thing at least I know there is something for me. He gives me time to teach in front of class, that is why every student enjoys his lesson (Alice).

In Paul’s tutorials, Alice seemed to be another person who was confident and active. She was eager to stand in front of the class and present her ideas, as she knew ‘there is something’ for her.

What is this something from Paul? What is the significance for these Asian pre-service teachers? What Paul gave Alice, in part was the legitimacy that she needed to see herself as a member of a certain community of practice (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of legitimacy). Yvonne also thought tutorials were practical. However, Yvonne’s appreciation of tutorials was conditional:

Generally it is ok but in (lecturer) Nancy’s tutorial, everyone takes turns and each student has to say something. In (other academic’s) tutorial, students were under enormous pressure. If you don’t perform, you will get low marks. Good topic is also another factor for giving one’s opinion in tutorials.
Both Alice’s and Yvonne’s comments on tutorials indicate the important role that lecturers/tutors can play with regard to the empowerment (Cummings, 2009) of the student-teacher. The performance of each AITE student then, relies to some extent on the degree to which he/she is empowered. Generally speaking, AITE students’ performance depends very much on what attitude tutors take towards them and the learning atmosphere that is then created. Tutors can adopt different attitudes towards students’ differences. The tutor’s attitude and subsequent actions will empower or disempower the students.

Compared with other student-teachers, Cindy was the only student who said that she generally disliked tutorials:

I have different views for tutorial which did not help me much. Because poor listening comprehension delayed our reactions to questions asked and we always lost the opportunity to express our opinions at tutorial. Although we did have an opportunity to speak out at tutorial, we were in fact in a state of ‘passive listening’.

Cindy saw her listening comprehension as hindering her access to participation or as taking away her chance to practise. Such difficulties may explain why Asian students are often considered to lack initiative (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009, p. 86). Many Chinese students will not ‘speak up’ until they feel that they are fully ready—first having understood totally what has been said, and having prepared what they are going to say in response. The fact is that when they think they are ‘ready’, the chance has gone. While the language issue is not the only factor that hinders their willingness to express their opinions, the deficit perception and self-perception of being ‘NESB’ (due to the NS/NNS binary) does play a key role in their hesitation about speaking in public.
Category 11: Language as a barrier (N = 7)

Of all the negative factors, the problem of ‘English language proficiency’ was generally perceived as the one that affected them the most. Aleve had to delay her practicum, and she was not allowed to go to focus week because of this. Alice felt shy and uncomfortable in some tutorials because of her language issues, which the lecturer Paul was able to ‘turn around’:

At first I was afraid, I worried about making mistakes, worried about other students laughing at me. It (the feeling) is just gone because whatever I do, he just see the positive part, he did not say, ‘you did not say English very well’ He would just say: ‘I understand you and your mathematics is very well, I haven’t think about it’. It just made me want to share my advantage with others and ignore my disadvantage like that way (Alice).

As Sonia (Alice’s school supervising teacher in her P1) argues, all ‘NESB’ (Sonia’s term) students see themselves in a deficit position. They come into the classroom with a sense of language deficiency and often apologize for making linguistic mistakes. Alice always felt she was being disadvantaged by her inadequacy in using English in tutorials. It is this sense of inferiority about being ‘NESB’, due to the NS/NNS binary, which can significantly hinder AITE students’ performance in their academic studies.

Q.10 Is this program successful in supporting you? What makes it so?
Q11. How might this program be improved to assist you or similar students?

Q10 and Q11 are the last two questions in Part III (The MTeach course). Participants were asked to evaluate the course in general, from their experience. In terms of whether the course was supportive, participants’ responses were varied. Among them, Vivian, Rachael, Jane and Yvonne thought very highly of the course while Aleve and Alice were quite negative. Comparatively, feedback from David, Linda, Cindy and
Riva was somewhat neutral. Categories generated from these two questions were as follows:

**Category 12:** Course duration (N = 8)

**Category 13:** Units of study (N = 6)

**Category 14:** Preparation for practicum (N = 6),

**Category 15:** English Language Support (N = 4)

**Category 16:** Expectations (N = 4)

**Course duration**

Students’ feedback about the duration of the course (see Chapter 5 for details of the course) was varied. Aleve held that one year would be enough if units of study in the course were well organised. She claimed there were too many holidays during a year. Alice echoed Aleve’s opinion and argued that the course was ‘too long’ because of too many breaks and holidays. In contrast, Cindy said that the course (18 months) was too short and it should have been a two-year full-time course in order to train a fully capable teacher. Cindy wanted more teaching time. Riva also complained that students were too busy writing up their assignments and did not have time to develop their writing skills and interact with each other, as things were often done in a rush. While Jane and Linda both thought that a 2-year full-time course was more appropriate for international students, Vivian and David felt that 1.5 years was adequate.

**Units of study**

One of the main issues that the participants mentioned frequently was the balance between ‘theory’ and ‘practical knowledge’ in the course. Such student perceptions echo concerns about the weak link between the practicum and the theoretical components of teacher education generally (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 2). Quite a
few students felt that they had been given too many ‘theories’ while they were
desperately hungry for ‘practical ideas’. Aleve and Alice claimed they should have
been given more ‘practical strategies’ for the practicum. Jane agreed with Aleve and
Alice in this regard and she thought most of the theories taught in the course were
not practical, while Cindy thought that the theoretical component of the course was
helpful. In addition, both Linda and Yvonne claimed that in the Languages Method,
only general issues in language teaching were discussed, without specific assistance
being provided for a particular language. Of course, this is also potentially a problem
for English speakers and local students.

**Preparation for practicum**

The practicum was unanimously considered by the participants a vital component of
the course, and it was the most challenging task that the AITE students had to
undertake. Aleve, Jane and David said that international students should be given
more information on Australian schooling culture before the practicum, since they
had not attended high school in Australia:

> I need a special course, like a *focus week*, but without the pressure of being examined,
without assignments, acting like a teacher aide for six months before I am required to do
anything about teaching in the class. So I can understand the (Australian) culture (and) the
system (Aleve).

Aleve argued that AITE students needed to be treated differently and that they should
learn the Australian school culture in a stress-free environment.

There were other suggestions: Linda said a brief introduction and orientation
to Australian schooling was necessary. Alice believed practicum students should be
given more opportunities to practise teaching at schools, and Rachael argued for a
‘crash course’ in classroom management. It should be pointed out that, while
‘preparation for practicum’ is of importance for both international students and
‘local’ students, it should be able to meet the different ‘needs’ of these students.
**English Language Support**

Rachael said she had hoped there would be a class on pronunciation, and that it would be good if the course could offer language scaffolding to students like her. She said that the kind of assistance she needed was ‘everything about language’. What she said, demonstrates how desperately some AITE students are struggling with their English. However, a question remains: how true is it that all the assistance the students need is ‘about language’? (See Chapter 8 for further discussion).

Riva claimed that her academic writing was her biggest problem. She was very upset when she tried to seek assistance for her academic writing and her demand was not met. She was disappointed at the system in the university:

> While we cannot change the system, we do expect a bit more face to face interaction by someone telling me how I was supposed to do. I could have the opportunity to show it to somebody to check whether it is appropriate or not, which is also a part of the learning process. It is a language issue or actually it is academic writing.

It seems that there is a gap between the scaffolding mechanism provided in the course and the students’ expectations in terms of English language support. While AITE students commonly value personal assistance, the language support provided in the course seems to be heavily reliant on modern technology (e.g. assistance for academic writing is largely provided on the university’s website), which is generally perceived by the students as depersonalised.

**Expectations**

Many participants expected to be provided with clear guidelines for assignments and expected their lecturers/tutors to appreciate the differences between them. Aleve was not satisfied with the course and one of her complaints was that her tutor was ignorant of the differences between local students and AITE students:
However, my tutor thought that every student went to the schools here and they knew about the teaching of Industry Design here and they knew something about the system here. Her teaching approach was based on the assumption that all students were educated here.

The differences between local students and international students in terms of their awareness of Australian schooling are obvious. This gap needs to be properly addressed, in consideration of the fact that AITE students are, and will continue to be, an important part of the cohort of Australian schoolteachers.

Riva also felt very strongly about tutors’ expectations and awareness of international students’ differences:

Another incident was when I tried to ask my tutor about my assignments. The tutor told us to visit the (university) website and it would help. But developing a language takes some time and it cannot happen dramatically. It is not realistic that we are expected to write wonderful essay and provide critical analysis like the native speakers. It does take some time. I think the tutor may have the same expectation for every student and may not be aware of the differences all the students have.

The key question for Aleve and Riva’s problem, of course, was how to help AITE students to reach the standards required. As Riva further argued, the MTeach course should have been ‘more open in regard to students’ differences’:

They expect us to visit some of the university’s websites and become qualified teachers in three months. I don’t agree with that. When I talked to my tutor regarding this, because I cannot be so good at English as the local students, she just told me to go the [University’s web-] sites and to [the academic writing program]. It is not that just reading the [University’s web-] sites and then implementing couple of things then I would come to the levels of the local students. I can’t do that, because it is difficult for me. I have put a lot of hard work on my assignment but I still can’t come to their level they expected.

There are four main issues found in this excerpt. The first is expectation. All students were expected by their tutor(s) to log into the university websites and it was assumed that information there would be enough to solve their problems. Riva, however, sees the depersonalisation of the reliance on websites as a problem. By using the phrase ‘in three months’, Riva signifies that the expectations of the tutors were not realistic for international students.
A second issue here is self-positioning. Riva explicitly positioned herself in opposition to ‘the local students’—the native speakers—and stressed that more attention and tailor-made assistance should have been given to international students in this regard. Again, Riva questioned the appropriateness of her tutor’s expectations and pointed to the variation of the English language proficiency between native speakers and international students, with a view to getting relevant and adequate assistance from her tutor(s).

A third issue is the appropriateness of the support provided. While the access to the scaffolding mechanism was physically available, this did not necessarily guarantee a solution to these students’ problems and there could be some ‘blind spots’ that lecturers and tutors had overlooked. For example, she argued that AITE students seemed to be expected to be ‘independent’ in the same way as their local peers. The realisation of international students’ independence may depend on two factors: access to the support and the content of the support. These two aspects need to be taken into account with regard to the specific needs of AITE students. The degree of independence achieved by international students could vary from that of the local students. Finally, there is the perceived attitude of lecturers/tutors. Riva did not think the tutor understood her actual needs in academic writing.

To recapitulate what has been discussed about the support for AITE students, the issue Aleve came across in her preparation for the practicum, and Aleve and Riva’s expectations for the MTeach course may look like individual instances initially, but the issues these students presented were, effectively, about the notions of equality and equity. The conflict between the expectations of both sides may be reflected in this idea: Does ‘equality of treatment’ mean ‘equity of outcome’?

Equality is used here to refer to the standards that school supervising teachers
demand AITE studentteachers meet in their practicum, which are regarded by some as a question of treating all studentteachers equally. Equity is used here to refer to fairness, because of the differences that exist among the cohort of AITE students, and highlights the problem of equal treatment, which is unlikely to lead to equitable outcomes if some groups start from a disadvantaged position. Thus, stressing equality may, consciously or unconsciously, work against equity. ‘Equality of treatment’ has been advocated heavily by school supervising teachers, while equity of outcomes may not necessarily be achieved by equal treatment. This dilemma between equality and equity, and some associated recommendations, are discussed further in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.
6.1.3 Part IV (Questions 12 to 14): IELTS and students’ differences

Q12. Do you think your IELTS scores generally reflect your skills in English?

All the participants had undertaken the IELTS test or equivalent. The purpose of asking this question was to see if there was any gap between their actual IELTS results and at what levels they imagined their language skills to be.

Category 17: IELTS Scores and students’ imagining

In analysing the data, two trends were found. First, most participants indicated there was a gap between the scores they obtained and what they had imagined their skills to be. Second, it was almost always the case that their scores were lower than they had expected. However, there were two exceptions. First of all, Riva was the only one who said there was no gap and that her scores really reflected her English skills. Second, Aleve was the only one who claimed her scores (7.5 overall) were higher than she had expected, and said that she did not think she deserved that. Aleve argued that her IELTS course provider ‘just wanted to take her money’.

Alice believed that one’s usual performance in exams played an important part in the gap, and she blamed her own weakness—always performing badly in exams—for that gap. Cindy believed her scores did not match her real skills and her scores were just ‘an approximate judgment’. She said that the Speaking and Writing sections in IELTS were difficult areas in which to achieve ‘7’ for international students. Jane was not satisfied with her scores, in particular her writing score. The source of the gap for Jane was the requirements of a specific genre. Rachael was not happy with her writing score either, and believed that it was due to fluctuations in the degree of difficulty of each individual test.

These perceptions of the students on their IELTS scores demonstrate some points: Firstly, by indicating that their scores were lower than they had expected, the
students position themselves as ‘better English speakers’ than their scores show, because the scores are vitally important for becoming a schoolteacher in Australia. The second issue is that what the students were not satisfied with, appears to be less about their IELTS scores than the treatment they received from relevant institutions. The third issue is the efficacy of IELTS scores: How truly do they reflect the English language skills of AITE students? An implied demand from the students would appear to be that, since their IELTS scores are critical for the future career, it is necessary or possible for relevant institutions to take their cultural and linguistic backgrounds into consideration while maintaining the standards required in conducting the test. For instance, in the Speaking test, instead of focusing on the nativeness provided by AITE students, intelligibility could be a key factor to consider in evaluating the students’ command of the language. Moreover, their IELTS scores are also good indicators of what they may need in their academic studies in the MTeach course. What adequate inputs would then be needed to facilitate these students to achieve equitable outcomes is then, of importance for them.

Q13. Have you found any differences among NESB students from different countries? If yes, then what is it?

Q14. Generally speaking, do you think that the students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over the students from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e.g. China) in terms of their academic performance?

These two questions were linked, and were designed to explore students’ views on, or awareness of, the differences between students from the ‘outer circle’ and those from the ‘expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1990). Question 13 was planned to find out
what sort of difference the participants might have noticed, before they responded to the more specific key question: Q14. Then, a common category found in this case from Q14, is perhaps predictable in terms of the question asked.

Category 18: Indian students’ advantage

Jane was the only participant who talked about the students’ differences in their English language competence when Q13 was asked:

One of the differences I have found is that Indian students and students from Middle East are more willingly to talk. I am not sure why, but first of all, English does not seem to be a problem for them though they have accents but we don’t mind. Second, it may be their culture.

Many students who did not point out this difference when Q13 was asked, later, when Q14 was asked, did agree that Indian students had an advantage in terms of English language proficiency. However, David disagreed that Indian students had an advantage, because of their accents. Nevertheless, he did concede that the spoken English of Indians was better than that of Chinese students since English was one of India’s languages. There was only one participant who totally disagreed with this suggestion, and this was Riva, who is Indian herself. She argued that international students were ‘on the same platform’ in terms of English language proficiency and she ‘did not have any advantage comparing with other international students’.
6. 1.4 Part V (Questions 15 to 16): Practicum

Q15. What would you say now are the biggest challenges you have had in practicum?

This was in some ways the most important question in this research, because the biggest challenges that teacher education students face, often occur during practicum. For AITE students, their ‘performance’ of English adds an extra burden to this challenge. When the participants were illustrating their difficulties during their practicum, everyone except Riva talked directly and indirectly about English language competence in practicum, including the NS/NNS binary (N = 9).

Another key category found was: teacher authority or identity/sense of belonging (N = 5). Besides these, other categories mentioned were: English language competence and cultural difference, and classroom management (see Appendix I).

Category 19: English language competence in practicum/NS/NNS binary (N = 9)

The reason why English language competence in practicum and NS/NNS binary are treated as the same category here is because many student participants expressed their concern about not being native English speakers when they were talking about their English skills on practicum. In this case, English language competence in practicum and NS/NNS binary are both ways of seeing themselves as a particular kind of user of English in the practicum. For them, to obtain English language competence is ‘to speak like a native English speaker’ (Aleve and Cindy). For instance, Aleve was worried about her language before her practicum, and also about not being a ‘native speaker’. She carried a deficit model of herself into her P1:

I know in my mind that I am not speaking like a native speaker. It is a conflict about me. I always conflict that I am not speaking like them. Because of this I am creating some barriers for (by) myself.
This conversation was recorded shortly after her P1 had finished, and a deficit mode of not being NS was obviously disturbing her:

I can’t move and the language doesn’t mean everything. If I know how can (to) describe this thing to you, language doesn’t matter because you can use body language, you can use other things. Sometimes I use my skills, my face, to make it move forward, to make it step forward. The first sentence shows how desperate she was due to not being a ‘native’ speaker.

She claimed that language competence was not the only criterion to evaluate someone as a qualified teacher or not. While Aleve was apparently struggling with her English, language does not seem to be the only obstacle to her being an ‘inspirational teacher’. Furthermore, as she declared (see Chapter 5: Aleve), not improving her English but rather the ‘relationships with other teaching staff in the school’ were her priority. This may not be the case, however, for many AITE students, as their English does play a key role in their academic studies, and improving their communication skills is the only way for them to be accepted as a legitimate member of the local school communities. The messages from Aleve’s narrative are that: first, the NS/NNS binary affects the construction of teacher identity of some AITE students, second, what AITE students are really struggling with may not be the English language itself as a linguistic system. These matters are further discussed in Chapter 8.

Category 20: Teacher authority/identity/sense of belonging (N = 5)

Riva, Vivian, Yvonne and David believed that ‘classroom management’ was their biggest obstacle on practicum. Thus, it is important to understand what they meant exactly by the phrase ‘classroom management’. Alice’s response to the issue of ‘classroom management’ provides a defining point:

Definitely, at the beginning my supervisor said that I did not have any classroom management skills. At university we were told we could not yell to students, not to be too aggressive to them, not to give punishment as these would result in negative relationship.
However, these did not work because if you did not do anything, students would do whatever they wanted. So I was left in an awkward situation and had no idea what to do. Whether trying to engage them, it did not work; punishment did not work either as they knew exactly I was a prac teacher there was nothing I could do. I felt so panic about if as my supervisor just sat there and watched me without doing anything to help me. If a native speaker teacher cannot control a class, how can an international student?

It is not difficult to deduce that what Alice was very frustrated with was her authority as a teacher. Jane shared Alice’s frustration, and found that it was a common issue for every practicum teacher. She indicated that the key to solving the problem was learning how to engage students. Thus, the establishment of teacher authority seems to heavily rely on two factors for AITE students: their language use and student engagement. Nevertheless, what Alice said reveals the following issues:

- It reflects the perceived gap between practicum at schools and university programs. For instance, students perceive that the course reminds them about what ‘not to do’ without providing them with what ‘can be done’.
- The importance of a rapport with school students: how to turn the artificial status of being a practicum student into becoming someone who is able to engage school students in certain ways.
- The challenge that school supervisors face: whether student-teachers should be left to ‘taste the reality’ of Australian schooling or be always ensured a ‘safe space’ in which they receive adequate assistance when a situation is beyond them.
- The establishment of teacher authority for the practicum teacher.
- What actions should university courses and school supervising teachers take to deal with AITE students’ perceived deficit model of being a ‘NNS’?

Furthermore, the establishment of teacher authority for AITE students seems to depend very much on two important elements: classroom registers and the power of the hearer (Miller, 2003).
Classroom registers

One of the keys for effective classroom management is using appropriate classroom registers. Alice provided a very good example of this:

When I was teaching my class, my students suddenly throw a pen hit me. Just instantly hit me. I don’t know how to deal with that. I stand there and look at my supervisor and wait for her responsible (response). I need to consider while I am talking to kids. I don’t want to my language to be too aggressive. I don’t know how to use proper language to tell them like that way. I think teaching is more about language specially teaching Science.

This was really a shocking incident for Alice because she had never thought something like this would happen to her in a classroom. There are several aspects of this incident in terms of the impact on an AITE student. First, throwing something at a teacher during a lesson is something unimaginable in many Asian school cultures, for both pupils and teachers, because teachers are a symbol of authority and they are automatically respected (Slethaug, 2007). Second, another surprise for Alice was the reaction of her supervising teacher. It can be a challenge for a supervising teacher, as suggested by one of the schoolteachers interviewed, to know whether to take action or not when a practicum student is ‘in trouble’. Finally, Alice was totally at a loss because she absolutely did not have any idea how to react in such a circumstance, not to mention selecting ‘appropriate’ words in English to regain the control of the situation, which was really something beyond her. As an experienced teacher in China, she would know—as would her students—about the importance of a teacher.

Classroom registers can be a very challenging issue for every student-teacher, but they are especially so for AITE students. Riva also considered that classroom register and student slang could be issues for her:

Yes, I will try to manage and I am confident that I can do that. The only thing I need to learn is the language used in the classroom. I am very confident that I could have a very good rapport with students.
What Riva called ‘the language used in the classroom’ included the language used by teachers and the student slang. The core of the so called ‘classroom management’ issue for any student-teacher seems to be how to establish their authority as a teacher and, for AITE students, relevant work needs to assist the development of their English.

These excerpts demonstrate three more important issues: the differences between different communities of teaching practice, the importance of English language proficiency in establishing teacher authority for AITE students and, most importantly, the power of the hearer.

**The power of the hearer**

Alice had tried many things to solve her ‘classroom management’ problems but most of them did not work. Jane also had her own experience in this regard:

.... classroom management does not seem to have much to do with your language skills, but the ways to engage students, which include penalty. Detention is not an effective way. I have observed (some) lessons and I have seen some of native speaker teachers’ classroom and it was so noisy and disrupted. I think the solution is how to you engage your students.

Although the phrases Aleve and Jane used are different—from ‘classroom management’ to ‘engaging students’, the key issue they had to deal with was similar: the power of the hearer, who in this case is the school student. Such power lies in its potency ‘to either accept or deny both the message and identity of the speaker’ (Miller, 2010). Whether it is ‘engaging students’ or ‘classroom management’, these challenges are critical for AITE students and depend greatly on the ‘power of the hearer’.

However, while classroom management was an issue for Aleve and Jane, they had different views on the role that language skills could play in this regard. For
Aleve, language skills were central for classroom management, but Jane separated these skills from classroom management.

For Riva, her ‘secret weapon’ for classroom management was a good teacher-student relationship. Vivian agreed:

I used to think language was the main issue but it was not really the case. It’s still (managing) the class. I don’t think language is an issue for me because my class is kind of actually an average class and my supervisor told me other class would be more noisy (noisier), more like disruptive students.

Vivian’s comment clearly indicates that her key challenge was her authority as a teacher, which she saw as related not to her English language competence but to the ‘power of the hearer’. Although Vivian did not point out the reason why ‘classroom management’ was her biggest issue, she did mention that she was ‘complained’ about by the students because of ‘her Asian background’.

**Q16. What tasks did you usually have confidence about, or most interest in, on practicum?**

The main intention of this question was to find out what the participants perceived they were most capable of and confident about. The most common task that students said they were confident about completing was *lesson planning*, followed by *talking to their supervisors*. In addition, many of them talked about the pedagogies they preferred. Three categories were generated from Q16:

- **Category 21**: relationship with supervisor and their expectations (N = 5)
- **Category 22**: ‘communities of teaching practice’ (N = 5), and
- **Category 23**: Teacher-centred vs. student-centred (N = 5).

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Many participants preferred lesson planning to other tasks, those that required the participants to be well-spoken in English. This seems to illustrate the point made by Pavlenko (2003) that written text can provide students with a ‘safe space’ in which their new identity can be found or in which they can feel comfortable.
Relationship with supervisor and their expectations

Among the ten participants, none said that she/he did not work well with her/his supervisor, and each of them said they ‘had a very good relationship with their supervisors’. For instance, Aleve considered that she had a good supervisor:

But my supervisor teacher is so…and he just gives me confidence about and flexibility, ‘no worries, if you can’t do this, I can manage. We can manage all together like this’. I rarely felt depressive [depressed] because he was always with me. If I can’t [do] something on my lesson, he will support me.

What appears important for AITE students is their supervisors’ understanding of their cultural backgrounds. By providing Aleve with ‘flexibility’ and a clear indication of being a ‘team’ together (‘we’), Aleve felt that she would have his full support all the way through her practicum.

Though nobody said that he/she had a bad relationship with her/his supervisors, this did not mean that each participant did not have any problems with their supervisors. For instance, Yvonne said that her P2 supervisor complained that she should have tried to establish a rapport with other teachers, which she saw as putting her under a lot of pressure. After her P1, teaching Geography, which she knew very little about, Linda said that she felt teaching was a disaster. These experiences of the students indicate that their relationships with their supervisors might not have been as ‘rosy’ as what was first described when they responded to the question. Issues, which they were reluctant to disclose publicly, might exist.

Every school supervisor has certain expectations for their practicum students. Linda and Jane believed that school supervisors had a ‘common expectation’ about practicum students’ performance, regardless of their backgrounds. Linda indicated that there was a huge gap between supervisors’ expectations and AITE students’ performance:
Because they (supervisors) think if you are studying here you should be capable to do everything (like a native speaker). It is very hard for international students to meet the expectation. I started learning English in China when I was twelve and a native speaker started from [age] zero … there will be a gap there forever.

It seems that many school supervising teachers hold an attitude of ‘sink or swim’ towards AITE students and believe that a pre-service teacher has to do what they are expected to do in schools, regardless of whether they are native speakers or non-native speakers of English. Many school supervising teachers perceive themselves as the last gatekeepers of certain communities of practice, who should maintain certain standards and ignore the differences of AITE students. This mind-set is not beneficial for the further development of Australian international education in today’s global world, because AITE students may need more support than their local peers.

As a ‘non-native’ speaker of English, Linda obviously was not optimistic about the gap between her actual English language competence, compared to her supervisors’ expectations; she said that she could never be a native, even if she lived in Australia for twenty or thirty years. For Linda, ‘nativeness’ was out of the question. Jane echoed Linda’s view in terms of her supervisor’s expectations for AITE students:

International students are generally expected to perform as well as their native speaker peers. They expect you to use some of their teaching strategies while they also encourage you to create your own.

With continuously-increasing numbers of Asian international students enrolling into teacher education courses, schoolteachers, like lecturers at universities, not only face the challenge of how to train the next generation of schoolteachers to fill the ongoing teacher shortage from this cohort of students, but also face a challenge of how to address the distinction between equality and equity. According to the data collected, however, school supervising teachers do have a choice with regard to dealing with this challenge. For instance, Alice’s mentoring from her P1
supervisor Sonia, and Jane’s and Cindy’s experiences, discussed in the following Category: (Communities of teaching practice) all reflect different approaches that schoolteachers can take. Some can be possible solutions to the problem. The difference between the approaches that these supervisors took lies in the ways in which they dealt with the notion of equity, which, as mentioned previously, is about fair outcomes.

‘Communities of teaching practice’

Many practicum students seemed to have specific ways of teaching, which could put them into various ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998). Although Aleve’s P1 supervisor seemed to be a ‘wise man’, it did not necessarily mean that she would follow every step on which he advised her. On the contrary, Aleve stuck to some of her approaches to teaching when her supervisor had advised otherwise. She can re-position herself as not just a victim. At one point, Aleve was advised to learn the approach of another teacher:

[My supervisor] said: ‘You should observe her (lesson); you should learn something from her’. But when I observed her [lesson], she was so strict, not smiling like a soldier. But I don’t want to be such kind of person. I just believe if you have enough knowledge about your subject area, your key area, you can manage. It gives you self-confidence and the students observe this self-confidence and catch your knowledge and respect not because [of] your voice, your yelling them, they just respect you.

What Aleve’s supervisor wanted her to learn from this teacher was how to show ‘assertiveness’, which her supervisor thought Aleve lacked because he considered that Aleve smiled too much and that she was ‘not strict enough’ on students. Aleve clearly declared that she did not want to become a teacher with a manner of being ‘assertive or strict’. The way she preferred teaching was being confident, having vision and creating a relaxed atmosphere instead of the ‘assertiveness’ and ‘seriousness’ that many other teachers would wear in front of their classes. She
wanted to win the students’ respect by her knowledge, her inspiration and her vision, instead of showing the ‘assertiveness’ that her supervisor had suggested. For her, the voice projection suggested by her supervisor was similar to ‘yelling’ and it would not obtain respect from students.

But a new member to a community of practice needs support or ‘safe spaces’ (Pavlenko, 2001) to become a legitimate member. As mentioned previously, such ‘safe spaces’ could emerge not just in tutorials but also on practicum. Jane and Cindy both had similar stories. Jane greatly appreciated the assistance her supervisor gave her when she was in trouble:

She (supervisor) will be my model. She is different from other teachers. When I was having trouble, unlike most of the supervisor who would stay at back of the class and did nothing, she always came to the front to help me solve the problem and she told me that she learned it from her supervisor—now the Principal—when she was a student-teacher.

Different supervisors may have different solutions for dealing with the situation when their practicum students are in trouble. It is a choice between ‘sink or swim’ or providing ‘safe spaces’, which means a great deal to AITE students in terms of the outcomes they need. The choice that a schoolteacher makes, reflects the role being played: being a gatekeeper of a certain community of practice or being a facilitator providing assistance and learning experiences for AITE students. One of the reasons why Jane’s supervisor helped her in that way was that this supervisor had been mentored in it by her own supervisor—now the school Principal.

Cindy felt very isolated when her original supervisor suddenly left the school, but it was her new supervisor who assisted her greatly. This supervisor not only introduced her to every staff member but also involved Cindy in school activities as much as possible. At the meetings, Cindy was asked for her opinion from time to time by her supervisor. This really made Cindy feel that she was a part of the team.
By doing this, this supervisor provided Cindy with legitimacy, which is critical for a new member of a community of practice. This is further discussed in Chapter 8.

**Teacher-centred vs. student-centred**

One of the common views in the field of teacher education is that many ‘NESB’ students dislike using student-centred approaches, as they have been used to teacher-centred approaches and are not familiar with the former (Campbell et al., 2006; Han, 2006). The data from the students seem to conflict with this common view. None of the participants argued that they disliked the student-centred approaches, and many of them would be happy to use both student-centred and teacher-centred approaches as appropriate. Moreover, quite a few of them were already familiar with student-centred approaches, or had even used them before they came to Australia. For instance, when discussing Alice’s image of teaching with her, the interviewer implied that teacher-centred approaches might have still been popular in China, she challenged the interviewer’s assumption:

> Actually I don’t agree with you right now. Great changes have taken place in Chinese classroom today. Before it was teacher-centred but now it is more student-centred. At least in the class I was teaching, it is more student-centred than here. In my generation, when I was student, I needed to write down (what the teacher said). But when I was in University, we were taught student centred and also after graduation, in the class I taught.

What Alice perceived as the core of a student-centred approach was being able to engage students by providing them with fun games or interesting activities. Jane and Linda talked about their initial experience of a student-centred approach as a university student:

> My favourite teacher was my American teacher when I was in university. Her style of teaching was very casual and she treated students like her friends. She often talked to us about different cultures and I loved her teaching style (Jane).

For Jane, **student-centredness** entails three elements: student engagement, cooperation between peers, and getting feedback. She said that: ‘Teachers [in China]
know student-centred [approach] is important but they just can’t do it’. Linda had similar experiences in her university studies in China:

I like the student-centred approach and I got it from my Bachelor’s degree. When the teachers teach at that time I just learned it. At that time group work was popular but people do not know how to use it effectively and my graduation paper was focusing on group work and teachers preferred group work. I think teaching then was very similar to here and we had many teachers were from Western countries.

Linda defines student-centredness by focusing on one of its features of offering group interactions to students. Jane and Linda argue that student-centred approaches have become popular in China due to Western influence. Similar shifts in pedagogy seemed to have been happening in India as well, according to this description from Riva:

When I started teaching in India, most of them were teacher-centred. After three to four years later, there had been great revolution in teaching in my country; suddenly the focus was shifted to the students. Now it is totally student-centred.

The core of student-centredness for Riva is ‘student engagement’ by focusing on their personal growth. Riva argued that this engagement was not only about engagement with teachers but also ‘with (the) school as a community and with the society as a community’. What she understood about this ‘student-centredness’ was that teaching should focus on their natural growth and that what pupils have learned in the classroom can be used outside school. Then, pupils bring the results back to classroom. She believed that that was the process in which teachers should get involved, because ‘teaching is not preaching’ but is about students’ engagement. In summary, the finding about the two approaches is contrary to some popular suggestions in the literature: that international students are not used to student-centred approaches.
6.1.5 Part VI (Questions 17 to 20): Being an Australian schoolteacher

This is the last Part of the interview questions. Many of the questions in Part VI are very specific, and the responses are so varied that it is difficult to find common categories among them.

Q17. Are you confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher? Why or Why not?
This question was asked to see how confident these participants would be after their practicum considering the difficulties they had experienced. Rachael was going back to her country to teach, and the question was not really relevant to her. Among the nine participants, six students said they were confident, to varying degrees, while three said they were not.

Aleve said she was confident, and Cindy was so disappointed after her first practicum that she was considering abandoning the course. However, her confidence came back after the second practicum. Jane was also quite positive and said she would be confident, particularly if she were teaching Chinese. Like Jane, Yvonne was teaching Chinese and she said that she was confident after her practicum, as good teaching depended on one’s experience and on time. Among all the students who said ‘Yes’ to this question, Riva was the most confident of all; she said that she was very confident, as she knew that she was very good at classroom management. She strongly believed that her experience of being a teacher for more than 13 years would help her.

On the other hand, Alice, Linda and David said they were not confident, and Alice and David explicitly pointed out that English language was his main obstacle. Why were they confident, or why were they not? These questions are answered in Chapter 8, in which participants’ conceptions of their image of teaching before
practicum (pre-conceptions) and their conceptions after practicum (post-conceptions) are analysed.

**Q18. Is identity/sense of belonging an issue for you? Why? Do you have options other than NS and NNS for identity construction?**

*Identity* is one of the key concepts in this research. Students were explicitly asked whether being mainly identified as a speaker of other languages other than English was a problem for them during their course, in particular in their practicum. How could they see themselves as future teachers in Australian schools? Could they have some other options for self-identification other than seeing themselves as ‘NS’ or ‘NNS’?

Very few students suggested that *identity*, which in this research is linked with *membership of a community*, was an issue for them.\(^{23}\) Following are some of the excerpts from responses to this question, which are elaborated on by employing the strategy of analytic commentary (Emerson et al., 1995). The explanation of the use of the analytic commentary is available in Chapter 4 (4.5.4).

**Aleve**

Identity is not an issue for me. I am telling myself I am a Design teacher. Teacher sometimes is not defined as teacher, but educator. I cannot describe myself.

By claiming that ‘identity is not an issue’, Aleve was declaring that she was emotionally strong and knew exactly who she was. She did not see herself as a teacher in general but as a ‘Design teacher’ specifically. But ‘teacher’ was not a term that made her totally satisfied, so she thought the term ‘educator’ might fit her

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\(^{23}\) This echoes the relevant findings of Rajagopalan (2005, p. 284), who found that many non-native speaker teachers (NNST) often did not confess their ‘complex of inferiority’, by which he refers to a lack of self of worth due to the genealogy of the discrimination faced by NNSTs. Rajagopalan (2005, p. 289) found that many NNSTs ‘categorically denied ever having been made to feel sidelined for not being native speakers of the language they were required to teach’.
characteristics and ambition. Overall, there are three themes that the excerpt implies: the self-claimed certainty of her identity; the imagined community of the ‘educator’, and the confusion over her own identity. Aleve may seem confused on the issue of identity, though she said it was ‘not an issue for her’.

Gee (2011, p. 181) argues that people often attempt to be recognised as a certain kind of person when they speak and that their attempts fail sometimes, or may even be interpreted in a way that is different from what the person intended. Aleve did intend to demonstrate that identity was not an issue for her. However, it may be that ‘I can’t describe myself’ hints at a tension here.

Alice

What do you mean by identity? Yes, I want to be one of them, but the thing is I need to improve my English. To be honest, I don’t think one has to ‘melt in’ as Chinese people; you have your own culture it is very hard for you to melt into another culture. As a Chinese we have our own culture, I don’t think it is necessary to be part of Australian culture. ‘Multicultural’ means more than one. Many Chinese are trying to melt in Australian culture and that is why they are struggling. As a Chinese, he should live in his own cultural zone.

Alice said that she would like to be an ‘Australian schoolteacher’. However, she believed that the English language was the main obstacle to being accepted as a member of the school community in Australia. In terms of adaptation into Australian culture, to melt into Australian culture seems extremely difficult for Chinese students, because the acceptance of the dominant group is hard to obtain. Alice argued that AITE students should not have bothered themselves too much about being fully accepted by the dominant group. That is what she meant by saying ‘melt in’ or ‘becoming part of Australian culture’. Alice argued that trying hard to ‘blend in’ was the reason why so many of her Chinese fellow students had been struggling. She said that she loved to be called a bilingual, but it did not exactly fit her, as many people considered a bilingual as someone who was ‘very fluent’ in both languages or who
could speak a foreign language with the facility of a native speaker. She admitted that the term ‘NNS’ positioned her in deficit.

**Cindy**

Identity is a disturbing issue for me and will be for a while until I have totally mastered the target language.

Cindy was the only one who openly stated that identity was a disturbing issue for her, and she believed that one’s identity issue is closely related to the language spoken by the community of which one wishes to be accepted as a member. She said identity would continue to be a disturbing issue for her until she had substantially improved her English. One message that underpins the above discourse is the link between one’s identity and the language one is able to speak fluently. Cindy stressed the importance of the role that language plays in the establishment and recognition of one’s identity.

**David**

Personally, once you have obtained your PR (permanent residency) and bought your house, then you will have your sense of belonging, because by then, you will have a stable job. Although there is a high demand for the course (special education), it is useless without permanent residency. You can’t teach if you are not a permanent resident.

David did not seem to be worried about his identity, from this statement, though other data showed otherwise, as further discussed in Chapter 8. David linked his sense of belonging and acceptance to permanent residency status, instead of to language, as Cindy did. That raises the issue of the other obstacles that these AITE students have to overcome, in order to become registered teachers in Australia. However, there is one thing that is shared by David and Cindy: a belief in the necessity ‘to melt in’, which is a popular saying among many Chinese international students and immigrants. This indicates that, though the ways of completely ‘melting into’ the mainstream may take various forms—command of English, permanent
residency or employment—many of these students do strongly expect to be accepted fully as a legitimate member of the host society.

Jane

Yes, in particular in the course of Society and Culture. This is a course designed for senior students in high schools and it is not a hot subject which is good for job searching. I was the only Asian student in the class and there were a lot of stuffs that I did not have a clue. So I felt very isolated. Such feeling was not that strong in my practicum because at least I got my supervisors to look after me or to talk to. Generally I feel that I am a foreigner who is trying to be accepted as a member of the mainstream.

Jane’s particular feeling of being isolated happened only at a particular moment, and did not last to a degree that effectively affected her studies. She positioned herself as a ‘foreigner’ and described her circumstance and desire to be accepted by the dominant group. However, there are two points worth considering: first, Jane’s major was English when she studied in China, and her spoken English was one of the best among all the participants. Second, Jane described herself as a ‘foreigner who is trying to be accepted as a member of the host society’.

Linda

Sense of belonging is not a problem for me. However, students do talk a lot about which group they belong to: native speaker, ABC (local), citizen, PR, TR, student visa, working holiday. Student visa holders are having good reputation because of their money while working holiday people are having big troubles. I like the term of ‘bilingual’.

Linda has a similar education background to Jane, and she did not appear to have difficulty in identifying herself either, as she considered herself a bilingual. It is interesting that Linda mentioned a few options in regard to identities that are available for international students. Among all the terms mentioned, she particularly wished to be called a ‘student visa (holder)’ because this group is considered to belong to the so called ‘rich group’.
Rachael
What do you mean identity? I never thought of it and it is a fact and I am very happy when my teacher understands me. Everyone is my friend and I don’t care. Like Alice, Rachael was initially confused about the concept of identity. After it was explained, she said that she did not have any difficulties in identifying herself. Rachael said she was very happy to be called ‘NESB’ because that indicated her teacher understood her. There may be a couple of reasons why Rachael does not worry about the issue of identity as others did. First, Rachael was the only participant who was definitely going home after the MTeach course. She knew her stay in Australia was temporary and she had a tourist mind-set, which might substantially alleviate the possible negative impact of identity on her. Second, Rachael had been very frank about her English language problems, unlike some of the participants. She had nothing to worry about.

Riva
I did have a feeling of being an outsider especially the first few weeks. But it did not last long and after three weeks, in particular, we made a rapport with my students, I felt a sense of belonging when I … kids…… I did have a sense of belonging when I was teaching in the classroom in practicum. I am getting attached to teaching the students now. I am desperate to get into the mainstream. The block, not obstacle, just I want to complete this course, which will not be enough. I will do another one and it will be equivalent to this or has more value than this one. I am still thinking of it. Like Jane, Riva was very confident about her spoken English, though she did have a moment of feeling an outsider. There are two aspects of Riva’s example that are different from the others, and they need to be discussed further. First, Riva was the only one who had a feeling that she ‘belonged’ while on practicum. Among Chinese students, only two mentioned the same feeling, and it was when they were teaching Chinese to Chinese students. Secondly, her words, block and obstacle, are synonyms. What Riva appeared to suggest was that the difficulties that she faced were not
something that could not be overcome but rather were just a matter of time. This might be different from the Chinese students’ points of view. While Riva did feel that there was some ‘block’ in front of her, she did not think the ‘block’ would be hard for her to overcome. She believed that further study of a relevant discipline would greatly enhance her power to negotiate more identities for herself.

**Vivian**

I think probably I am not kind of sensitive. I don’t think of this much.

Vivian and Cindy were friends and Vivian said she was ‘not kind of sensitive as Cindy’, referring to Cindy’s own comment on her identity issue. Vivian thought that the students who had difficulties identifying themselves were ‘too sensitive’.

**Yvonne**

Yvonne claimed that she did not have any difficulties in identifying herself either. Two things, however, need to be pointed out: First, Yvonne was the only participant who had been granted permanent residency. Therefore, she is not an ‘international student’ strictly but a ‘local’. The reason why Yvonne was still recruited as one of the ten student participants is because she came from China and received her first degree there. Second, Yvonne’s teaching method was Language, and she was teaching Chinese in both her P1 and P2.

A tension in the data around the issue of identity can be identified: some students claimed that ‘identity is not an issue for them’. Such a claim might not be read as students not having any difficulty in identifying themselves. By denying that they are ‘having an identity issue’, they are actually denying their perceived inferiority in the eyes of native English speakers (Rajagopalan, 1997, 2005). This tension exists because some AITE students may feel that admitting such inferiority could make them lose face.
Q19. What are the most important elements for ‘becoming’ an Australian teacher?

Most of the student participants in the research were being trained to become Australian schoolteachers. Unlike most of their Australian counterparts, they experienced additional challenges on top of the common difficulties that local students faced. This question was asked in order to pinpoint the biggest struggle the students might have in their construction of teacher identity. Among all the possibilities, English language was considered the most important element by many participants. In many Asian cultures, being a teacher is a symbol of being competent (particularly in language) and confident. Thus, their confidence in being a teacher would be severely compromised if they were not competent in the English language.

**Category 24:** English language proficiency in the construction of teacher identity (N = 6)

Six students said that *English language proficiency* was the main obstacle to becoming an Australian schoolteacher, while the rest mentioned elements other than language. Other suggestions for the most important elements included: *courage to face difficulties and challenges* (Jane); *confidence* (Riva); *clarity in providing instructions*; *student engagement* (Vivian), and *satisfying the needs of pupils* (Yvonne).

Linda thought the most important element for her to be an Australian schoolteacher was to keep the welfare of students in mind, as well as their academic studies:

> Always thinking for the kids, taking care of them and make them safe because Australian kids don’t care about knowledge and contents… Language, personality and discipline they are all importance.
There are two themes raised by this. The first is *expectation*: the differences in cultural expectation between two cultures, which include the expectations of parents, of authorities, of students and of teachers. The second is *students’ motivation*. Students in China are perceived as self-motivated, whereas those in Australia are perceived as having to be motivated by their teachers. This view was shared by some of the students and even by Hua, Jane’s school supervising teacher. While this researcher sees the suggestions that Australian students have to be motivated by their teachers as essentialising those students, it is certainly true that high school students in China are under much more pressure, due to the Entrance University Examination (EUE) held yearly in China, than their counterparts in Australia who sit for the High School Certificate (HSC) or equivalent. This is because the EUE is the only opportunity for Chinese students, while the HSC is only one of the options for Australian students to receive higher education.

Linda demonstrated her disagreement with the ‘unfair’ treatment of teachers and what she saw as the excessive attention and favour given to pupils in Australian schools. In addition, she saw that pupils’ interests and their safety were chief criteria to decide whether a plan could go ahead or not. She implied that schoolteachers did not have the authority and respect they deserved. Another message implied is that Linda did not want to be part of a community of teaching practice in which students’ welfare is considered the priority. She perceived that teachers deserve more attention, and their rightful authority.

For Aleve, the first element was one’s language skill. The second was having a ‘wise man’—a supervisor or head teacher—who is reasonable and compassionate, and has great insights into his teaching staff’s individual talents. He or she, in
particular, puts high value on other capabilities of practicum students than their command of English:

If I show my ability, my knowledge, I think it is the more important the language, but at the same time, if the teacher, the supervisor, and head teacher is a wise man, they can catch you, they can catch your idea, you (capability).

This sentiment of Aleve’s does raise three questions for school supervising teachers: First, how could supervising teachers become the ‘wise man’ that Aleve expected? Second, have the supervisors really given the students adequate input in order to achieve equitable outcomes? These questions are concerned with the issues of equity and equality, which are further elaborated on in Chapter 8.

Q20. If you feel that you have overcome big challenges in this course, what helped you create this resilience?

This was the last question of the student interview. It was based on the assumption that these students might have experienced many challenges in the course. It was my intention to find out what kind of factors worked to make them resilient, with a view to providing recommendations for future research. Many participants suggested that their confidence came back after practicum, while some of them said that that was not the case. Everyone, except Vivian, thought they had overcome some challenges. Most of the participants talked about their ‘attitude’ (Cindy, Jane, Riva) and their family (Alice, Linda, David) as the main elements in helping them to have resilience.

For instance, Jane also said that:

It is a sense of success and self-motivation. It often occurs to me that if an Aussie lived in China, she/he would be more problematic than us here.

Riva said she had come across many difficulties since she arrived in Australia. She said there were three elements that had supported her and helped her to stand firmly: confidence, willingness to take on new challenges, and family.
6.2 GROUP INTERVIEWS

As indicated previously, there were two sub-groups in the group interviews:

- Group A\textsuperscript{24}: local students from Asian backgrounds who had their first degree in Australia;
- Group B: Asian international students who had their first degree in British Commonwealth countries where English is spoken as a first or second language.

There were five participants in Group A: three Pakistani-background students, one Chinese-background student and a Korean-background student. There were three participants in Group B: one Pakistani student and two Indian students. This grouping was based on the time at which they were being interviewed. While two interviews were held for Group A—one before practicum and one afterwards—there was only one interview, held before practicum, for Group B, as the participants in Group B failed to appear for the second one. Therefore, the comparison, in Section 6.3, between Group A and Group B, and the individual student participants who were the focus of this research, is limited to issues before the practicum.

6.2.1 Interview procedure and questions

Group interview (A): these were local students of Asian backgrounds. Most of them came to Australia as adolescents and went to high school in Australia. All of them received their first degree in an Australian university, or a university where English was used as the language of tuition. These students were not required to undertake IELTS before they enrolled in the MTeach course.

\textsuperscript{24} The main reason why the data from Asian local students were used was the assumption that these local students of Asian backgrounds, and other Asian international students, might have some similarities in their academic studies in an Australian university, although the former group may not have language problems.
Group interview (B): International students of British Commonwealth countries who had to undertake IELTS before they enrolled in the MTeach course.

Procedure

Two semi-structured group interviews were conducted: one before their practicum and one afterwards (Group A), and the main questions were as follows:

Questions before practicum:

- What are the biggest challenges you have in the course?
- What would you say are the biggest challenges you might face in practicum?
- Have you found any differences among Asian international students? If yes, then what are they?

Questions after practicum:

- What would you say now are the biggest challenges you have had in the practicum?
- Are you confident about becoming an Australian schoolteacher?

6.2.2 Findings

Group interview (A): local students of Asian backgrounds

The biggest challenges in the course: formality and genre

Essay writing was considered a difficult issue, because many of these students came from Engineering or Science backgrounds and they were only used to a ‘report’ format, rather than an essay format. In addition, voicing opinions was difficult for them. They found that understanding the formality and the genre required was a problem.

The biggest challenge in the practicum
Before the practicum, ‘classroom management’ was commonly considered to be a potential issue, as they were told that some of the children would not demonstrate the respect they would expect. After practicum, as they expected, classroom management was indeed a key problem for them. The key issues identified included students’ motivation, students’ behaviour and students’ engagement. However, most of them claimed that they enjoyed their practicum.

**Differences among Asian international students**

All participants thought that students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over students from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language. One student said that even though Indian students did not have a full grasp of English, the starting point they had when they arrived in Australia was different from that of many other Asian students, who came from a country where English was spoken as a foreign language.

**Being a confident Australian schoolteacher**

Everyone in the group said that their practicum was helpful and that they were confident about being a schoolteacher after their practicum. Participants in Group A did not have any difficulties in identifying themselves as prospective Australian schoolteachers, and many of them considered themselves bilingual, though the Korean-background student still did conceive of herself as ‘NESB’. How to engage students was commonly recognised as the most important element of being an Australian schoolteacher, and they argued that efforts must be made to establish connections with students and that the teacher should act as a good facilitator. A skill mentioned by a Pakistani-background student, who came to Australia when he was four, was the ability to operate in the language of the pupils.
Another thing I would like to say is that, because I grew up here, I know the culture, I know the accent, I know how people talk, a lot of time, I found sometimes, if the student say something to me, I would say, not something rude, or not something taking him back but I say something to him that would sort of make them be quiet. But a lot of teachers I have seen, they are not from here and they have accent. They can’t cope with that.

Obviously, what this student stressed was the authority that a new teacher needs to establish in a class and that that is one of the most challenging tasks for most pre-service teachers, especially Asian international pre-service teachers. The contrast with Alice, for example, is quite strong.

**Group interview (B):** Asian international students from countries of the British Commonwealth

*The biggest challenges in the course*

The biggest challenge Group B faced was the complexity of reading in the academic work of the course. They said it was not ‘the language itself’ but ‘the complexity’ of academic English at tertiary level that was difficult for them. They had not read academic texts in their own language previously. Moreover, they did not consider this complexity as a *language issue*, as perceived by other AITE students from ‘the expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1985), because they argued that they had the same level of texts in India and Pakistan but they did not have the ‘opportunity to be exposed to them then’. In other words, these students seemed to indicate that academic English at tertiary level such as that in Australia did exist in universities in their countries. This statement from students of ‘the outer circle’ can be confusing since academic genres are obviously related to language. But it seems that these students from ‘the outer circle’ are reluctant to identify themselves as being like their Chinese counterparts, who are considered to be suffering from basic communication problems.
Their attitudes to ‘language problems’ do demonstrate the different perceptions AITE students have of their challenges.

**The biggest challenges expected in the practicum**

This group felt that teaching students in Australian schools would be a challenge for them because of their multicultural backgrounds, and due to being in a totally new environment. It was anticipated that classroom management would be a problem for them. As one of them said, the biggest challenge for them in practicum would be to ‘bring all the students of different backgrounds to a same level of understanding’ in their class. To recapitulate, the difficulties they faced were cultural differences that were composed of three levels:

- the national level (‘Australian culture’);
- the level of education in general (the multicultural dimensions of Australian school culture), and
- the culture of their particular schools.

**Differences among Asian international students**

This group claimed they did not have any language problems at all, but they thought their Chinese counterparts did.

**6.3 A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE THREE STUDENT GROUPS**

As mentioned previously, group interviews were used as a form of triangulation in this research. These group interviews provided this research with some useful information when the data from the group interviews were compared with those from the individual interviews. The data collected were used to analyse possible differences among all the students interviewed by the researcher. These students then can be divided into three different groups: Group A, local students from Asian backgrounds; Group B, AITE students from ‘the outer circle’ and Group C (the
student case study cohort), AITE students from ‘the expanding circle.’ Thus, five differences between these three groups were found.

**Table 6.2 A comparison between the three student groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Difference 1</th>
<th>Difference 2</th>
<th>Difference 3</th>
<th>Difference 4</th>
<th>Difference 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Asian backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>format/genre shifting in writing</td>
<td>at the beginning of the course</td>
<td>classroom management</td>
<td>Appropriate content delivered to pupils</td>
<td>very confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AITE students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from ‘the outer circle’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>difficulties in mastering academic English in general</td>
<td>a long term problem</td>
<td>classroom management</td>
<td>English language competence and cultural difference</td>
<td>confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group C</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>cohort, AITE students from ‘the expanding circle’</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>difficulties in mastering academic English in general</td>
<td>a long term problem</td>
<td>language issues, accent and classroom management</td>
<td>teacher authority</td>
<td>many of them were lacking confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, although, academic writing was generally considered most challenging, by all groups, each group perceived the issue differently. For instance, for the local students (the students in Group A), difficulty was mainly about format/genre shifting in writing: from a documentary style to a discursive and descriptive style, and was largely due to the fact that they were Science students. The difficulty that the

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25 As indicated in Chapter 5, Riva, among all the student participants in the case study cohort, was the only student from ‘the outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985), while the rest were from ‘the expanding circle’ (Kachru, 1985). Riva’s perceptions about these differences in Table 6.2, match those from Group B.
students in Group B and Group C faced lay in their understanding of English in a more general sense, which is then compounded by their unfamiliarity with academic English. Moreover, the degree of difficulty that writing presented to these students was varied. Writing was difficult for the local students, mainly at the beginning of the course while it might take quite a while for the international students to reach the same level of writing competence.

In addition, a difference was also found in the challenges confronted by these three groups: language issues, accent and classroom management were the main concerns for the Asian international students from ‘the expanding circle’, while classroom management was the main problematic issue for the local student group of Asian background and the Asian international students from ‘the outer circle’.

Again, although classroom management is a universal concern for practicum teachers (and often for already qualified schoolteachers), the exact connotations of the so called ‘classroom management issue’ can mean something different for different individuals or groups. For instance, a local student of Pakistani background mentioned his problem with engaging the pupils in his class. That he failed to engage them was not because of his lack of competence in his English language but rather because the content delivered was difficult for his students to comprehend. Comparatively, the ‘classroom management’ concerns for AITE students from ‘the outer circle’ were mainly about ‘English language competence and cultural difference’, and those for AITE students from the expanding circle were usually language-related or in particular, related to their teacher authority.

Finally, it is the level of confidence about ‘becoming’ an Australian schoolteacher that demonstrates the difference between these three groups. Confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher was not a problem for the local
group, and it also was less of a problem for AITE students from ‘the outer circle’. But it was a big concern for AITE students from ‘the expanding circle’. This concern was again related to English—that is to say, many Asian international students ranked English as the most important element for them in becoming an Australian schoolteacher. For the local group, the most important element was a connection with students, and what they cared about most was how to be a good model or facilitator who could successfully establish such a connection.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed questions in the student interviews across all interviewees, in categories, and also those in the group interviews. Twenty-four categories were generated from the student interviews, and English language competence came out as the most frequently mentioned theme of all (in Categories 7, 8, 11, 15, 19, and 24). Differences were also found and analysed between three different groups: local students of Asian backgrounds (‘Group A’ of the group interviews), AITE students from the British Commonwealth countries (‘Group B’ of the group interviews) and AITE students from countries where English is spoken as a foreign language (from the case study student cohort). Tensions were also identified in the students’ perceptions about identity, which are believed to reflect the complexity of the formation of AITE students’ teacher identity.
CHAPTER 7: ACADEMICS’ AND SCHOOL SUPERVISING TEACHERS’ INTERVIEWS

Having analysed the data from student interviews in Chapter 6, this chapter explores these students’ experiences from the point of views of their lecturers and school supervising teachers with a view to providing the reader with a comprehensive view of the whole case. Five academics—Louise, Paul, Adam, Mary and Nancy (pseudonyms)—who were lecturers in the MTeach course, were interviewed individually. The questions asked chiefly concentrated on the following 4 themes (for the interview questions for academics see Appendix D):

- challenges that AITE students face in the course and their nature (Q1/Q6);
- differences within the cohort of AITE students (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5);
- accent and identity (Q7/Q8), and
- the scaffolding/support for these international students in the course (Q9, Q10, Q11).

In addition, five school supervising teachers—Jeremy, Tom, Sonia, James and Hua (pseudonyms)—who supervised some of the student participants during their practicum, were also interviewed. Questions asked chiefly concentrated on the following 6 themes (the interview questions for school supervising teachers are in Appendix E):

- the biggest challenge the particular participant had in his/her practicum (Q1);
- their expectations of AITE students (Q2);
- benefits of doing the practicum for AITE students (Q3);
- benefits/challenges for school supervising teachers (Q4);
• a sense of belonging and identity for these students in practicum (Q5), and
• differences among AITE students (Q6).

This chapter aims to explore the perspectives of academics and school supervising teachers on the challenges that AITE students face a) in their MTeach course in general and b) on their practicum in particular. This chapter also functions as a means of comparing various perceptions from the students’ interviews with those from the academics’ and school supervising teachers’ interviews. The collection of students’ assignments and practicum reports was part of this aspect of data gathering.

This chapter is composed of five sections. First is a discussion of the academics’ interviews, by themes. Second is a discursive exploration of the tensions found in the academics’ data. Third, students’ assignments are analyzed as a group, with a focus on the MTeach course. This is then followed by a discussion of the school supervising teachers’ interviews with students’ practicum reports, with a view to detecting some key issues or patterns in these students’ orientation into Australian schooling.

7.1 THE ACADEMICS’ INTERVIEWS

This discussion covers all the questions in the academics’ interviews, and is organised according to theme rather than person by person.

7.1.1 Challenges AITE students face: in the course and in their own nature

While English language competence was commonly perceived by the academics as one of the central issues for the students, there were different views on the most important issue these students face. Louise claimed that accent was their key obstacle,
together with academic writing and academic literacy. Louise argued that accent was part of ‘cultural adaptation’, which was the biggest challenge for AITE students in the course. She indicated that ‘cultural adaptation’, within which plagiarism was a key issue, might ‘take a while’ for the students.

Adam argued that the biggest challenge for these students was ‘cultural expectations’, and that ‘language came in afterwards’. He explained that the biggest challenge for his students in teaching Mathematics was probably the different ways in which students were taught Mathematics in their own countries. Adam argued that teaching Mathematics was different from other subjects and that the main difficulty was the conflict between the ways in which these students were taught in their own countries and Australian ways of teaching Mathematics. Accordingly, cultural expectations in this context can include ways in which some subjects are expected to be taught by certain communities of teaching practice.

The other side of the language/culture coin came from Mary and Paul. Mary believed that the main problem for AITE students was their ‘Australian English’ which, like any language use, is one of those ‘local language practices [that] are a set of activities dynamically integrated across physical, social, mental and moral worlds’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 130). In particular, subtlety and nuance was a problem. Such nuances were the key issue identified by Mary. Mary emphasized that there was definitely a language problem for these students and that cultural factors exacerbated this. She told the story of an Arab student, who found it extremely difficult to accept gay or lesbian teachers, as homosexuality was a crime in her country.

According to Paul, ‘the single and the most problematic issue for (AITE students) was indeed their English’. Paul claimed that it was a problem at a number of levels: understanding what was happening in their lectures, tutorials and
assignments; having difficulties understanding questions, and being reluctant to have problems clarified, due to their cultural backgrounds. They also had a fear of asking questions. In addition to all these issues, an underlying fear was about what was going to happen in terms of job prospects, because of their language.

Nancy’s comment was very different from her colleagues. For her, the biggest challenge for these students was neither the issue of cultural adaptation nor a problem of English proficiency, but a ‘psychological barrier’: a kind of fear of losing face. That is what Nancy refers to when she says:

I can’t categorize all the NESB students ... the same but for those who are struggling to some extent, are creating the barrier themselves. I think it is a psychological barrier. Once they break through this barrier; they are wonderful (Nancy).

She suggested that more interaction was needed among students from different backgrounds, instead of their limiting their socialising activities to their fellow nationals.

7.1.2 Perceived differences among Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth AITE student-teachers
Differences in terms of English language proficiency and the relevant requirements for enrolling in the MTeach course were found among AITE students (see Chapter 6). While no academics interviewed were consciously aware of any significant differences between students from the British Commonwealth countries and those from non-British Commonwealth countries, most of them believed, when asked explicitly, that Indian students had some advantage over their Chinese peers, in particular at the beginning of their course.

Three academics agreed with the idea that Indian students had a better knowledge of English, particularly written English, though they spoke English with
an accent. Paul agreed with the idea that there were some differences between Indian students and Chinese students:

Yes, there are some differences. There are differences in culture and worldviews for a start. But there are also differences in language. The Indian students, to me, have a better understanding than the Chinese students of nuances of the (English) language (Paul).

Paul said that this difference was because English had been in the Indian culture for many years, though he did think the English spoken by Chinese students was easier to understand as ‘they did not clip, cut off the words’ and they tended to speak more slowly. Paul believed that Indian students were advantaged initially but that over time their accent would become problematic, and this was hard for them to overcome. Adam believed that the biggest problem for Indian students was not their accent but their speed of speaking the language, which was generally too fast for school children to follow.

Mary believed that students from the British Commonwealth countries were normally good at speaking, and competent in communicating:

Yes, sure, certainly, especially if the students are coming from countries that used to be colonized such as India, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. They have this advantage because they have English as one of their official languages and it is not a big issue for them. Maybe sometimes, people pick on their accent, but they can really communicate—they can write. These students are those who would find themselves easily mingled with the English speaking students because they themselves are English speaking background. You can’t call them ‘NESB’ (Mary).

Mary also talked about her own experience in India, when she studied there, and English was extensively used as one of the national languages, in particular between different ethnic groups in India. In India, English for Indian students is used not just internationally but also locally.

Louise had an opposite view on this last issue. She believed that Indian students only used English in Australia to study and they did not use it otherwise.
Indian students in her view could be positioned in the same way as those from a country where English was spoken only as a foreign language. She did not think Chinese students were being disadvantaged in any way. As they ‘worked very hard’, she claimed that Chinese students were in a position to perform well too, and the problem for Indian students was that English was not spoken unless there was a requirement to do so, in spite of the fact that English was a second language for them.

Generally, the academics’ views seemed to be divided on the issue of students’ differences, and academics seemed to have various views on the confidence of the students from ‘the outer circle’, with regard to their English. Mary said she was not sure what differences Indian students had, while Adam replied that he could not make a judgment unless he had spoken to them. Louise stated that the main problem that AITE (Indian students included) students experienced was their accent, which she believed to be their main challenge. She argued that it really presented as a major challenge in their practicum. Compared to his colleagues, Paul argued confidently that Indian students’ confidence about their performance in practicum needed to be questioned:

No, they have a misperception there. The language is a problem and the perception of an Indian student in particular is that it’s not going to be a problem. The reason that they see it as not going to be a problem is because they see it in their culture and they have experience in their culture. So they think that was going to be OK, they were very confident, but the reality is it will become a problem, as time goes on (Paul).

Paul indicated that it was the conflict of cultural expectations in schooling that had caused such misperceptions, because these students had made an assumption that the English spoken in Australia was similar to that spoken in their countries. Nancy agreed with Paul’s view and indicated their assumptions would match reality only if these students went to a school of the same ethnic background as their own. Nancy
pointed out that even a native English speaker who did not understand the classroom culture, particularly the classroom registers, would struggle in the classroom. On top of that, Australian students—like any students—use a lot of slang and, as a classroom practitioner, having an awareness of that and not being offended, was important for them.

In summary, academics’ views on Indian students’ potential advantages are divided. Some academics perceive that Indian students do not have particular advantages over other Asian international students, and their confidence before their practicum is seen as short-lived, because of their accent, which can hinder their communication with pupils. In addition, the Australian school culture, classroom culture, registers and slang, all present challenges to all AITE students.

7.1.3 Accent and Identity

The views of the academics on students’ accent were also divided, in terms of the impact on a student’s teaching career. Louise argued that accent was a big issue these students had, in the practicum in particular, because it affected their communication and classroom management. Louise believed that many AITE students were afraid of being identified because of their accents, and some of them were too scared to speak up in public. Mary generally agreed with this, and believed that AITE students’ accents could be problematic. She considered that AITE students’ expressions were often ‘blunt and abrupt’, and this was one of the reasons causing communication barriers.

However, two other academics seemed to have different opinions on the issue of accent. Adam argued that accent was not a problem, as children can adjust to accents very quickly:
Honestly, I certainly do not think accent is a problem and the kids adjust to an accent very quickly, you know. If somebody can speak English with a Chinese accent, kids will adapt to that very fast and that will not interfere with their learning (Adam).

Adam maintained that it was not the accent of these practicum teachers that presented a problem, but the speed of their speech that may present an issue. Echoing this view, Paul pointed out that, at the beginning, accent seemed to be a problem for AITE students. As time went by, it would become a less of a problem for them because school children would tune into their accent quickly. However, considering the timeframe of the practicum, it may be very difficult for school students to accommodate the accents of practicum students in time to neutralize this as an issue.

Nancy thought it was hard for her to generalize on the issue of accent. But she argued that a positive attitude towards effective communication was of importance:

For me as a teacher, I won’t be able to communicate unless I do my very best to understand the accent. For instance, this morning I was in the meeting with a man from South Africa. Some of the words he said at first I could not recognize. But because I wanted to understand him, I made my brain work over time to figure out what he was saying. Now that is me, because it was important (Nancy).

Nancy’s statement throws some new light on the three concepts of comprehensibility, intelligibility and familiarity, as discussed in Chapter 2, because it highlights the role of the listener. Nancy argued that if one did want to communicate, accent would be overcome as a problem for a listener; the issue was not the accent but the mind-set involved in the process of communication and the process of negotiating meanings. She maintained that accent should not be an excuse for native speakers not to keep the conversation going, while on the other hand it should not be an embarrassment for AITE students not to participate, either. Nancy indicated that accent could be used as an excuse for a native English speaker not to talk to non-native speakers.

Louise argued that the issue of identity was part of the adaptation. She considered that the term ‘NESB’ involved a degree of labelling and stigmatizing that
many international students disliked and that they did not want to be seen as ‘NESB’
students. She was in favour of the term *World English Speaker* (WES), which she
argued was a coherent and much more equalizing way to look at language and
globalization. She considered that the term ‘*WES*’ recognizes the difference of
international students, and emphasized that *WES* conveyed the notion that there are
various ways of speaking English.

Adam argued that identity was an issue for everyone. When a teacher was in a
classroom, one had to negotiate an identity with that class, and one needed to go
through a process to determine how one was going to manage the class. Adam
pointed out that identity did take into account where one was from, but equally that it
would be generated from one’s negotiation process, which could be difficult for an
inexperienced teacher:

> If you set the rules and engagement when your class begins, then the class just flows along.
> You don’t have to fight the battle. You don’t set them earlier on, (and) you are going to have
> big (trouble). It is going to be a negotiation for every class you have. The students will
> reopen the negotiation about calling out, about homework about everything. That is where
> young teachers fall down because they are still coming to grip with the rules they need
> (Adam).
>
> There is no doubt that many AITE students would like to set the rules, as Adam
>suggests, at the outset. However, this is true of any beginning teacher, not just AITE
>students. For AITE students, the issues are more fundamental. These students come
>from different cultures, including different schooling cultures. They perceive—as do
>local students, no doubt—that the ability of a teacher to communicate is basic to
teacher identity. And on this most basic feature, identity, they find themselves
wanting in a way that is not true of local students. Their identity negotiation is
therefore more crucially subject to the ‘power of the hearer’ (Miller, 2003) and so,
negotiation of teacher authority is reopened.
Paul said that it was true that identity was an issue for some AITE students, and they were stressed about not being accepted by the host society. However, Paul pointed out that these students should realize the existence of various levels of recognition from the host society. He implied that one’s degree of acceptance by the host society relied very much on one’s own communication skills. AITE students had to extend their tolerance and reconcile the different levels of recognition; and by doing so, they could actually expand their own identity options.

Paul argued that difference was one of the most important elements and also the most misunderstood in terms of comprehending other cultures, and was usually viewed negatively. In order to gain a picture of a certain culture, the correct way to approach it was to explore difference. He argued that difference could become important and central when it was negotiated and examined positively. Such an approach to difference is a way to understand the world around us; and is a perspective that makes people grow as persons. So, the task for educators was to try to create an environment in which different identities were appreciated and understood.

7.1.4 Scaffolding/support for AITE students in the course

With a view to helping students with communication problems, a new communication program was offered to the relevant international students in the MTeach course. However, academics seemed to have varied views on the efficacy of the program. Louise, as a coordinator of the program, believed that AITE students would eventually realise the benefits of doing the program, particularly when they returned from their practicum. She believed that the course offered the students substantial assistance that would help them finally achieve their academic success.

Paul stated that another support program was being discussed and that this
would try to address all the differences that international students saw as important. He emphasized that a holistic program wherein employers had a strategic relationship with the Education Department of that state, should also be developed.

To deal with the differences of international students, Paul said that there had been some difficulty in implementing a support program, simply because of the shortage of qualified staff. Paul disclosed that having or finding people who could implement this program had proved difficult.

Nancy had a different view on this; she did not think these students had had enough scaffolding for their academic studies and she felt many other things should have been done:

Not really. I think we need a lot of scaffolding and mentoring for these NESB students. We’ve got a program but it is not mandatory. But my other concern about the program is its focus on NESB and yet I know that there are students who are not NESB—for instance, students who come from a TAFE pathway, and they still struggle, so if you say this program is only for NESB students, it leaves those out.

One reason Nancy argued, as to why this kind of assistance program should have been made available for all students was that the term ‘NESB’ itself causes a problem and that some students may use it as an excuse for not attending, as they did not want to be labeled ‘NESB’.

Nancy believed that it was important that assistance should be arranged equally for those who thought they were problem-free. She argued that adequate assistance should be designed in a way such that students’ cultural differences were recognized. Nancy felt some of the students were being set up for failure and that they had not received the assistance that they should have had. She demonstrated her point by indicating that many ‘NESB’ students failed to get a job many years after the completion of their course, as they struggled with their English language. She
pointed out that there are so many obstacles that they have to overcome: even if they have finished the course, they still need to ‘get the green light’ from school principals, which could be another challenge, because of the belief that many teachers and pupils could not understand them. Nancy confessed that it worried her *ethically* that some students had to undergo so much and that there was very little hope for them to succeed in their chosen career. She did not think the course had thought far enough ahead in planning relevant assistance for international students.

**Personal strategies to assist AITE students**

While individual strategies used by academics varied, most of the scaffolding provided seemed to relate to how to overcome linguistic and personal/cultural barriers. For instance, academic writing was a common problem for many students. Adam would organise group discussions on the university website to ensure his students understood the questions and requirements of their assignment before they started doing it. After marking their assignments, Adam would provide feedback to his students on their writing, to find out students who were struggling.

Paul often encouraged his students to talk in his class by providing them with opportunities to practise. If there was an issue, instead of just dealing with the student who had the problem, he would ask a group of students to his office to deal with it as a common issue in a group. This created a much more positive environment for this student and other students to solve a problem that they had in common, but in varying degrees. Once a problem was apparent, it was made a common issue or a responsibility for everyone in the class, with a view to creating some ‘safe spaces’ for cultivating membership of a certain community of practice:

There are a lot of reasons (to do this). One reason is that they are not the only one with the problem. Second, there is some cultural problem. If there is one-to-one, particularly for the
cultural background they come from, then they will be frightened as they think they are the only one with the problem. If it is done in a group, they would be relieved as there are others who have the same problem (Paul).

Paul explained that his intention was not to set up a barrier but to try to involve the whole class in a positive way, to create a fear-free atmosphere in which all the issues were recognized in a collective way. Paul argued that if learning was taking place among a group of people in which everyone saw everyone’s perspective, then the learning would be far more rapid and effective. Paul argued that in teacher education, there was a bar for all students to reach, and the bar could not be changed. One of the ways to assist the students to reach the bar was not to leave them feeling isolated and as if they were the only one with a problem. Students should be encouraged to work with one another and to use each other’s strengths to support each other’s weaknesses.

Validity of short graduate entry programs for AITE students

The academics unanimously agreed that the accelerated mode (12 months) of the MTeach course was too short for AITE students. Louise believed that a 12-month program certainly put a lot of pressure on the students, because many of them were on a scholarship, so they had to finish in a year. She thought that a program of at least 18 months was more suitable for international students, because students were faced not only with the challenge of new content but also that of adaptation to a new culture.

Adam felt very strongly about this issue, and was totally against a 12-month program, as it was too short even for native English speakers. He argued that it was a ‘disgrace’ to offer a one-year course instead of a two-year course, especially for international students. He said that it was impossible to expect him to train a good Mathematics teacher in 12 months, even with native students who have a good
command of English and Mathematics, let alone international students. He argued that 18 months was a bare minimum and that the duration of the course should be two years for AITE students.

Paul totally agreed with the suggestion that the one-year graduate entry program was probably designed without AITE students in mind. But he further indicated that ‘teacher education’ at university had to be considered as part of a much bigger context, in which beginning employment should be included. He claimed that teacher education and training should be expanded from ‘campus only’ into ‘initial employment’ as well. Paul argued that he did not believe in the ‘structures, artificial barriers and borders’ between pre-service and in-service education teachers, and that systems needed to face the reality of teacher education as being complex and not ending at graduation. He argued that the timeframe may be important, but that the most important point was that ‘a new world view’ was required; things would just remain the same if people still took an old view into an extended timeframe.

7.2 THE VIEWS OF ACADEMICS COMPARED TO THEIR STUDENTS

Given the academics’ explanations of the nature of the challenges faced by students, it is necessary to discuss the connotations of the notions of ‘cultural adaptation’ (Louise) and ‘cultural expectations’ (Adam). In this section, some of the tensions in the views provided by Louise and Adam on the nature of the challenges these AITE students faced are examined; some of the conflicts with the views of the students are explored, with an attempt to ‘unpack’ the implications arising from the academics’ perceptions.

26 By ‘worldview’ in this context, Paul seemed to be referring to the perceptions of teacher educators about practices in teacher education. With such perspectives, teacher educators see and interpret the ways in which teacher education courses should be run.
7.2.1 The notion of ‘cultural expectations’ (Adam)

As stated earlier, Adam argued that the biggest challenge for these international students was cultural expectations, which, he explained, related to the way in which Mathematics should be taught in Australian schools. So the ‘layers’ contained in these cultural expectations might include the following:

- Australian national culture;
- Australian schooling culture, and
- Australian schooling culture with regard to teaching Mathematics.

It was these ‘cultural expectations’ that Adam considered ‘the biggest battle’ for himself as a lecturer and, by implication, the biggest challenge for his AITE students. Such cultural expectations are actually about acculturation to the rules and practices of a community of practitioners. Adam’s view contrasted with the remarks made by one of his students, Rachael, who claimed that her biggest challenge was her English.

The researcher specifically raised this issue in the second interview with Rachael, who had earlier claimed that her biggest problem was her English. She replied that she did not have any problems with expectations about teaching Mathematics in Australian schools. What she was really struggling with was how to explain those Mathematical concepts in English to her pupils. Rachael’s experience is the same as Miller’s (2010) description of one of her participants, Andrea, who was confronted with challenges from her Year 9 Science class. Miller (2010, p. 140) points out that: ‘The problem here is not that she [Andrea] did not explain things to students, but that she was unable to’. To recapitulate, Adam’s view on AITE students’ sources of struggle is focused on accepting an ideology of teaching, while Rachael’s focus is on struggles with using English as a means to apply an approach to teaching. Clearly, there is some conflict between the perceptions of academics.
about the reasons for these students’ challenges and the views of their students. Such conflict is further demonstrated by the views of cultural adaptation and cultural expectations, which are discussed in the following sections.

7.2.2 The notion of ‘cultural adaptation’ (Louise)

As indicated previously, cultural adaptation was considered by Louise the biggest challenge that these students faced. Louise claimed that cultural adaptation could be ‘quite isolating’—that word itself positioning these students as having lost a sense of belonging.

What did Louise mean by ‘cultural adaptation’? Louise argued that Australian academic literacy was a huge problem for AITE students and that the students should know how to write essays and how to do research, as many of them had been unwittingly plagiarising in their home countries. The phrase ‘cultural adaptation’ here seems to be suggesting an acculturation into the practice of academic writing and the academic literacy of Australian higher education. Louise also considered accent as part of cultural adaptation, which she saw as relevant to both culture and language.

Learning western academic conventions is a challenge for many CALD students (Handa & Power 2005). From the point of view of some academics, the challenge these students face is a cultural problem, partly related to their own belief that plagiarism, for example, is acceptable in Asian cultures.

From the students’ point of view, it is not a cultural issue, as they have never actually been told that ‘to copy’ is acceptable in their own cultures. Singh and Fu (2008, p. 263) argue that ‘it is a misunderstanding to assume that Chinese students are inherently plagiarists. They are taught that it is wrong to do so’. What often confuses them is the concept of paraphrasing, which is part of the regular exercise of
learning English in Asian countries. Many of them believe that they can turn a sentence from an article or book into their own ‘property’ by changing one or two words in a sentence. Moreover, they believe that turning a sentence into ‘their own’ by following the Western academic tradition is extremely difficult, as it is not just a matter of replacing a ‘brick’ (a word in this case) in a house but ‘dismantling the whole structure of the house’. For some academics, this can be a cultural issue—’cultural expectation’ or ‘cultural adaptation’—but for most students it is essentially a language problem, as they are often struggling to find a substitute for a word in a sentence, quite removed from dismantling ‘the whole house’. Therefore, it is necessary to further explore the implications of some of the academics’ views on AITE students’ acculturation into Australian higher education.

7.2.3 The implications of cultural expectations and cultural adaptation

Table 7.1 ‘Cultural expectations’, ‘cultural adaptation’ and membership of a community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Cultural expectations’</th>
<th>‘Cultural adaptation’</th>
<th>What this means for membership of a community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam saw it as ‘layers’</td>
<td>Australian national culture</td>
<td>Expectations from gatekeepers, which are about meeting the ways of doing things and the practices of certain communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian schooling culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian ways of teaching Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise conceived of these as themes</td>
<td>Accent/academic literacy/academic writing</td>
<td>Rules for gatekeepers of a community of practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 The academics perceived differently the challenges that AITE students faced, and not all of them talked about cultural expectations or cultural adaptation.
As shown in Table 7.1, Adam saw cultural expectations in terms of a number of ‘layers’ of cultures, or ‘ways of doing things’, while Louise conceived of cultural adaptation as ‘themes’ that AITE students have to adapt to in Australian teacher education. Adam’s cultural expectations and Louise’s cultural adaptation, which they see as the biggest challenge for AITE students, are similar, if we conceptualize them as related to membership of a community.

Whatever the terms Adam and Louise use, as indicated from the final column in the Table 7.1, they are all playing the same role of the gatekeeper, whose responsibility is to make sure that all the students have to satisfy certain ‘ways or rules of doing things’ in order to finish their teacher education courses, such as becoming insiders to the practice of the community of ‘Australian academic literacy’ before membership of this community is eventually granted. The notions of cultural expectations and cultural adaptation also echo the perceived challenges of the students, because they are both suggesting that AITE students satisfy certain standards in order to become a legitimate member of a community. In a word, this ‘expectation’ or ‘adaptation’ is in fact about belonging to a community of practice, and this conceptualization of the challenge they face runs against the view that many of them, like Rachael, still hold: that their biggest challenge is their English language proficiency. This thesis argues that reality is more complicated. The notions of cultural adaptation and cultural expectation partly reflect the complexity of the challenges these students face.

7.3 STUDENTS’ ASSIGNMENTS

Of the ten participants, nine assignments were collected, which covered varied subjects in the MTeach course. Students were asked to choose one of their assignments for analysis. The criteria for choice were left to them.
7.3.1 Aleve’s Assignment

Aleve’s submitted assignment was a lesson plan in the subjects Technology & Applied Studies Method 1Y and Computer Method 1X, in which she was supposed to demonstrate her understanding of the context, philosophy, aims, outcomes, and content underpinning one Stage 5 Syllabus. Her assignment gained a mark of 15 out of 50. The criteria were divided into 3 sections. Aleve received a ‘0’ in one section because she was considered to have failed to identify ‘outcomes’ from the Syllabus. In another section, in which Aleve was supposed to include two lesson plans, she received 3/8. According to the comments in this section, Aleve did not provide an ‘explicit lesson plan with enough detail’. The final section was about how to engage the students in varied learning tasks, where Aleve obtained 5/15. The comments from the tutor were that Aleve lacked the details of times allocated to tasks, which were also not presented in an explicit order. In addition, other issues indicated by the tutor were that Aleve did not use the correct template for her lesson plan and that there was no connection between her two lessons.

In summary, the weaknesses demonstrated from Aleve’s assignment can be summarised as structural, sequential and pedagogical. With regard to structure, Aleve was perceived to not fully understand a Stage 5 Syllabus, in particular the meaning of all the outcomes and their relations, and this could have resulted from her lack of experience of Australian schooling. Secondly, not being able to ‘provide an explicit lesson plan with enough detail’ may indicate Aleve’s difficulty in understanding the tasks. The final issue is pedagogy. While it could be hard to judge who should be more responsible for Aleve’s failure in engaging the pupils in her class, there is no doubt that Aleve faced challenges from the conflict of two schooling cultures. These

28 ‘Stage 5’ refers to Years 9–10 in NSW.
challenges include cultural awareness and how to engage pupils. So she has to work
with cultural differences, at the same time as learning to engage students in her class.
This dual challenge is not the same for local students.

7.3.2 Cindy’s Assignment

Cindy’s assignment was an essay in the subject *Diversity, Social Justice & Equity*, in
which she was asked to analyse a social justice-related incident or an ongoing social
justice issue. It scored 17 out of 25. The essay criteria were:

1. demonstration of understanding of the main issues related to the issue/s
   (that the student has chosen);
2. identification of discourse;
3. development of theoretical framework and understanding of power;
4. evaluation of own approach and school’s approach to the issue/s, and
5. research of the issues and academic literacy.

Cindy’s essay scored best in Criteria 1–3, scoring 4 out of 5, while it scored worst on
Criterion 5, scoring 2 out of 5. In general, Cindy’s essay was considered ‘well-
researched’. It was thought that Cindy’s observation of the social justice issue she
selected was supported by evidence and relevant theories. As indicated by the tutor,
the area in which she scored worst was in ‘academic literacy’, though there were
many grammatical errors in this assignment that were not highlighted. As well as
grammatical errors, there were problems with vocabulary and syntax.

Academic literacy was identified as her weakest aspect, and language was a
major concern. This matches Cindy’s own description of her biggest challenge in the
course. However, while quite a few grammatical errors were highlighted, no specific
comments were made on Cindy’s academic literacy, though it obviously influenced
her final result. The tutor could have taken maximum advantage of this assignment
as a learning tool by giving more feedback to Cindy. In general, this assignment, as a
teaching instrument, was under used, because many grammatical errors were ignored, despite the fact that some of them had been corrected.

7.3.3 Jane’s Assignments

One of Jane’s assignments was from the same subject as Cindy’s. It scored 20.5 out of 25. Again, the criteria were:

1. demonstration of understandings of the main issues related to the issue/s (that the student has chosen);
2. identification of discourses;
3. demonstration of theoretical framework and understandings of power;
4. evaluation of own approach and school’s approach to the issue/s, and
5. research of the issues and academic literacy.

Jane obtained the highest mark in the first and the final criteria scoring 4.5 out of 5 on each. Her weakest area was the fourth criterion: ‘evaluation of own approach’, which scored 3.5 out of 5. Jane received 4 out of 5 in the second and third criteria. Jane’s assignment was considered an ‘excellent paper’ and her academic literacy was perceived as ‘very good’.

Another assignment collected from Jane was the same as those collected from Linda (7.3.4) and David (7.3.6), and these assignments were marked by the same lecturer/tutor. But Jane achieved the highest score of all (68/100). Jane’s work was considered to have a ‘good standard of academic writing’, with ‘all sources cited correctly’ and ‘APA style applied without error’. This also confirms my earlier suggestion that Jane’s English language proficiency was one of the best among all participants.

7.3.4 Rachael’s Assignment

Rachael’s assignment was a research report in the subject Secondary Method Mathematics. In this report, Rachael discussed gender differences in performance on
Mathematical tasks. It scored 37 out of 50. There were 21 criteria, covering 2 main areas in the assignment: Planning, written presentation and technical competence, and Quality of the research report and information sheet.

Rachael was given a total of 37 out of 50 for her research report, which was generally viewed as ‘well done’ by her tutor. It was almost a grammatical-error-free assignment. The report was considered a ‘satisfactory written submission’ with ‘a satisfactory 4 page summary of the current research literature’. In addition, the language in the assignment was considered ‘clear and concise’ and the issues were ‘well-explained’.

It was actually hard for me to imagine that it was the work of the Rachael that I met twice in interviews. I knew that Rachael had a mentor who had helped her with her academic writing. However, it was unknown to me to what extent this mentor had been involved with Rachael’s writing and assignments, though it did appear that mentoring offered by the course had been beneficial to Rachael’s academic writing.

7.3.5 Linda’s Assignment

The assignment Linda chose was a ‘written assessment task’ in the subject Literacies for Learning. Linda was asked to do a lesson analysis, and the topic of the lesson was a movie review. The lesson scored 55 out of 100. The marking criteria covered four areas for this assignment: Analysis of viewed lesson, Lesson activities, Supporting statement and References. The awards ranged from Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction

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29 I was not able to clarify whether Rachael had been specifically assisted by anyone in completing this assignment, as it was collected after the interviews. However, she did have a mentor whom she found ‘quite helpful’.
and *High Distinction* for each criterion. Linda obtained ‘Pass’ for most of the areas and scored ‘Distinction’ in two areas in ‘References’.

For *Analysis of viewed lesson*, the tutor said that what Linda produced was ‘description’ rather than ‘analysis’ of a lesson. In the second area, *Lesson activities*, while Linda did identify the resources and the literacy links were considered *adequate*, there was a ‘lack of some detail’. Linda’s problems seemed to be concentrated on the *Supporting statement*, where she was found to have the following problems:

- literacy strategies were weakly linked to lesson outcomes;
- limited explanation of strategies;
- while sentences were well-constructed, some errors needed editing, and
- restricted literacy research description to explain lesson activities.

Linda scored the best in *References*, where she received ‘Distinction’ in two areas. Overall, Linda’s weakest area in this assignment seemed to be her understanding of how literacy learning strategies work, in terms of supporting the achievement of particular lesson outcomes.

### 7.3.6 David’s assignment

David’s assignment was an analysis of a lesson, with two incorporated activities in the subject *Literacies for Learning*. David was asked to do a lesson analysis, and the topic of the lesson was PDHPE theory. It scored 56 out of 100. David’s and Linda’s assignments were from the same unit of study and were marked by the same tutor, so, the marking criteria also covered the same four areas: *Analysis of viewed lesson*, *Lesson activities*, *Supporting statement* and *References*. The awards ranged from *Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction* and *High Distinction* for each criterion. David also obtained ‘Pass’ for most of the areas and scored a Credit in *Lesson activities*. 
For *Analysis of viewed lesson* and *Lesson activities*, the tutor put a tick between ‘Pass’ and ‘Credit’. In the second area, *Lesson activities*, while David identified the resources, and the literacy links were considered adequate, there was a ‘lack of some detail’. Like Linda, David’s problems also seemed to be concentrated on the *Supporting statement*, where he was found to have the following problems:

- literacy strategies were weakly linked to lesson outcomes;
- limited explanation of strategies;
- while sentences were well-constructed, a couple of errors may need editing, and
- restricted literacy research description to explain lesson activities.

David scored the best in *Analysis of viewed lesson*. The mark awarded in this section was 6/10. Other comments from the tutor include that David wrote too much about the content but failed to talk about the development of specific literacy skills.

In summary, David’s weakest area in this assignment was also thought to be his understanding of how literacy learning strategies work. in terms of supporting the achievement of particular lesson outcomes. There were very few grammatical errors in the writing itself, which did not match the impression I had of David’s English skills.

### 7.3.7 Alice’s assignment

The assignment Alice chose was a report on attitudes to student misbehaviour, which was from the subject *Positive Learning Environments*. It scored 31 out of 50. The marking criteria in this assignment covered five areas:

1. a clear and coherent description of the interview process and overview of findings;
2. identification and analysis of key themes with reference to relevant academic literature;
3. demonstration of contextual understanding of adolescent development
and impacts of development issues on student behaviour;
4. discussion of implications for personal awareness and teaching practice, and
5. report presentation (coherent form, sound argument and appropriate referencing).

Alice was said to have provided a basic description of the interview process and a coherent overview of findings. In addition, interview themes were comprehensively identified and analysed, and Alice showed a sound understanding of developmental issues by relating them to student behaviour. Alice’s main problems appeared to be found in the last two criteria. While there was engagement with a number of personal and teaching implications, discussion of these implications was limited. For report presentation, the tutor pointed out the issues in her spelling and use of relevant expressions.

An overall evaluation from the tutor was not available, and it was not at all clear how exactly the total mark awarded to Alice (31) was allocated. While the tutor’s corrections of some obvious mistakes in spelling, articles and punctuation could be found, there were many other grammatical mistakes, such as tense, inadequate sentence structure and misuse of vocabulary, which were not corrected. For instance, Alice writes in her last paragraph:

The value of this investigate is to insights the causes of misbehavior, effectively use teaching strategies and solve problems (p. 6).

There were many such examples. It was evident that academic literacy was a weak area for this student, and it is most likely that these errors prevented understanding of her arguments.
7.3.8 Riva’s Assignment

The assignment Riva chose was a lesson plan in the subject *Language Secondary Method*. This lesson plan was for the group of ‘Hindi Continuers’ (Stage 6) and the theme of the plan was ‘The Hindi speaking communities: Festivals and Ceremonies’. It scored 29 out of 50. The marking criteria in this assignment covered three task components:

1. syllabus outcomes and specific lesson outcomes;
2. teaching/learning strategies and skills; teacher/student resources; lesson content; quality teaching, and intercultural learning, and
3. lesson sequencing; student activities and questioning.

The comments from the tutor include the following:

- being able to use syllabus outcomes in relation to lessons planned;
- the teaching and learning strategies were relevant to the context, and
- a good sequence was demonstrated in the lessons, though some repetition was found.

Marks awarded to Riva in these three components were: 2/4; 10/16 and 17/30 respectively.

While academic standards of language were not set as a criterion for the assignment, quite a few grammatical problems were found in the last part of the assignment: *Theoretical justification*. Some words were circled or underlined by the tutor (probably due to grammatical considerations, though this was not directly indicated). This issue matches Riva’s own concerns about her academic writing.

7.3.9 Yvonne’s Assignment

The assignment Yvonne chose was a lesson plan in the subject *Inclusive Education: Principles and Practices*. This lesson plan was for a group of Chinese background
speakers (Stage 6) and the theme of the plan was ‘Chinese communities overseas: Adapting to new cultures (lifestyle)’. It scored 32.5 out of 50. In this assignment, Yvonne demonstrated how she conducted a lesson in Chinese. The marking criteria covered four areas for this assignment: Ideas and appropriateness for students with disability, quality of the lesson plan, Writing skills, and Referencing skills. The awards ranged from Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction and High Distinction for each criterion. The lowest mark Yvonne obtained (Pass) was her writing in Textual features, with ‘limited ability to write in accurate English’, while she received a High Distinction in Referencing.

According to the tutor’s comments, Yvonne’s reflection was not specific enough while she did demonstrate some good teaching strategies. Yvonne failed in her knowledge of the policies of Board of Studies and she passed in:

- academic writing;
- learning outcomes/life skills;
- behaviour management;
- knowledge of Disability Standards for Education, and
- use of technology and understanding of collaboration.

Among all the areas, English language proficiency was obviously a major issue for her, because many grammatical errors could be found from the assignment, even though the assignment was only a lesson plan.

### 7.3.10 Summary

Through the analysis of nine participant assignments, the major impressions can be gleaned as follows:

- The marks that participants received were between Pass and Credit, with most in the ‘Pass’ range;

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30 ‘Stage 6’ refers to Years 11–12 in NSW.
Students’ abilities to write accurate English did not seem to have been given deliberate attention though there were relevant criteria. Quite a few linguistic problems in these assignments were not dealt with, and very few comments were made in this regard, and

While there were obviously grammatical issues, relevant supporting evidence was absent in these assignments.

It was not clear here whether the linguistic problems in the students’ assignments were deliberately left unchecked, due to issues such as student self-esteem, cultivating self-confidence, or time-constrained assignments. However, it is evident in this research that some academics, as Benize (2012) found, tend ‘to separate disciplinary knowledge from academic literacy and, as a result, send students with ‘writing difficulties’ to the learning support centre, rather than see it as part of their own role to assist students to learn discipline-specific writing conventions’ (p. 455).

Three common patterns in terms of AITE students’ weaknesses in these assignments were:

- structural weakness;
- pedagogical weakness, and
- cultural weakness.

By ‘structural weakness’, I mean AITE students’ knowledge about syllabuses for Australian schools. ‘Pedagogical weakness’ refers to their knowledge about ‘practical and applied teaching strategies’, and ‘cultural weakness’ refers to their knowledge about those popular concepts/discourses in Australian school education.

While the first weakness is related to the awareness that these students have of Australian schooling (in particular Syllabuses), the second and third chiefly relate to their unfamiliarity with the perceived routines, teaching methods and discourses used regularly in Australian schools. Structural weakness and pedagogical weakness were more obvious in students’ lesson plans or lesson analysis, while cultural
weakness was often found in their essays or reports. Furthermore, the impacts of structural weakness and pedagogical weakness on some of the students seem to be greater than those of culture. For instance, Aleve received ‘0’ in identifying syllabus outcomes and David just got ‘Pass’ in identifying his lesson activities and literacy approaches. Thus, for some students in this cohort at least, structural and pedagogical weaknesses directly affected their academic performance.

Comparatively, the impact of the third weakness, culture, on some of the students, did not carry the same weight as the other two: Cindy was awarded 34 out of 50 in her essay and Rachael got 37 out of 50 in her report. And they both were given the comment: ‘Well done’. This variation in their assignments could be related to certain expectations or unstated standards in each area. However, given the small number of students, these indicators are suggestive only.

English language competence, which is often presented as ‘academic literacy’, plays two roles in AITE students’ academic studies: academic reading and academic writing. Moreover, each student’s academic literacy is a vehicle that carries their knowledge about such things as Syllabuses and pedagogy in Australian schooling, and presents this knowledge to their lecturers/tutors. According to the data collected from the assignments, academic literacy was a major issue for these students, whether it was listed as one of the criteria in their assignments or not.

Furthermore, many grammatical errors had not been dealt with in their assignments, although some of the student participants’ problems in academic writing were identified. It could be that, in consideration of the importance of academic writing and the needs of these students, the assistance with improving their writing skills that should be gained from the marking of these assignments, since assignments are a teaching instrument, was inadequate.
These weaknesses also reveal the difficulties that AITE students face in their orientation into Australian higher education, particularly Australian schooling (see Chapter 2) and in seeking membership of a community of teaching practice. Aleve’s assignment is a case in point. Her failure to identify the outcomes from a Stage 5 Syllabus not only demonstrates the expectations of these students in this cultural adaptation but is also a clear refusal to someone like Aleve in their application for ‘membership’. The obstacles to Aleve becoming a legitimate member of the community of Australian schoolteachers are structural, pedagogical and cultural.

7.4 THE SCHOOL SUPERVISING TEACHERS’ INTERVIEWS

Five school supervising teachers were interviewed: Aleve’s supervisors, Jeremy and Tom; Alice’s supervisor, Sonia; David’s supervisor, James, and Jane’s supervisor, Hua.

Table 7.1: School supervising teachers interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School supervising teachers</th>
<th>Jeremy</th>
<th>Tom</th>
<th>Sonia</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Hua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student participants</td>
<td>Aleve</td>
<td>Aleve</td>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aleve is the only participant whose two supervisors—Jeremy and Tom (pseudonyms)—were both interviewed. Jeremy was Aleve’s P1 supervisor and Tom was Aleve’s P2 supervisor. The interviews focused on the 6 themes (see Appendix E for schoolteacher interview questions):

- the single most important challenge AITE students face in their practicum (Q1);
- the expectations of AITE students in their practicum (Q2);
- benefits/opportunities for AITE students in the practicum (Q3);
• benefits/challenges for school supervising teachers (Q4);
• a sense of belonging and identity for AITE students in the practicum (Q5), and
• differences among AITE student-teachers (Q6).

The following is a summary of the school supervising teachers’ feedback on the above issues. The reason they are gathered together is because I intend to discuss them thematically, and as a whole. This particular group are crucial ‘gatekeepers’ of certain communities of teaching practice and their views truly represent a reflection of Australian schooling culture.

7.4.1 The most important challenge AITE students faced in their practicum

Both Jeremy and Tom considered Aleve’s biggest challenge in her practicum to be her English language skills. They said that students had difficulty understanding what Aleve said, due to her accent. In addition, Tom claimed that another thing Aleve lacked was classroom presence—the use of voice projection. Sonia, too, argued that Alice’s biggest challenge was her communication, which was a two-way issue: while the pupils found it was difficult to understand her accent, Alice was also struggling to comprehend what the pupils said to her. James said that the moment he first met David he felt straight away that David was going to struggle with his accent. James indicated clearly that David’s biggest challenge in the practicum was his communication (which James believed was the main reason David had been refused by another school, before coming to his). James said that David’s spoken English was hard to understand and presented a huge problem to his pupils due to his accent, and pupils were also confused by the words he used in particular contexts.

Hua said that Jane was quite confident compared to other AITE students she had supervised. Hua said that Jane’s English was the best of all AITE practicum teachers she had had. She pointed out that the biggest challenge Jane faced in her
practicum was her awareness of students from other backgrounds, such as Pacific Islanders, and that it could be challenging for Jane to understand the attitudes towards learning of some of these students, in a limited timeframe. Hua said that students, especially those of non-Chinese background, were very sensitive to practicum teachers’ accents, and practicum teachers had trouble if they did not speak English fluently. In addition, school students would notice whether a teacher was confident or not, and would ‘make things harder’ for the teacher. Hua believed that, generally speaking, for Asian practicum teachers who taught Chinese at Australian schools, the biggest challenge was their English language proficiency. To recapitulate, language, accent and the role of supervising teachers all functioned together as ‘gatekeepers’ to deny or allow AITE students’ access to becoming a legitimate member of an Australian school community of practice.

7.4.2 The expectations of AITE students in their practicum

Aleve’s two supervisors seemed to have different approaches to the performance of AITE students. Jeremy said that he was prepared to work with AITE students on terminology, to look at their accents and consider whether there were better ways for AITE student-teachers to present to pupils. However, Tom claimed that he probably had the same expectation for every practicum student, regardless of what backgrounds they were from. Sonia’s position and James’ were similar to Tom’s.

Sonia argued that every practicum teacher was expected to be professional in their teaching and in taking part in any activities of school. She claimed that her expectation for every practicum teacher was the same, and that this was also a policy of the school. Sonia suggested that practicum teachers were expected to have a high level of English language proficiency and she believed that training in voice projection and acculturation to Australian schooling should also be provided by
teacher education programs. Practicum students should be well-informed about the daily activities in which a schoolteacher was normally involved. In addition, practicum teachers were expected to show professional conduct by being proactive and being well-prepared for everything they would be called upon to do.

In a similar vein, James said that the expectations of a practicum teacher were very high, regardless of what kind of background they had. James indicated that the school expected very high quality teaching for teachers or practicum teachers who came to the school. James emphasised that there were standards for every single teacher to pass, and that was the reason why he had failed David in three elements of his practicum report. James argued that a standard for professional attitude and knowledge for practicum teachers had to be maintained.

Hua’s feedback on this issue was different from her counterparts (this could possibly result from Hua’s Chinese background and from the subject she was teaching—Chinese). Hua explained that practicum teachers were not expected to be perfect in their teaching but they did need to have the right attitude and enthusiasm to participate. Hua believed that the most challenging task for a practicum teacher was time management and accurate explanations, and it often happened that they would lose track of the lesson or fail to finish the lesson, due to a lack of experience. Hua had different expectations for non-native Chinese teachers, whom she believed were not able to teach background Chinese students, and they were often assigned to teach junior classes. In this very specific context, AITE students become experts, and the native English speakers were perceived as the ‘lesser’ experts, which substantially reverses the ‘novice’ image that AITE students usually have. However, the pressure on native English speaking students who are trained to teach Chinese may be much less than that on a native Chinese student, because the supervising teacher(s) may
have different expectations for each of them. As indicated in this chapter, Hua did not expect her student-teachers of non-native Chinese backgrounds to achieve an equal outcome—to perform as well as their Chinese counterparts. Comparatively, other school supervising teachers interviewed, required all their practicum students to achieve an equal outcome—to pass a certain ‘bar’—regardless of their different backgrounds.

As gatekeepers of certain communities of ‘school practice’, Sonia, Tom, and James have clearly demonstrated their attitudes towards newcomers to their communities. Their messages are unambiguous: there is the same bar for any practicum student to pass. Hua, on the other hand, is certainly a gatekeeper of the community of Chinese teachers too. However, Hua’s expectations for her practicum students are obviously different from those of her counterparts. As she indicated, her expectations for native speakers of Chinese were different from non-native Chinese speakers. It could be said that Hua is aware of the differences among practicum students, and shows her awareness of students’ differences by treating them differently. This is presumably to the advantage of pupils as well as to the benefit of non-native speakers of Chinese.

This is a case where a supervising teacher makes different arrangements for pre-service teachers. While it is obvious that Hua simply sees native Chinese speakers as potentially better teachers of Chinese, because they are better speakers than non-native Chinese speakers, it is not an equivalent situation to the ways in which the AITE students are ‘acculturated’, since here Hua is consciously making different arrangements for what she sees as more novice teachers.

Hua’s approach to the supervision of her practicum student is different from her counterparts from the mainstream. Coming from a non-English background, Hua
seems to understand her student-teachers more than her counterparts, by having different expectations of her practicum teachers, due to their cultural and linguistic differences. Moreover, she did not expect her practicum students to perform ‘perfectly’ as her other counterparts did. So, while Hua stressed the importance of certain aspects of equality, that she had the same expectations for every student, for example, to have the ‘right attitude and enthusiasm to participate’, she did not forget the dimension of equity—to treat her practicum teachers fairly by assigning them to different tasks suited to their immediate capacities and, most importantly, to allow them enough space and time to ‘grow’.

The problem with Tom and Sonia is that they don’t differentiate between people’s cultural and linguistic differences. In fact, they unconsciously discriminate against AITE students, by emphasizing equality and ignoring equity. That is probably one of the key reasons why AITE students struggle in the practicum.

7.4.3 Benefits/opportunities for AITE students in the practicum

Jeremy indicated that the benefit for Aleve was that she could enhance her ability to relate to pupils from different cultures, while Tom claimed that the biggest thing for Aleve was ‘getting a reality check’, which Tom further explained as Aleve needing to understand the different ways in which each school was run and that each practicum student was expected to meet the regulations required in different schools.

Sonia said the different experience Alice had, compared to Australian students, would benefit her future teaching, as Alice had learned some new ways of teaching that were different from how she was taught in school. Hua believed that there was a good career opportunity for practicum teachers who could teach Chinese, because Chinese was becoming more and more popular in school as a foreign language.
7.4.4 Benefits/challenges for school supervising teachers

Sonia thought that for a teacher, one is always in a state of constant learning, and that she could learn something from the experience of every practicum teacher she had supervised. Hua thought it was the use of technology or special talents that young practicum teachers had that really benefited her own teaching practice. On top of that, practicum teachers could be very helpful as teaching assistants, in dealing with several different levels of student in her class. However, James frankly felt that while he enjoyed teaching and sharing his experience with other teachers, there was nothing particular he could learn from David. As he said in response to this question, ‘I am clutching at straws as I don’t think there is much benefit to us really.’

With regard to the challenges that school supervising teachers face, Jeremy indicated that his challenge was how to ‘get the practicum teacher’s confidence’. But Tom explained that what he had found most difficult was knowing when to stay present in the classroom and when to leave a student alone with a class. For instance, while he wanted Aleve to gain confidence in her lessons, he did not intend to remove all difficult situations from Aleve, because he wanted her to experience ‘reality’. Sonia found it was a bit challenging for her when her class did not understand what Alice said, but they still tried to be patient and polite. James said that supervising David did present a challenge for him, and also stressful, as he had to delay other things for his training of David. There are two challenging elements that Hua thought were her own main concerns: the progress of her class, and the time spent on training practicum students.

31 Hua was the only teacher of Chinese at the school.
7.4.5 A sense of belonging and identity for AITE students in practicum

Tom indicated that there had been quite a few occasions on which criticism from the pupils prevented Aleve from achieving her authority, and that she failed to engage pupils because of her language. Tom argued that children could be very cruel, that they were intolerant of different accents and that they expected certain standards of the teacher. It was Sonia’s view that all NESB students carried a deficit model about their use of the English language, instead of seeing themselves as bilingual. Sonia pointed out that NESB students consciously walked into classroom with a sense of language deficiency and always felt sorry for the grammar mistakes they made. Sonia stated that she had never met an NESB student who had not felt that they were disadvantaged by their poor English language proficiency. However, Sonia did not think Alice looked at herself as an ‘outsider’, as she had witnessed her passion for, and effort in, learning the culture.

James thought teacher identity would be a difficult issue for practicum students, as they had to establish a rapport with their students and an ownership of the class to which they were assigned, as quickly as possible. James said to David that it would be difficult for him to gain this within a short period of time, such as a couple of lessons. David was considered as too timid and not sociable enough, and James argued that a practicum teacher sometimes needed to be ‘extrovert to survive’ his practicum. James considered that David’s personality, together with his lack of confidence and lack of a sense of belonging, had contributed to his failure. David relied heavily on his supervisor, followed him wherever he went and gained the nickname, ‘James’ shadow’.

Hua agreed that identity was an issue for practicum teachers of Chinese background, as Chinese students tended to keep to themselves and were not as
outgoing as their Western counterparts. He argued that a reserved person has trouble being accepted by others. However, Hua did not think that identity was a problem for Jane, because Jane was very open-minded and loved talking to people around her.

In this case a sense of belonging, for AITE students, refers to their teacher identity or membership in the community of ‘Australian school’ practice. During their apprenticeship, school supervising teachers’ roles are sometimes contradictory: being a facilitator as well as a gatekeeper. All depends on how pupils are engaged. One of the factors that might be in play, contributing to this uncertainty, is what Miller (2003) terms ‘the power of the hearer’. Some pupils are intolerant of differences (accent in particular) and expect certain standards on the very first day they meet these practicum teachers. Thus, how to motivate and engage pupils and prevent the power of those hearers from being too easily negative, is something that supervising teachers could address in the practicum. The separation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ can otherwise be too quickly and easily established. The situation is worsened when supervising teachers sometimes relay to their pupils the message—even after pre-service teachers have left the school—that these pre-service teachers are ‘lacking’. Thus, they habitually strengthen such differences, unconsciously (Santoro, 1997; Thomas, 1999).

7.4.6 Perceived differences among Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth AITE student-teachers

Jeremy said he did not find there was much difference between AITE students, because a lot of them were doing well in his school, while culturally, many of them still tended to maintain their own traditions. Sonia found some female Indian students were not talkative, but they seemed to be somewhat confident, more so than other Asians such as Chinese and Japanese in the use of the English language. James
was unsure in response to the question of whether there are differences among AITE students, as David was his first Asian practicum teacher. Hua agreed with the suggestion that Indian practicum students generally enjoyed a certain degree of advantage over their counterparts of Chinese background, as Indian practicum teachers did not have the same language problems.

In summary, the majority of the school supervising teachers interviewed believed that the main obstacle that AITE students faced in their practicum was their English language competence, of which accent was one of their primary concerns. Besides that, classroom management was another challenge for them. This challenge indicates that the ‘power of the hearer’ (Miller, 2003)—the intolerance of the school children in this case as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3—plays a critical role in the establishment of teacher identity.

7.5 PRACTICUM REPORTS

Five practicum reports were collected from the 10 participants. In each report, there are five standard criteria, which were set by the School of Education of the university where this research was conducted. These are broadly based on Graduate Standards for the teacher registration authority in the state. These criteria are as follows:

- knowledge of content and pedagogy;
- abilities in planning, assessing and reporting for reflective learning;
- effective communication;
- abilities in creating and maintaining safe and challenging environments through classroom management skills, and
- professional knowledge.

All the students who provided the researcher with their practicum reports scored Satisfactory. Two main issues were found in the students’ practicum reports: their communication skills and classroom management, which were commonly recognised
by all the school supervisors interviewed as the major challenges that these students faced.

7.5.1 Aleve’s practicum report (P1)

Years Taught: 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11
Subject taught: Technology, Graphics, Timber, and Design & Technology
Final Grade: Satisfactory

The report said that Aleve needed work in the following areas:

- awareness of the common issues among students at the school;
- the ability to engage ‘low end’ students or those who were disengaged;
- English language skills and her accent;
- assertiveness and the balance between being assertive and overbearing
- basic workshop skills, and
- confidence in classroom management.

7.5.2 Linda’s practicum report (P1)

Years Taught: 7&10
Subject taught: Geography and Commerce
Final Grade: Satisfactory

From this practicum report, Linda appeared to perform relatively well. Although Linda had very little knowledge of Geography, which was the subject she was teaching in her P1, she attempted to adapt her lessons to the various abilities of her students. Effective lesson planning from different resources was demonstrated. Issues raised in the report included work being needed in giving instructions to lower ability classes, and the ability to manage challenging class groups. In general, Linda was considered to conduct herself in a professional manner at all times during her P1.
7.5.3 Alice’s practicum report (P1)

**Years Taught:** 7&9  
**Subject taught:** Science  
**Final Grade:** Satisfactory

Alice’s P1 supervising teacher thought very highly of Alice’s performance on her practicum, and the only problem she had—and her biggest challenge, as she mentioned herself—was her English.

7.5.4 Jane’s practicum report (P1)

**Years Taught:** 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11  
**Subject taught:** Chinese  
**Final Grade:** Satisfactory

Jane’s P1 supervising teacher thought very highly of Jane’s performance during her practicum, and the report said that Jane demonstrated broad and deep subject knowledge, with well-planned lesson plans. Jane communicated effectively with all the pupils in her classes, regardless of their backgrounds, as she could speak English and Chinese fluently. It was suggested though that assertiveness was required when dealing with challenging pupils.

7.5.5 Riva’s practicum report (P1)

**Years Taught:** 9, 10  
**Subject taught:** Geography  
**Final Grade:** Satisfactory

Riva was considered to have demonstrated a thorough understanding of the Geography Stage 5 Syllabus, using a variety of teaching strategies to engage her pupils. Riva’s lessons were thought to be well-planned and appropriate for each class she taught, and she performed very professionally during her practicum. The areas
where Riva needed improvement were flexibility when a planned lesson was not working, and that her expectations for pupils to achieve certain learning targets should be made explicit to the pupils.

7.5.6 Summary

Among five practicum reports collected, problems and issues of participants in their practicum pointed out by the supervisors were:

- assertiveness when dealing with challenging students (Jane, Aleve),
- communication barriers (Alice and Aleve),
- effective communication with low ability classes (Linda),
- classroom management (Linda, Aleve),
- workshop skills (Aleve), and
- teaching style (Aleve).

Here it can be seen that the mainstream classroom issues that all pre-service teaching students have with management and pedagogy, are compounded for AITE students by their perceived communication issues. The two weakest areas for the participants in the practicum were communication skills and classroom management. Of all the participants who had provided practicum reports, Aleve was the one who seemed to struggle the most, in many aspects during her practicum; this matches the other data provided, from her individual interviews and her assignments. Although some of the participants failed to provide me with their practicum reports, I was aware that at least two of them failed one of their practicums: David and Yvonne failed their P1. Finally, it needs to be pointed out that the concept of relations of power (Cummins, 2009) is also demonstrated through ‘the discourse of the practicum within which the supervising teacher has a greater ability to exercise power’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 57). As Nuttall and Ortlipp (2012) argue, the practicum report is ‘an instrument of power’ (p. 57) through which AITE students are required to perform in line with
certain expectations. Then, such exercise of power is ‘not only about power as actions upon actions; it is about power exercised through subjectification’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 57).

7.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, academics’ and school supervising teachers’ views on AITE students’ issues were explored. According to the views of academics, AITE students’ English language competence in academic literacy is the main concern, which echoes the perspectives of most of the student participants. However, there were also some conflicts between the views of the academics and those of the students; tensions also existed between different academics’ views. The conflicts are evident when the data of one student is compared to that of another; these reflect the complexity of the challenges that AITE students face.

From an analysis of the students’ assignments, academic literacy was found to be a major issue for the students. This issue can be broken into three sub-issues:

- understanding the school curriculum content;
- understanding the requirements of the assignments, and
- academic writing skills.

These results also match the views of the academics in general. It seems, however, that there is a gap between what the students perceived and what the course had had in place, in terms of scaffolding. This is further discussed in Recommendations for teacher education programs in Chapter 9.

According to the school supervisors’ interviews, AITE students’ communication skills, in which accent was a major concern, were the key challenge for them in their practicum. In addition, most school supervising teachers insisted that practicum students should satisfy the relevant requirements before they start
teaching in Australian schools, and that these ‘bars’ could not be lowered, regardless of their backgrounds.

How to cope with the situation of a new school culture is one of the biggest challenges that confronts AITE students. A particular school culture may entail the following aspects: ‘professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of the learning/teaching environment, and student-centred focus’ (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 141). Thus, there are some implications with regard to these students’ adaptation to Australian school culture, which chiefly reflect the professional orientation of schooling. A newcomer to a school community is supposed to meet certain professional expectations within the existing school system, and to create a learning environment in which s/he delivers a desired or expected quality of teaching effectively, to pupils. In the context of AITE students, the most immediately relevant aspect seems to be ‘professional orientation’, which may include the notions of ‘cultural expectations’ and ‘cultural adaptation’. According to the school supervising teachers’ interviews and the practicum reports, there seems to be a tendency for pre-service teachers to be expected to be ‘an instant expert’, as academic Paul described it.

Many school supervising teachers appeared to follow this school culture by imposing certain expectations and standards on every single teacher education student, without addressing the issue of different inputs that AITE students needed. As Paul claimed, teaching was still one of the professions in which a new teacher had to do everything single-handedly, from his very first day on the job, and he was expected to be independent. Thus, this tends to make the practicum even more challenging for AITE students.

However, it has to be pointed out that school supervising teachers are only a
part of the ‘institutional practices which are complicit in the audibility or the invisibility’ (Miller, 2003, p. 189) of AITE students. Reform in teacher education is necessary, in order to ensure that AITE students’ entitlement is heard: as Miller (2003) argues, hearing and acknowledging CALD students provides them with opportunities for self-representation and with more identity options in their new school communities. And then, as discussed in Chapter 1, for school supervising teachers, ‘the focus on reception opens up a terrain where diversity may be heard as normal and valuable’ (Miller, 2003, p. 189).
CHAPTER 8: ANALYSING DATA USING CONCEPTS FROM THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter analyses the data from all the interviews, using concepts from the four theoretical categories in the theoretical framework shown in Chapter 3. Hence, Figure 3.1 is repeated here, simply to remind the reader of the theoretical categories included in the theoretical framework.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.1 (reproduced): The theoretical framework**

The four main theoretical categories included in this theoretical framework (those in bold in Figure 3.1) as shown in Chapter 3 are:

- language use;
- language within culture;
- identity, and
- teacher identity as membership of a community.
Within this theoretical framework, the fourth theoretical category: teacher identity as membership of a community, is the key theoretical category, with the other three categories feeding into it. Therefore, this theoretical discussion starts with the first three categories, before focusing on the key category: teacher identity as membership of a community. This chapter intends to achieve the following aims:

- to analyse the primary data using relevant concepts;
- to test claims against counter-evidence, and
- to advance propositions based on the analysis of data.

In order to provide the reader with a clear link between the theoretical categories discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, and the relevant findings, this chapter examines the findings, using the theoretical categories in the same order as outlined in Chapters 1 and 3.

### 8.1 LANGUAGE USE

As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of economy of reception, coined by Miller (2003), refers to the reciprocal relation between a language user and his/her social field. Miller (2003) argues that this reciprocal relation involves specific ‘politics of speaking and hearing’ (p. 189), and that this reciprocal relation critically affects ‘the conditions of production of linguistic minor students’ (p. 189). In this research, it was found that the NS/NNS binary, as one such politics or practice, affected the ways in which AITE students saw themselves as teachers. As shown by the data collected, it was the view of some school supervising teachers that many AITE students saw themselves in a deficit position because of their linguistic backgrounds, and some of the schoolteachers did have such a view themselves.

In addition, the students’ ‘buying into’ the notion of the need to achieve nativeness is one of the main reasons why they struggle. It is perceived by some of
the participants that their sense of inferiority about being ‘NESB’ significantly hindered their performance in their academic studies. Alice, who always felt she was being disadvantaged by her inadequacy in using English, was one example. Riva explicitly positioned herself in relation to ‘the local students’—the native speakers—and stressed that more attention and tailor-made assistance should have been given to international students like her. Being a ‘non-native’ speaker of English, Linda said that she could never be a ‘native’, even if she lived in Australia for twenty or thirty years. For Linda, nativeness was something impossible to acquire. Thus, the concept of economy of reception creates a sphere in which the power relationships between AITE students and their pupils and school supervising teachers can be studied by examining the NS/NNS binary and other concepts, such as, audibility and the power of the hearer.

As indicated in Chapter 1, Miller (2003) uses audibility to refer to the way in which a NESB student is heard and comprehended. So audibility is critical for them in terms of the formation of their teacher identity. Findings in this regard include David’s frustration with his failure to acquire acceptance from his native English peers, and Riva’s disappointment with the lack of assistance in English academic writing. In contrast, Alice’s example demonstrates that acceptance and assistance from native English speakers can be obtained. The key point is that native English speakers seem to hold the key as to whether AITE students are granted audibility or not. All these findings show that Miller’s concept of audibility applies not only to migrant school pupils but also to AITE students.

The success of AITE students’ teaching in their practicum also depends very much on ‘the power of their students to grant or refuse a “hearing”’ (Miller, 2010, p. 132), and this has been demonstrated with this case study. For instance, pupils’
complaints about Vivian ‘being an Asian’, and the narratives from Riva, Vivian, Yvonne and David about their beliefs about ‘classroom management’ as their biggest obstacle on practicum, indicate that pupils as listeners have the capacity to ‘accept and legitimate or to deny both the message and the identity of the speaker’ (Miller, 2010, p. 132).

However, some of the participants (Jane and Vivian) considered that their ‘command of the language’ was not related to pupils’ acceptance and subsequently to their legitimacy as classroom teachers. It is then evident that some participants separate the language issue from their functioning as teachers.

Kachru’s (1985) three concentric circles are used in this study to analyse evidence of AITE students as a non-homogenous group, in terms of their use of English. The data collected show that the term ‘NESB’ is an inappropriate term for AITE students, as some students from ‘the outer circle’ rejected this title. Furthermore, different perceptions of the students from the two circles about the challenges they faced, were also found in the data.

8.2 LANGUAGE WITHIN CULTURE

This section focuses on how Pennycook’s (2010) key concepts of language as local practice can be used to analyse the evidence related to these students. As mentioned in Chapter 3, language has been traditionally viewed as a system (Chomsky, 1971). Adopting Pennycook’s (2010) approach to language does not necessarily indicate that the view of language as a system will not have a role to play in this research. Rather, both approaches could be used to analyse the evidence collected in this research from different perspectives. According to the data collected, there are six language related themes found in the six categories of the students’ interviews (Chapter 6):
• academic writing/literacy in Australian English (Categories 7, 8 & 15);
• classroom registers (Category 19);
• the specialist language of subjects e.g. Maths and Science (Category 19);
• classroom slang/pupils’ own language (Category 19);
• the accent of Australian English (Category 11), and
• English language proficiency (Category 24).

These themes constitute some of the students’ perceived obstacles to their academic studies, and particularly to their successful completion of the practicum. With these data collected, a challenging issue that confronted the researcher was the choice of lens through which to analyse this data. Is there a ‘best’ approach to language in terms of explaining the evidence above? If yes, on what basis?

The traditional view seems to be in a better position to analyse these language related themes, because most of them belong to pre-existing structures. These systems, such as academic writing/literacy in Australian English and classroom registers, did function as gatekeepers for the student participants when they tried to be involved in these ‘language practices’, which also served as ‘rituals’ for new members. Furthermore, ‘structure’ and ‘system’ constitute what is both pre-existing and non-negotiable, each connoting what is ‘universal’ and ‘fixed’.

With regard to practices as obstacles, Wenger (1998) perceives practices as the properties on which communities of practice are established, as well as obstacles for new members who desire to join a community. This can help explain how five themes (the theme: English language proficiency is not considered to be pre-existing) effectively act as gatekeepers that hinder the construction of AITE students’ teacher identity. What has Pennycook’s (2010) approach, in particular, contributed to this research? The answer lies largely in an understanding of the concept of locality.
Pennycook (2010) provides ‘an exercise […] of thinking’ (p. 136) about how language operates, in comparison with the view of language-as-system.

Pennycook (2010) argues that the notion of the local is no longer a synonym for ‘static’, ‘traditional’, ‘immobile’ but rather is ‘dynamic’, ‘fluid’ and ‘mobile’. So Pennycook’s (2010) view of ‘language as local practice’ is at odds with the five themes listed here, which effectively act as gatekeeping obstacles. Written academic English is not ‘local’, in the sense of being dynamic, fluid and mobile, as its practitioners largely treat it as universal. It does not operate as a local practice, as defined by Pennycook (2010), but as a pre-existing system that most of the student participants found challenging.

In terms of relocalization, each language-related theme mentioned above could be seen as a ‘sedimented pathway’ (p. 137) or practice. A particular ‘sedimented pathway’ could be seen as a bush track which has been created by ex-bush walkers. To the new bush walker, sedimented-ness presents two kinds of meaning. First it can be a possibility of the relocalization of an existing practice. Second, it can be a prohibition on looking for a new pathway, or an obstacle for the new walker, because they have to gain tacit knowledge of how to walk on this pathway. Pennycook argues that ‘languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 1). Furthermore, he also argues: ‘An understanding of relocalization allows us to appreciate that to copy, repeat and reproduce may reflect alternative ways of approaching creativity’ (p. 139). Pennycook’s (2010) concept of relocalization demonstrates a way in which teacher educators may understand the efforts made by the students: not just as failed attempts to conform, but as a kind of creating.
8.3 IDENTITY

AITE students ought not to be thought of as lacking agency. They themselves can make or create a role by making choices and engaging in the negotiation of different roles. Chapter 3 argues that some student participants had difficulties in exercising their agency because their command of the English language limited the choices they could possibly make, and their negotiation of different roles. Aleve was puzzled about how to describe her identity as a teaching professional, though she claimed that ‘identity was not an issue for her’:

Identity is not an issue for me. I am telling myself I am a Design teacher. ‘Teacher’ sometimes is not defined as teacher, but ‘educator’. I cannot describe myself.

While Alice did not have the uncertainty that Aleve had in seeing herself as a teaching professional, Aleve did realize how difficult for AITE students it was to be seen as a legitimate member of the mainstream as well as of the community of Australian schoolteachers.

What do you mean by identity? Yes, I want to be one of them [teachers in Australian schools], but the thing is I need to improve my English. To be honest, I don’t think one has to ‘melt in’ as Chinese people; you have your own culture it is very hard for you to melt into another culture. As a Chinese we have our own culture, I don’t think it is necessary to be part of Australian culture. ‘Multicultural’ means more than one. Many Chinese are trying to melt in Australian culture and that is why they are struggling. As a Chinese, he should live in his own cultural zone.

Here, Alice clearly shows her aspiration—being accepted as an Australian schoolteacher—and the obstacle. According to Alice, the role of discourse in self-representation is central, with regard to teacher identity formation. For Alice, to have a good command of the English language is a prerequisite to being recognized as a teacher in Australian schools. However, she obviously rejects ‘assimilation’, while she does not seem to totally reject ‘acculturation’. She positions Australian culture as not multicultural because, even though there are many cultures in Australia,
expecting them to adopt one homogeneous culture is not multicultural. Showing her opposition to other Chinese students’ efforts to ‘melt in’, and explaining the reason why they are struggling in Australia, she argues that it is their very attempt to assimilate that is the problem.

Each of these students desires to exercise their agency, but they feel limited by their perceived lack of English language competence. However, their choices in how to perceive themselves as users of English and negotiate their teacher authority with the pupils in their classes are actually determined by factors that include practicum students’ relations with their pupils, their supervising teachers, and other members of the school community. For Aleve and Alice, being accepted by the mainstream as a qualified teacher is something they desire. For Alice, the effort to melt in is useless. Other students identify their command of the English language (e.g. Cindy) or their status as permanent residents or international students (e.g. David) as an issue.

Chinese students are normally perceived as NESB, which some of them may ‘feel at ease with and do not necessarily find offensive’ (Mantero, 2007, p. 4). From what Alice describes about the issue of identity, one can see how AITE students negotiate their identities when they face resistance or acceptance. Alice is obviously not satisfied with her assumed identity as NESB, because she wants to be recognized as a legitimate member of the community of Australian schoolteachers. These identities clash, simply because being NESB is perceived as not ‘legitimate’ for being a schoolteacher. In other words, what Alice assumed did not live up to the locally perceived standards to be a schoolteacher in Australia. This opens up the issue of seeking negotiable identities, though they may not know exactly how these negotiable identities might be achieved, or even, sometimes, defined.
Nevertheless, their efforts to overcome assumed identities and seek negotiable identities can face resistance from the community of Australian schoolteachers. That is why Alice claims that Chinese students should not bother themselves with the idea of ‘melting into’ Australian cultures, because she thought trying to ‘melt in’ was unachievable. She believed that this was also the reason why many of them were struggling.

8.4 TEACHER IDENTITIES AS MEMBERSHIP OF A COMMUNITY

As indicated in Chapter 1, the goal of this research was to disentangle the sources of AITE students’ challenges by unfolding the perceptions held by, and of, these students about their challenges. So, there are two steps, in terms of achieving this goal: unfolding different perceptions held by, and of, the students about their challenges, and then disentangling the sources of the students’ challenges. In Chapters 6 and 7, the perspectives of the students, their lecturers, and school supervising teachers on their challenges were investigated. This Section focuses on the second step, disentangling the sources of AITE students’ challenges, and addresses this research’s second task: to disentangle the perceived sources of the students’ struggles, by illustrating the complexity of the process of AITE students becoming members of the community of Australian schoolteachers, and by offering some solutions. Section 8.4 then is organised into six subsections: the teacher identity formation of AITE students; Wenger’s (1998) ‘community of practice’; the complexity of teachers’ identity formation for AITE students; sources of identity construction: a different perspective on AITE students’ challenges; imagining as a valid way of thinking about identity: ELF as practice and obstacles to easily joining a community of practice: school supervising teachers’ expectations of AITE students.
8.4.1 The teacher identity formation of AITE students

The teacher identity formation of these AITE students in the research can be demonstrated through the trajectories of their seeking membership of the community of Australian schoolteachers. *Trajectory*, which is used to refer to a process of ‘constant becoming’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 154) in terms of identity, is one of the important concepts used in Wenger’s (1998) construct of communities of practice. The concept of trajectory is used in this study to argue that AITE students’ teacher identities are basically temporary and dynamic, and their formations are continuous in social contexts. Furthermore, ‘trajectory’ is also used as a metaphor to demonstrate a course of development of AITE students’ perceptions about their confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher, before and after their practicums.

The participants’ images of teaching/teachers before practicum (pre-conceptions) and their conceptions after practicum\(^ {32}\) (post-conceptions) are analysed in terms of their confidence about being a member of the community of Australian schoolteachers (see Table 8.1). This attempt was to explore what they thought of teaching and of themselves becoming teachers in the Australian context, and to investigate how confident they felt about being a schoolteacher, with a view to finding out what kinds of factors might have affected the construction of their teacher identity. I have set out ten tables of the ten participants. Each of them provides the development of their confidence about being a teacher before the course started until their practicum finished. However, for reasons of space, only the table setting out the

\(^ {32}\) The reasons why practicum was chosen as a baseline are as follows: first, practicum is commonly viewed as a critical period for all pre-service teachers, particularly for AITE students, due to their newness with English (Miller, 2010). Second, the data collected from this study have shown that the practicum was a point at which major issues began to emerge for some of these students. Thus, by using the practicum as a baseline, the trajectories of students’ perceptions on their challenges before and after such a crucial experience can be effectively explored.
trajectory of belonging to a community for Alice, is shown (Table 8.1) in this section. Other participants were investigated in the same way, and the tables of their trajectories of belonging to a community are all available in Appendix H.

Alice was chosen from the others here, because her experiences in P1 and P2 present many of the possibilities that AITE students may experience in their practicum, in terms of their membership of a community of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously a teacher in China</td>
<td>A good teacher who can change students’ lives</td>
<td>Full of confidence</td>
<td>According to the evidence collected, Alice imagines herself in a community of teaching practice in which a teaching model of friend-to-friend is appreciated, instead of the traditional teacher-to-student model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘A teacher is an actor’</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>She sees herself as belonging still to a particular community of teachers, here defined by the social function of actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘Whatever I teach in Australia or China, Paul’s teaching strategies will influence my whole life’</td>
<td>Self-value confirmed in Paul’s tutorials.</td>
<td>Her expectation of being part of an Australian school community of teaching practice is being strengthened in Paul’s tutorials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>‘My image of teaching before practicum: [teachers can use] student-centred approaches; teachers are respected and students are highly-motivated’</td>
<td>Confidence and enthusiasm remained</td>
<td>She envisages that she would be part of a community of practice in which student-centred approaches are largely encouraged, teachers have authority, and pupils are well-behaved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table demonstrates the stages that many students went through, especially the relevant membership they were seeking in terms of a community, and how confident they were in this regard. Alice was full of confidence, at the start of the course, with the belief that a *good* teacher was someone who could change pupils’ lives. She was confident about her teaching role and she saw herself as belonging to *a community of good teachers*. She expected that members of this community needed to possess the following characteristics:

**During practicum**

‘My thinking way is changed as I feel that I only want to survive here…the worst teacher [in China] is the best teacher [in Australia].’

Confused and mixed feelings

She had two totally different experiences: In P1, she was put on an *inbound trajectory* by being supplied with enough legitimacy to be treated as a potential member of the local community of teaching practice. In P2, she found her desired image of teaching did not have any place in this community of teaching practice where ‘the worst teacher’ she believes in China is considered ‘the best teacher’ in Australia.³³

**After practicum**

‘Not confident in being a schoolteacher in Australia; it is very hard to be a teacher who could change pupils’ lives in Australia for a NESB student’

Confidence gone

A deficit model

She feels the *community of good teacher* does not exist and the *actual community of teachers* is not worth joining, because for her there is no ‘fit’. The desire of being a member of her imagined community is not realistic, as what she once considered the *worst teacher* is now seen as ‘the best teacher’ in this local community of teachers. She realizes that being a teacher who can change pupils’ lives is hard for her in Australia, due to the language barrier and cultural differences.

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³³ For Alice, a *good teacher* was someone who should enlighten the lives of his/her students. She was disappointed at her impression that schools in Australia were treated by parents as ‘babysitters’. That was why she thought the worst teacher in China is the best teacher in Australia..
• committing to changing pupils’ lives;
• being inspirational, and
• being a friend of his/her pupils.

These expectations were met and strengthened in Paul’s tutorials. Carrying this image of teaching to her practicum, she envisaged that she would be a part of a community of practice in which student-centred approaches were largely encouraged, teachers had authority, and pupils were well-behaved.

However, after her second practicum, she believed that the community of good teachers did not exist at Australian schools and in the actual community of teachers, because there was no ‘fit’. She believed that joining the community of Australian teachers meant that she has totally to give up her previous beliefs about being a good teacher.

With regard to the trajectories of belonging to a community for other participants shown in Appendix H, some of the imagined communities that the participants sought to join were perceived as follows:

• a community we might call inspirational teachers (Aleve);
• a community we might call native speakers (Cindy);
• a community we might call ’NESB’ teachers (Rachael, Cindy);
• a community we might call lecture-oriented teachers (Vivian);
• the community of TESOL teachers at university (Linda);
• community of coaches (David);
• a community of bilingual teachers (Jane);
• a community of multilingual teachers (Riva), and
• a community of teachers of Chinese (Linda, Yvonne).

In regard to the communities identified above, several points can be made. First, a certain order did appear to exist in their options for different communities. Most participants took the community of native speakers as their main priority, though
their perceived possibility of being accepted by this community varied. Second, most of the student participants appear to have set themselves a ‘lower bar’. For many of them, to blend in or to obtain membership of the community of native speakers of English was their ultimate goal. Having experienced the difficulties of obtaining access to the community, they had to opt for other, more-easily-achieved options, of which the community of teachers of Chinese was one of those mentioned, because then there is no language barrier for the Chinese students. This reflects the degree of difficulty of joining the community of Australian schoolteachers. Finally, while their preferences seemed to be quite individualized, some communities were also common across some of the participants: for example, the community of inspirational teachers (Aleve and Alice); the community of ‘NESB’ teachers (Cindy and Rachael), and the community of teachers of Chinese (Linda and Yvonne).

8.4.2 Wenger’s (1998) ‘community of practice’

As discussed previously, efforts were made in this research to uncover the participants’ images of teaching before and after their practicum. This subsection aims to show how Wenger’s (1998) concepts of community of practice were used to analyse these images.

From the evidence collected, examples of participation and reification (as explained in Chapter 3) were both found from the participants’ images of teaching. While participation is featured with mutuality, reification is characterised by projection, through which our meanings are transmitted into the world (Wenger, 1998).

Projection of reification is explored in this research, with a view to better understanding participants’ images of a teacher. For instance, an example of
reification was found when Alice talked about her image of a teacher. For her, a ‘good teacher’ included the following characteristics:

   A good teacher is one who can change a student’s life. A good teacher can use both methods (teacher-centred and student-centred) and know how to learn from others’ experience and experiment by listening and talking with other people.

Alice’s experiences in China and her learning experience in Australia were made concrete, into the model of ‘a good teacher’.

With regard to peripheral and legitimate participations, Rachael’s case was one of the examples of peripheral participation: full participation was not considered by her, because she never intended to join the community of Australian schoolteachers, and her peripheral participation was enough to contribute to her identity as an NESB student. The reader might remember that in Chapter 3 it was explained that peripherality is a stage of legitimacy: Newcomers should be provided with legitimacy, in order to have their peripherality, in terms of initial participation, achieved. For instance, Alice thought of herself as a competent classroom practitioner in Paul’s tutorial; Alice and Cindy were treated by their supervisors as part of the team by being provided with ‘enough legitimacy’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 101).

The notions of legitimacy and peripherality also provide theoretical lenses to describe the experience that some of the students had in their university tutorials. From the tutorials the students attended, evidence could be obtained as to how ‘a proximity of a full participation’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 100) was achieved through peripheral participation, and how this in turn was achieved through strategies used by their tutors. These strategies can be seen from the learning experiences of some of these students. Yvonne and Alice both talked about their experiences in tutorials, and they were very satisfied with the opportunities afforded by their tutors. Alice’s tutor, Paul, who asked the students to teach their peers in role play, managed to create an
accepting atmosphere by focusing the students’ initiatives and ideas on pedagogy, while ignoring their foreign accents or minor grammatical errors. This meant that students’ initial anxiety about language fluency was dealt with when their roles as potentially capable classroom practitioners were confirmed. Students’ peripherality was achieved by being provided with activities that meant ‘reduced intensity, reduced risk, special assistance or close supervision’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 100).

 Germane to participation and non-participation, one of the findings from this research was that a number of student participants said that identity was not an issue for them. This contradicted my initial assumption, that identity would be a disturbing issue for many AITE students. As explained in Chapter 1, this identity issue for them is that being labelled NESB consequently contributes to their seeing themselves as deficit users of English. Wenger’s concepts of participation and non-participation help to explain this problem. Rachael is another such case. Rachael said that she did not have an identity issue, and she did not have any problem with being called ‘NESB’. She was returning to her native country after the course, and did not have any intention of entering ‘the community of Australian schoolteachers’. Under such circumstances, as explained in Chapter 3, participation and non-participation do not ‘interact to define each other’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 165) and subsequently Rachael’s non-participation did not affect her sense of self.

 By comparison, Aleve wanted to be a member of the community of Australian schoolteachers; not being a member of this community was a problem for her. Aleve believed she was rejected by the pupils, and that she did not have legitimacy. This power of the hearer, which is effectively in the hands of their pupils, among others, affects AITE students particularly as it impacts on their identity as a member of the community of Australian schoolteachers.
Nevertheless, experiences of non-participation are of importance when participation and non-participation do interact to define each other. For instance, when a novice (e.g. AITE student), does not understand a conversation between insiders (e.g. teaching staff), this experience becomes significant, as such experience of non-participation, in this case, is equated with an unsuccessful attempt at participating, which is critical for the outsider who intends to join. This is demonstrated by Cindy’s and Jane experience, when they were in the staff room and remained peripheral to conversations among English-speaking teachers. The salient feature of these two students’ perceptions is the way in which they themselves are perceived in turn by members of the Australian school teaching community.

8.4.3 The complexity of teachers’ identity formation for AITE students

As the title of this thesis suggests, I argue that the sources of struggle for AITE students have been tangled. For instance, is it the label of being NESB or more generally, entry into Australian higher education or entry into Australian schooling cultures that is the key issue? Seeing themselves as NESB is only one of the choices that these students may have for self-representation, and each option not only entails notions of how they perceive themselves but also of how they are perceived. The following Figuress 8.1 and 8.2 offer an outline of some of the factors that need to be to untangled, in terms of sources of struggle.
Different sources of struggle

- self-identification: (being an NESB)
- entering into Australian higher education
- becoming an Australian schoolteacher: the practicum

Different perceptions of sources of struggle

- held by the students themselves
- held of the students (by academics, school supervising teachers)

**Figure 8.1 Different perceptions of sources of struggle**

Figure 8.1 outlines the contrasting fields of actual and perceived sources of struggle. Within this complexity, the sources of struggle are generally located in three processes: AITE students’ self-identification as a teaching professional; orienting into Australian higher education, and becoming an Australian schoolteacher, as outlayed in Figure 8.2.

Self-identification as a teaching professional

- how AITE students perceive themselves as users of English
- how AITE students are perceived as users of English

Orienting into Australian higher education

- cultural adaptation
- cultural expectations

Becoming an Australian schoolteacher

- relationships with pupils: the power of the hearer
- relationships with school supervising teachers: gatekeepers

**Figure 8.2 Three process of struggle associated with belonging to the community of ‘Australian schoolteachers’ (AST)**
The significance of this distinction lies in there being confusion over the challenges that CALD students face (as argued in Chapter 2), and one of the reasons for that is that people may refer either to different perceptions of AITE students’ challenges, or to different sources of struggle in one of these three processes, when CALD students’ challenges are discussed. In previous chapters, the perceptions of AITE students, academics and school supervising teachers have been explored. The discussion now focuses on different sources of struggle.

An explanation of the complexity of teacher identity formation for AITE students

As shown in Figure 8.1, AITE students face a variety of sources of struggle, in terms of challenges. However, the entanglement of these sources, as described previously, is only part of the complexity, because tensions have also been found between the student participants’ and academics’ data about sources of struggle. As analyzed in Chapters 6 and 7, some of the student participants’ perceptions of their sources of struggle are in tension, as are those of the academics. Additionally, some academics’ perceptions are also in tension with those of their students, as with Adam and Rachael. This tension is partly constitutive of the complexity, but is not illustrated in Figure 8.1. Furthermore, while the language barrier was commonly perceived as a key trigger for their struggles (as seen in Chapter 6), the impact of language problems on each of them was different. For instance, Rachael, Aleve and Alice all considered that their biggest challenge on practicum was their English. But while Rachael finished her practicum with a certain kind of enjoyment, the others gave up hope of being a schoolteacher in Australia.

Thus, the issues of AITE students are situated in a complexity that entails various interrelated barriers. Three questions need to be addressed:

- Is it justified to claim ‘there is a complexity’ according the data collected?
• What constitutes this complexity?
• What is the significance of pointing out the complexity of belonging to a community as the key challenge for AITE students?

The following sections attempt to respond to these questions.

**Evidence that supports the claim**

Relevant evidence obtained from the data in this research supports the existence of a complexity of belonging to a community, which consists of various barriers, such as personal barriers, social barriers and what I call a practice synergy. By personal barriers, I meant the fear or shyness that AITE students may have in communicating with native English speakers, which is common in AITE students’ academic studies. For instance, academics Nancy and Mary both indicated that it was very difficult to ask AITE students to take part in group presentations and, conversely, it was not unusual that the students who had difficulty in joining groups were those from non-English speaking backgrounds. This difficult was largely what I perceived as social barriers, by which I mean the tendency of members of a particular ethnic group to reject or marginalise members of other groups. As a result, there was a tendency for students with the same or similar ethnic backgrounds to form together as a group. Paul also pointed out that the students were afraid of initiating questions:

> They also had fear to ask questions. In addition to all these, there was an underlying fear about what was going to happen, as far as their language was concerned (Paul).

Similar incidents were also found in the students’ practicum, where some of them, such as Yvonne and David, were reported by their supervisors for not interacting with other teaching staff.

Muir et al. (2010) found that it was the view of the school supervisors that the main problem for AITE students was their shyness and reticence. This comment
highlights the notion of personal barriers that these students have. While supervisors commonly acknowledge the students’ being keen to do well, acting on advice and completing planning components as required, personal barriers ‘were exhibited by an inability to initiate conversations with other staff members and parents’ (p. 78).

Beside personal and social barriers, the complexity of belonging to a community consists of a practice synergy, by which I refer, in particular, to the systematic regularities and rules that police certain communities of practice. For AITE students who may be struggling, linguistically and emotionally, to overcome their challenges, depends very much on how well they deal with the complexity of entering a community. Dealing with different practices is challenging and critical for these AITE students, because social activities, which in the case of the students in this research are their experiences in their academic studies, are controlled by different practices (Pennycook, 2010). Accordingly, when examining the difficulties of AITE students, two sets of practices, at least, have to be investigated: Australian academic English practices and Australian school teaching practices. Besides, the language use of AITE students itself does not exist in a cultural vacuum, and their particular use of English is a social activity that is policed by different kinds of social practices, or a combination of some of them:

- Australian higher education practice;
- English academic literacy practice;
- Australian English language practice;
- Australian teacher education practice;
- practicum practice;
- Australian school practice;
- classroom practice, and
- the practice of classroom registers.
These I term a *practice synergy*: By ‘synergy’, I intend to indicate the interaction of different practices that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than a sum of the individual practices on AITE students. Thus, the pressure that AITE students face is not just from Australian English as a language system but also from the *practice synergy* that is enacted collectively in their courses and in their practicum, by institutions involved in teacher education in their role as gatekeepers.

**Significance of the claim about the complexity of belonging**

The significance of this claim about the complexity of belonging lies in the following three aspects: First, the scope of discussion about the sources of struggle has so far been narrowed down from the very broad notion of *cultural difference*, or a simplistic claim of *language issue only*, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, to a more complicated and multi-dimensional one: *the complexity of belonging to a community*.

Second, from this perspective, instead of just dealing with their language problems within a purely linguistic system, attention has been shifted from simply addressing the linguistic problems of the students, to barriers that have resulted from various social practices. By ‘social practices’, I refer to ‘routines and customs’ that are cultivated from people’s collective learning in an historical and social context (Wenger, 1998). This change may significantly liberate some of AITE students from their longtime struggle with being NESB, because one’s perception can be either a source of struggle or a way of disentangling the struggle. In other words, AITE students should not blame themselves only for the struggle with being NESB; changing their ways of perceiving themselves could be a way of alleviating their struggle. This message is for all parties involved in this social context.

Third, this complexity reveals that there is a gap between school supervising teachers’ and students’ perceptions about the notions of equality and equity. How to
deal with equity is, I have attempted to show, a challenge for school supervising teachers.

Finally, by pointing out the complexity of becoming a teacher for these students, the ‘language issue’ is seen no longer as an isolated entity, because language itself is not the only key factor in struggle. International students are often stereotyped as more or less handicapped (Cummings, 2009), and they are often made to feel inadequate about their accents, due to the NS/NNS binary and/or to discrimination. Since the barriers of belonging to a community have in effect been built by both sides, I have argued that the central defining issue in the perceptions both of students themselves and those of the range of gatekeepers, can be seen as identity, in terms of the problems of joining a community. Addressing these barriers requires a new perspective on this complexity, and collective efforts from all stakeholders.

8.4.4 Sources of identity construction: A different perspective on AITE students’ challenges

In line with the theories of Wenger (1998) and Pavlenko and Norton (2007) on the sources of identity construction, disentangling the sources of students’ struggles may require a different way of thinking about their challenges. Therefore, this complexity is viewed by this researcher as a direct product of their social activity—learning to become Australian teachers, during which period English is used as a Lingua Franca (ELF). The use of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) is, in their case, a social practice in which there is a reciprocal relationship between self and other people (Stets & Burke, 2003). The pressure with which the students were confronted was multi-dimensional, as it was generated not just within a linguistic system but also within a ‘local practice whereby languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural
activities in which people engage’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 1). If their language problems are perceived as a product of socially constructed activities resulting from attempting to belong to a community, then their problems can be thought about differently.

By belonging to a community, I am referring to a process with which AITE students attempt to engage, in order to become a legitimate member of a particular community of teachers in Australian schools. It is evident that the student participants initially had varied expectations of the practice of teaching, based on particular and personal situations at a specific time. However, these imaginings encountered challenges from gatekeepers of these communities and from the practices and rules that are set by these communities and by the power of the hearer. English language competence in general and a native-like accent in particular, are important gatekeeper concerns in respect of accepting ‘outsiders’ such as AITE students as members of an Australian school teaching community.

Koo (2009) argues that ELF is not just a ‘concept’ but also a ‘practice’. What really matters for these students ‘when it comes to assessing a teacher’s self-confidence is not necessarily their actual, publicly attested knowledge of the language, but rather the way they perceive themselves and rate their own fluency’ (Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 290). This is why this research questions any approach that sees the students’ challenge as mere ‘cultural difference’ or as a purely ‘language issue’ only, and emphasizes the involvement of teacher educators and school supervising teachers, both in relation to causes of the students’ problems and in searching for relevant solutions.

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34 This quotation just emphasises the importance of AITE students’ perceptions in terms of their self-confidence, without implying that schoolteachers do not have a role to play in respect of their pupils.
8.4.5 Imagining as a valid way of thinking about identity: ELF as practice

Therefore, I argue, the biggest challenge that these AITE students face, should be seen as located in their seeking membership of the community of Australian schoolteachers as ELF users. This argument is based on the notion that most of their difficulties in practicum were generated by the expectations of school supervising teachers, and by the intolerance of differences by the pupils in their classes. And these difficulties are largely related to the issues of communication skills and accents, further complicated by the prevalence of the NS/NNS binary. One way of addressing these issues would be for the students to change the way in which they perceive themselves, seeing themselves as users of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), rather than as ‘NESB’. In the former, ‘nativeness’ is no longer the controlling notion.

**ELF: the characteristics of being a practice**

To explore ELF as a social practice means that the challenge that the participants face in terms of practice ‘is to make social activity central’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 2). Thus, by examining the language issues of AITE students under the lens of *language as a local practice*, AITE students’ problems are no longer viewed merely as faulty imitations of the target language, but rather as bundles of activities that are regulated by a range of practices (Pennycook, 2010). With the view of language as a local practice, students’ language problems are explored as a material part of social and cultural life.

**ELF as a product of social activity: meaning and significance**

Using this perspective of social activity, the challenges that AITE students faced could be considered as part of a multifaceted interplay between humans and their world. Their use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in this process, is a product of a
social activity, rather than what has been traditionally viewed as a purely individual effort ‘to ape the native speaker as best as one could’ (Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 286).

As the students’ views about which community they ‘imagine themselves into’ can be the source of their sense of success or failure as students/language users, re-imagining themselves into another community, such as community of users of ELF rather than as ‘NESB’ teacher, could also be a source of re-imagining themselves as teachers. Having said that, I am not suggesting that the impact of the ‘hearer’ will simply disappear. However, as shown in this study and in other studies (Rajagopalan, 1997, 2005), when it comes to self-confidence around being a teacher, a large part of what counts is one’s own perceptions about oneself as teacher and as language user. Students’ self-perceptions as teachers or as users of English are equally important in respect of how they believe they are perceived by others.

**The significance of this new perspective**

It is important for all stakeholders to believe that the students’ use of English as a process of socially mediated activities in which great cultural tolerance and respect have to be exercised, is a prerequisite for any practice to change. It is incumbent on all stakeholders in teacher education to work collectively to cultivate a ‘safe space’ (Pavlenko, 2001) where students can find a sense of belonging and develop their full personal potential as future teaching professionals. Academic Paul and his student Alice have demonstrated that this can be done in tutorials (see Chapters 6 and 7). Appadurai (1996, p. 33) argues that people are living not just in imagined communities but also in multiple worlds; therefore, people are able to challenge and even *demolish* the imagined worlds that have been *imposed* on them. Thus, ‘ELF’ can be seen as a replacement term, rather than ‘NESB’ being imposed on CALD students. Thus, AITE students could surrender the term ‘NESB’ (see Chapter 1) and
even terms such as ‘bilingual’ or ‘multilingual’, which they might consider inappropriate.

With a replacement term such as ‘ELF’, they could be liberated from the control of the NS/NNS binary, and ‘nativeness’ would no longer be their ‘ultimate goal’. The point is not simply the label ‘ELF’ or ‘NESB’ but rather, the adjustment of one’s perception and its effect on one’s self-confidence. Rajagopalan’s (2005) argument about the importance of students’ self-evaluation is also confirmed by the data from this research; students’ perceptions are critical for their self-confidence as teachers.

8.4.6 Obstacles to joining a community of practice: school supervising teachers’ expectations of AITE students

As discussed above, to disentangle the sources of struggle of AITE students entails examining not only the way in which they perceive themselves, but also the degree to which they are assisted by their school supervising teachers. The expectations of academics and school supervising teachers, and in particular of AITE students, count in producing AITE students’ perceptions of being qualified teachers in Australian schools. These expectations may facilitate their self-confidence as qualified teachers or alternatively act as barriers to undermine their efforts to ‘fit into the environment’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 54) of Australian schools. As explained previously, the expectations of school supervising teachers can be seen as characterized by their handling of the notion of equality. The dilemma of this issue lies in the fact that emphasizing equality of treatment for all student-teachers may possibly undermine equity for AITE students.

School supervising teachers’ expectations might act as obstacles in other ways. Their expectations can represent a sink-or-swim attitude and can in turn lead to
a kind of ‘‘self-fulfilling prophecy effect’’ (Jussim & Harber 2005, as cited in Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 59) as they ‘will teach in ways that make real [the school supervising teachers’] belief’ (p. 59). Self-fulfilling prophecy, in the case of AITE students, is a supervising schoolteacher’s expectation that the student-teacher will fail in his/her practicum. Indeed, it could be that the supervising teacher’s certainty of such failure will cause the practicum to fail. In other words, a strongly held belief, whether positive or negative, may sufficiently affect these supervisors so that their reactions ultimately fulfill their prophecy. Furthermore, AITE students are often ‘positioned in and through the teacher’s discourse of difference-as-deficit as ['Asians’ who have] a language problem’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 55).

While all pre-service teachers may struggle to meet their supervising teachers’ expectations, AITE students’ practicum experience is of a different order because of the ways in which they are perceived by their school supervising teachers (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012). Some AITE students’ supervising teachers have been found to have ‘attributed [AITE students’] perceived deficiencies to [their] ‘Asian’ background’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58). This was also found in the data collected in this research.

During the researcher’s interview with David’s supervising teacher James, there was a conversation about what sorts of benefits a student and a supervisor may both obtain from each other:

**James**: [David] didn’t do anything like that [obtaining benefit from supervising David] and he didn’t have anything that he came to us with, it was us giving him ideas and content.

**Interviewer**: Are you disappointed at this?

**James**: I think I expected that when I met him. First impression, I think I can tell how teaching experience was going to go. My first impression is, I can usually pick up whether it will be tough, easy or whether we are going to get good practice or it is going to be
challenging. Other things I picked up with [David] straightway were certainly his dialect, his accent. I felt we were going to struggle here and we are going to have trouble.

Here, the first impression that James had of David was his accent, and he was judged at the very outset ‘through the lens of cultural and linguistic difference’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58). Like the participant Sue in Nuttall and Ortlipp’s (2012) research, David failed his first practicum. Thus, James’ prediction may, directly or indirectly, have been self-fulfilling. This is just one specific example, characterized by the sensitivity of supervising schoolteachers to their student’s accent and cannot, however, serve as a generalization.

In addition, supervising teachers’ expectations of students can be conveyed as their ‘own culturally normative views of what constitutes “appropriate”’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58) pedagogy, against which AITE students are judged as being qualified or not. This is also evident where Aleve’s P2 supervising teacher, Tom commented on her communication with the pupils in her class:

**Interviewer:** What was the biggest challenge for [Aleve] in practicum?

**Tom:** The main challenges that Aleve has had are certainly the language difficulties; she doesn’t understand or doesn’t have the breadth of the language skills to […] get information over to the students. The second thing she has is probably a more generic problem, which is the classroom presence. The uses of voice projection, asserting using language, have been perhaps two main areas for further improvement. […] you have to use language to assert your authority on the group and she is less willing to do that. I think perhaps it is because her kindergarten background, that she had teaching kids in kindergarten. […] So as a teacher, that is what she needs to develop; a little bit more assertive behavior.

The same comment is found with Aleve’s P1 supervisor Jeremy:

**Aleve:** Sometimes he (Jeremy) recommends me, ‘You have to be more assertive.’ Yes, because it is a boys’ school. Maybe for primary school and kindergarten, as a teacher, your management, your behavior is ok but for a boys’ school, you have to more assertive. Sometimes he said that ‘You are so soft’.
However, Aleve had her own perspective on the assertiveness with which Tom and Jeremy were concerned:

**Aleve:** I am always smiling, smiling. But it doesn’t matter. I always discuss with [Jeremy], being assertive doesn’t mean to increase your volume, being strict, you know.

Jeremy tried to construct the subjectivity of Aleve as a teaching professional in Australian schools according to established norms (Phelan et al., 2006), and Tom’s and Jeremy’s views can be justified, because they show their concerns for their pupils. Aleve is ‘caught between the demands of normative—what [she believes she] ought to be and value and normalization—what professional others tell [her] that [she] should be and value’ (Phelan et al., 2006, p. 162). But Aleve refuses to align with the prescribed practices in Australian classrooms and tries to reconstruct herself in terms of what she believes. She strongly disagrees with what Jeremy suggested: viz., that she should observe another teacher’s lesson and learn from her:

**Aleve:** She just start[ed] the last year and she is young, maybe 25. But when I observed her [lesson], she was so strict, not smiling, like a soldier. Maybe, that is her first year, she has to manage her position, but I don’t want to be such kind of person. I just believe if you have enough knowledge about your subject area, your key area, you can manage. It gives you self-confidence and the students observe this self-confidence and *catch* your knowledge and respect not because (of) your voice, your yelling at them, they just respect you.

What was seen as ‘assertiveness’ by Jeremy, was considered by Aleve as just ‘yelling at pupils’. So, a supervising teacher’s expectations may reflect their construction of AITE students’ identity as particular kinds of teachers. Jeremy’s construction and Aleve’s reluctant reconstruction of herself as someone she would not want to be, ‘constitutes violence toward a pre-service teacher’s subjectivity’ (Phelan et al., 2006, as cited in Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58). It needs to be pointed out that ‘violence’, as one of the processes of alignment, entails very little negotiability (Wenger, 1998). This conflict between different expectations raises a
question: To what degree can AITE students meet the expectations of their supervisors?

Finally, school supervising teachers tend to emphasize the notion of *equality of treatment*, based on the notion of ‘fairness’. This, consciously or unconsciously, potentially compromises the notion of *equitable outcomes*. For instance, when the schoolteachers were asked about their expectations for AITE students’ performance in practicum, everyone, except for the supervising teacher of Chinese, claimed that their expectations were the same, regardless of the practicum teachers’ backgrounds.

Here is a conversation between the researcher and James—David’s P1 supervisor:

*James*: Yes, no matter what his ability, no matter what his experiences; no matter what his languages; I have a job and I have a role to play and professional service to provide for my student-teachers ...

*Interviewer*: So, there is bar there is a criteria here and everyone has to pass this no matter what kind of background they have.

*James*: Absolutely, absolutely, that is why I failed him (David) in three elements.

Jeremy, another schoolteacher also indicated:

Yes, I think, I have to say that I try to use the same criteria because, as I said to you before, I do believe that we would not be doing anybody a service. As the students or the teacher, this is the baseline that you have to walk into the classroom with.

Alice’s supervisor, Sonia, was very pleased with Alice’s performance in her practicum; however, when asked about her expectations for these students, Sonia did not hesitate either:

My expectation for these practicum teachers is the same regardless of what backgrounds they are from. I expect them to be professional, to be professionally dressed, to participate in the whole life of the school. Our principal has made it very clear that that is the expectation for the student-teachers. While I am pretty sure there is a school policy for this, different teachers might have different strategies in implementing the school policy.

This is all understandable, but it does reflect a tendency in which school supervising teachers stress the notion of being ‘equal’ with every single student, without
considering the need for differentiated support for students from various backgrounds. In practice, the same, equal ‘input’ for AITE students and for local students will most likely result in different outcomes for students with no local cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, these expectations become obstacles for AITE students when they have not been provided with adequate support to fulfill them. There are then, two key messages in terms of supervising teachers’ expectations, which reinforces the findings of Nuttall and Ortlipp (2012): First, the way in which AITE students are currently supervised needs to be changed, to embrace the complexity of their teacher identity formation. Second, supervising teachers need to be supported to engage with AITE students in ways ‘that are relationally and pedagogically sound’ (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012, p. 58).

8.5 SUMMARY

With concepts from the four theoretical categories, this chapter has analysed relevant evidence collected, tested key claims against counter-evidence, and offered propositions based on an analysis of evidence. Throughout this research, the researcher’s driving theoretical position has been that the process of learning to become a teacher is actually a process of teacher identity formation (Danielewicz, 2001). This investigation of the students’ images of teaching and of their confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher, reflects this position. It was found that most participants’ confidence in becoming an Australian schoolteacher fluctuated.

This chapter has also dealt with the second task and the goal of this research: disentangling AITE students’ sources of struggle. The strategy that views the situation of AITE students as entangled is established on the assumption that there is an additional set of complexities in becoming an Australian schoolteacher, for this particular group. By an analysis of evidence collected from this study, with relevant
concepts from Pennycook (2010), Pavlenko (2003) and Wenger (1998), some suggestions for disentangling their struggle have been given: a re-thinking of ‘who they are as users of English’ is one of them.

However, for AITE students, finding a new way of thinking about whom one is, in terms of their use of English, is only part of the solution to this complexity. It is vital for all teacher educators and schoolteachers to provide these students with differentiated support, either on the campus or in schools. This would be more likely to address the issues of equity of outcomes, more adequately. While attention appears to be given to equality in the supervision of AITE students in their practicum, equity is an area that deserves more attention, as the notion of ‘equality’ or ‘fairness’ has, paradoxically, been unfair in application to the supervision of these students, despite their teachers’ sense of treating them equally. Equality does not necessarily lead to equitable outcomes.

In order to establish their teacher identity gradually, and to achieve similar outcomes to their native-speaking peers, AITE students should be provided with more adequate support that reflects their differences. It would seem that the claim that the main challenge for AITE students is the complexity of belonging to a community, which consists of various barriers, is justified.

To overcome this complexity of belonging to a community depends on collective efforts from all the stakeholders, and in particular lecturers and school supervising teachers. Teacher educators should help these students create a set of imagined communities of practice to which they feel they belong. As Pennycook (2010) argues, ‘a focus on language practices demands that we move beyond a focus only on text’ (p. 142) and begin to see ‘language as a local practice whereby languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people
engage’ (p. 1). In a similar vein, we could infer that exploring the sources of the challenges with which AITE students are confronted should go beyond the boundary of a language system to include a wide range of social practices.
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter first summarizes what this research has found in respect of the perceptions held by, and of, ten AITE students, about the challenges that they face in becoming Australian secondary schoolteachers. After an explanation of the limitations of this research (Section 9.2), recommendations are then provided for teacher education programs (Section 9.3). Finally, suggestions on the issue of AITE students’ orientation into Australian schooling, and recommendations for future research are made (Section 9.4). Before the major findings are explained, it is necessary to look at the main research questions and other contributory issues. The main research questions were:

1) What are the key challenges that AITE students themselves perceive as confronting them in their course, and particularly in the practicum?
2) Are these perceptions echoed by other key players, such as their university lecturers or supervising teachers in schools? What are their perceptions about the students’ struggles, and do these perceptions match?

The contributory issues are:

1) the role, if any, of accent in spoken English in the creation of their teacher identity;
2) the ways students engage with their pre-service teaching and practicum, and
3) the adequacy of support in the practicum, both from schools and universities.

9.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As emphasized in Chapter 1, the significance of studying various perceptions lies in the fact that perspectives from students, academics and school supervising teachers
can throw different light on what AITE students’ challenges are and, crucially, test whether perceptions from different groups are in tension, since such a tension/mis-match could in itself be a source of problems. Based on an analysis of this case study of 10 students, and of other participants’ perceptions, this thesis argues that the biggest challenge that AITE students face is neither solely a language issue nor one of ‘cultural difference’ but is centred in the complexity of seeking to belong to a community.

Such complexity partly relates to the idea that languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage. Pennycook’s distinguishing of ‘local practice’ from ‘system’ is central because, as shown by the evidence collected, part of the complexity is about the gatekeepers not perceiving language as local practice. Instead, gatekeepers see language in their setting as non-negotiable, and many AITE students themselves ‘buy into’ this perception. In addition, particular mis-matches with teachers and academics can be seen in terms of other barriers to students joining a community. The following six findings summarise responses to the main research questions and the contributory issues.

**Main research questions: the key challenges**

*Finding 1: The key challenges that AITE students perceive themselves to face*

Although this thesis argues that the biggest challenge that AITE students face is neither simply a language issue nor one of ‘cultural difference’, but rather is centred in the complexity of seeking to belong to a community, the AITE students themselves commonly expressed their key challenge as their ‘English language competence’. The difficulties that these students faced were demonstrated in two phases: during the course, and during their practicum. Their ‘English language competence’ was perceived as a key difficulty for most of them throughout both
phases, while they believed ‘cultural difference’ was relatively less important. Before their practicum, the issue of ‘cultural difference’ found in the course proper was first replaced and then basically dominated by the difficulty of constructing their teacher identity, as their centrally perceived concern. This issue of teacher identity was commonly perceived by most of the participants as an issue of ‘classroom management’ that, for them, was closely associated with their English language competence.

While English language competence was commonly perceived by the academics as one of the central issues for the students, there were different views among the academics themselves about the main issue these students face. Such disparity of views among the academics themselves adds an extra layer of complexity to the mismatches between the perceptions of the academics and those of the AITE participants. These different views among the academics can be summarized under two categories: cultural adaptation and cultural expectations, which are defined and explained in Chapter 7.

The school supervising teachers interviewed, believed that the main obstacle that AITE students faced in their practicum was their English language competence, of which accent was a key problem. Classroom management was another challenge for AITE students, listed by supervising teachers. Here, I argue that this can be seen as the particular additional issue of audibility, which is related to the power of the hearer (Miller, 2003).

Based on all the evidence collected, I believe that academic success for these students stems from a set of interrelated complexities that come together to form particular barriers to belonging to a community. Mis-matches between the perceptions of the key players are part of this complexity.
First contributory issue: the role of accent in spoken English in the creation of their teacher identity

Finding 2: The issue of accent, the NS/NNS binary and teacher identity

Accent was a big concern for every AITE interviewed, and for the school supervising teachers. For academics, their opinions on the issue of accent were divided in terms of the degree of impact that accent had on the students’ academic studies.

The student participants often made a very close connection between their teacher identity and their English language competence, in which their accent was a major concern, because they perceived that it jeopardized their teacher identity. It determined whether they could be ‘heard’ or not. This was true of their academic course, and in particular, of their practicum. Data collected from this research found that the NS/NNS binary was a way of explaining the failure of some of the students on practicum, because this failure was associated with the attitude of the gatekeepers and with the notion of audibility (Miller, 2003). Furthermore, the traumatising effects of the NS/NNS binary (Braine, 1999; Miller, 2009a, Miller, 2009b, 2010; Thomas, 1999; Rajagopalan, 1997, 2005) were found in particular student participants.

Hence, I argue that the ‘NS/NNS binary’ can produce what I have termed a peripheral stage of trauma, because this binary creates barriers to the construction of their professional identity as teachers. I use the term trauma because the word challenge seems inadequate to describe the experiences of all the AITE students in this study, in terms of becoming Australian schoolteachers. This ‘becoming’ (Danielewicz, 2001) is complicated, and puts them in a disadvantaged position because it entails ‘complex, multidimensional linguistic and identity issues’ (Miller, 2010, p. 136). However, I do not intend to position the AITE students as always helpless, though some of them did believe this of themselves. Rather, as indicated in Chapter 8, they can exercise agency in constructing their teacher identity.
Furthermore, AITE students often ascribe their difficulties to their ethnicity: for example, to their ‘Chineseness’ rather than to ‘[their] being novice teacher[s]’ (Miller, 2010, p. 147). Thus, the traumatic aspect of the challenge lies in the *eternality* represented by ethnicity, rather than the *temporality* represented by being a novice. Therefore, because many AITE students perceive their English as a barrier to their construction of teacher identity, being a non-native speaker of English ‘does not allow [them] to feel entitled to teach’ (Miller, 2010, p. 146). And as Linda indicated of her practicum experience, this sentiment stays, unless they are able reach their perceived level of required proficiency.

Thus, to some extent, the impact of the NS/NNS binary could bring particular student-teachers to a ‘peripheral stage of trauma’. A broader and more widespread sample of respondents (had I had greater numbers) could well show that this matter applies particularly to mature-aged students. This would echo Rajagopalan’s (2005) finding about younger teachers being ‘less encumbered by the native-speaker myth than their older colleagues’ (p. 290). In summary, the model of ‘the idealised native speaker’ (Leung et al., 1997) can serve to shape the identity of non-native teachers of English, and that of AITE students as well. It is the ‘buying into’ the binary by the AITE students and the allowing the binary to dominate their perceptions, that itself impacts on their sense of identity.

**Second contributory issue: the ways students engage with their pre-service teaching and practicum**

**Finding 3: Student-centred and teacher-centred approaches**

One way to examine the students’ engagement with their practicum is to explore it through pedagogy, in which the debate on ‘student-centred’ and ‘teacher-centred’ approaches has been a central issue. The data collected seem to conflict with the
common view wherein AITE students are considered not familiar with student-centred approaches and as preferring teacher-centred approaches (Han, 2006; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009). None of the participants interviewed disliked student-centred approaches, ‘in which there is more equality and sharing between teacher and student’ (Slethaug, 2007, p. 79). Instead, most of the participants liked student-centred approaches; many of them would be happy to use both approaches, as appropriate. Quite a few of them were familiar with student-centred approaches or had even used them before they came to Australia, and therefore they perceived themselves as being comfortable with such approaches.

However, it was also found that participants whose first degrees were not in English language and/or literature were not only very likely to struggle with their English language, but also to have difficulties in employing student-centred approaches. Therefore, AITE students’ command of English might affect their confidence vis a vis student-centred approaches.

Additionally, differences also existed between school attitudes towards ‘student-centredness’ and those studied in the university course. Student-centred approaches are strongly recommended in the MTeach course, while tensions evidently exist between the ethos of this university teaching and the specific practice in different schools, in terms of what approach should be prioritized. This ‘fits’ into the traditional binary that many in the field see, between theories in the academic course and practice in schools.
Second contributory issue: the ways students engage with their pre-service teaching and practicum

Finding 4: Differences among AITE students

Among my participants, AITE students from ‘the expanding circle’ were different from those from ‘the outer circle’ in their ways of engaging with their pre-service teaching and practicum. The differences were found not only in their confidence about their use of English but also in their perceptions about the nature of their challenges in this regard.

First, the confidence level of the two groups with regard to being a teacher, was distinctively different, and this difference was shown in the evidence from the students’ images of teaching itself, both before the course and after the practicum. Furthermore, most of the student participants from ‘the expanding circle’ agreed that Commonwealth students (such as Indian students) were advantaged in terms of the use of English, compared to themselves, when this issue was specifically raised.

In addition, the significance of the difference in their use of English does not lie in the various IELTS scores that AITE students obtained, but in a different description of the nature of the challenges that they had in using English. For instance, problems in academic writing are generally viewed as language issues, especially for students from ‘the expanding circle’. But Riva, an Indian student, perceived that her difficulty with academic writing was not only a ‘language problem’ but a ‘cultural issue’. Such a distinction was not made by the other nine students, from ‘the expanding circle’. The other nine student participants said that academic writing was a problem for them, but they did not see the problem the way Riva did. Although Riva’s example is an individual case, different perceptions about their challenges are certainly worth further research.
Third contributory issue: the adequacy of support in the practicum both from schools and universities

Finding 5: Relationship with school supervising teachers
In contrast to the findings in the literature, where the relationship between CALD pre-service teachers and their host teachers has often been perceived as problematic (e.g. Han, 2006; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009), none of the student participants said that she/he did not work well with her/his school supervising teacher(s). Each of them said they had ‘a very good’ relationship with their supervisors. It seemed that most of them had established a rapport with most of their supervisors, and even David, who was failed by his first supervisor, claimed that he still kept in touch with this supervisor after his practicum. Although overall relationships between them were not as bad as suggested in similar research (Han, 2006; Spooner-Lane et al., 2007), tensions between practicum students and their supervisors could still be found in the data—such as Alice’s P2 supervisor, who forced her to use teacher-centred approaches in the class, and Yvonne’s P2 supervisor, who gave Yvonne ‘a lot of pressure’.

Third contributory issue: the adequacy of support in the practicum both from schools and universities.

Finding 6: Duration of a teacher education course for international students
There were three modes available for the course in which the participants were enrolled: 1 year accelerated, 1.5 years full-time, and 2 years part-time. All the participants took the second mode except Rachael who was completing over 2 years part-time. Four participants considered a 2-year full-time course would be appropriate for international students; three found their current course was suitable and two felt it was too long. Academics mainly considered a 2-year full-time course
to be a suitable option for these students. Generally, the 1 year accelerated course is considered more suitable for native speakers of English or local students, and not as suitable for international NESB students.

The findings above are summarized from the data collected, in which, however, tensions remain that indicate there are mismatches between the students and their lecturers and supervisors. In addition, to make the situation more complicated, tensions are also evident within the answers given by any particular lecturer or student, about the challenges the students face. This reflects what Varghese et al. (2005. p. 30) found: that ‘individual teachers came with numerous contradictions and tensions in their belief systems’; so did my student participants. Some of them were very sensitive about the issues of their language competence and identity. As Rajagopalan (2005, pp. 287–8) argues: ‘Some of the students appeared to cover up their constantly repeated “inferiority complex” by pretending that they are perfectly at ease with their subaltern conditions’.

9.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like any research, this study inevitably has its limitations. For instance, the representativeness of this case study is limited. This is partly a question of the small numbers and partly, as Cohen et al. (2007) argue, because researchers need to be very cautious about claiming representativeness, given that volunteers do not necessarily represent the wider population. Apart from this limitation, however, there are three further, key limitations of this particular research: finding qualified student participants; collecting practicum reports from the student participants and obtaining access to school supervising teachers.

First of all, finding qualified student participants (see criteria for participants in Chapter 4) was difficult. The students who responded first to my invitation were
mainly local students of CALD backgrounds, but they were not the students this research was targeting. It seems that AITE students were less likely to participate in research projects voluntarily. This restraint gave me very little room to move in terms of selecting participants, who should have come from many different Asian countries rather than being concentrated on a particular country, such as China in my case. This problem in selecting participants does limit the representativeness of this case study of ‘AITE students’. In addition, this restraint also limited my interview schedule arrangement. I would have interviewed all the student participants before their P1 and afterwards if I had had a large number of qualified students to chose from initially. In short, this limitation is shown in three aspects: the number of student participants I had, the degree of their representativeness as ‘AITE students’, and the restricted choices I had for my interview schedule.

Secondly, another problem of this research was collecting few practicum reports from the student participants: many of them were not willing to offer their reports. As a result, only five reports were collected from 10 student participants. I assumed that this occurred probably due to the consideration that these documents were perceived as confidential by many students.

Finally, obtaining access to school supervising teachers was the most challenging task for me in this research. It was very difficult to get permission from relevant school principals to interview their teachers. It is possible that schools assumed that research like this might give very few benefits to the school, compared to the disturbance that interviewing might caused to their normal teaching. So, only four student participants’ supervisors were interviewed (a total of five teachers).
9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In general, scaffolding for AITE students in the MTeach course encompasses two aspects: support for the course proper and for the practicum. As seen in Chapter 6, the suggestions that the participants put forward for further improvement for MTeach course comprise the following categories:

- Category 10: Language as a barrier (N = 7);
- Category 11: Tutorials/Favourite tutors (N = 4);
- Category 12: Course duration (N = 8);
- Category 13: Units of study (N = 6);
- Category 14: Preparation for practicum (N = 6);
- Category 15: English Language Support (N = 4), and
- Category 16: Expectations (N = 4).

Most of the participants found that the English language was a key barrier to achieving their academic success and personal potential (Categories 10, 15). They expected their lecturers and tutors to understand this issue, so that they could be provided with proper assistance (Category 16). That is why many of them were pleased when they found that some tutorials were actually very helpful in this regard (Category 11). In these tutorials, students could see the ways in which they could be perceived as being a capable teaching professional in Australian schools.

Furthermore, meeting all the criteria to be qualified to teach in Australian schools within 12 months or so (Category 12) was very challenging for most of them. This challenging nature for the students may result from the failure to address the notion of equitable outcomes within such a short period of time. Thus, providing the students with adequate equity, of which the duration of the course is part, is a crucial issue in terms of support for AITE students.

Finally, the practicum is a big concern for pre-service teachers, in particular for AITE students, because of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their
limited knowledge of the local school system. Their concern could increase, due to the generally perceived imbalance between theory and practical knowledge in the course (Category 13) and to the inadequate information provided (Category 14) before or during practicum.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there is an urgency about future shortages of schoolteachers, and so the ways in which AITE students are trained and supported will be crucial. As the findings indicate, school supervising teachers, whose role is crucial for the success of these student-teachers, often hold an attitude of ‘sink or swim’ and place these students in situations where they will either fail or find their own way to succeed. AITE students are expected to achieve the same outcome as their Australian peers without necessarily being provided with adequate support. Most of the school supervising teachers interviewed considered that all practicum students should be treated ‘equally’, regardless of their backgrounds. A dilemma is, however, that achieving equitable outcomes may require different inputs, because an equal input does not necessarily guarantee an equitable outcome.

So, while maintaining a certain standard of outcome is important, equity has to be addressed as well; each individual needs to be provided with adequate assistance to reach the expected outcome. Therefore, the following are some suggestions in terms of future teaching training for AITE students, if an equitable outcome is expected from them:

- an extended orientation to Australian schooling;
- a longer practicum, incorporating a gradual introduction to independence by teaching with supervising teacher(s). Such initial team teaching with supervisors could include three stages: observing only; teaching with supervisor’s assistance, and solo teaching;
- University workshops that focus on language delivery (e.g., common classroom registers);
• assistance to AITE students could be extended beyond their courses into at least the first year of employment, and
• for schools, specific assistance should be given to prepare schoolteachers for the task of supervising AITE practicum students.

While some student participants claimed more support was needed, in terms of their academic literacy, some lecturers insisted that there were support mechanisms in place, in this regard. There were programs and workshops designed for assisting all the students with their comprehension of each unit of study and to improve their academic literacy at the university, where this research was conducted. However, there seemed to be a gap between what some of the student participants wanted, and what was available for them.

9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: ORIENTATION INTO AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

Since teacher identity is a key challenge for AITE students, the question of how AITE students can be oriented to Australian schooling may deserve more attention. The notion of resilience is probably one of the related issues, because resilience in this case is associated not only with their confidence about being Australian schoolteachers but also with the amount of support they receive from their school supervising teachers. However, from their responses to Q. 20, it seemed that there was a lack of adequate input or support from school supervising teachers, who had been expecting AITE students to achieve the same outcomes as their Australian peers with similar input. Therefore, the following questions could be further researched:

1) How does the NS/NNS binary as an ‘acculturative stressor’ (Pan et al., 2007) affect AITE student’s academic studies and their confidence about being Australian schoolteachers from the perspectives of academics and school supervising teachers?
2) To what extent could teacher educators and school supervising teachers possibly assist these students in terms of cultivation of their resilience?

In this regard, related issues are:

- what are the protective factors in this regard?
- what are the preconditions for resilience?
- input and outcome: support and expectations, and
- cultivating ‘safe spaces’ or a positive environment.

The issue of resilience in Question 20 was raised, based on the assumption that AITE students may have been affected by some acculturative stressors, which are ‘critical risk factor[s] for negative affect’ (Pan et al., 2007, p. 740) that come about in the process of orientation into Australian higher education. According to the data collected, the NS/NNS binary is indeed one of the acculturative stressors for AITE students. To mitigate the negative effects of acculturative stressors, and to ‘bounce back’, AITE students do need to equip themselves with something that acts as a ‘protective factor’ (Pan et al., 2007). So, a key answer to this question relates to the way in which these students can be adequately assisted by their supervising teachers. Providing AITE students with a more positive environment and with enough legitimacy, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 8, can act as protective factors and alleviate the effect of those acculturative stressors.

As Berry (2010) argues, such support is the most important among other scaffolding proposed by relevant authorities and institutions. This argument, thus, is an apparent endorsement of Pavlenko (2001)’s suggestion of ‘safe spaces’ for international pre-service teachers, to provide them with enough legitimacy for their imagined communities (Anderson, 1983; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Furthermore, how to cultivate some ‘safe spaces’ (Pavlenko, 2001) in which ‘their voices’ can be heard and respected, and how their power of self-expression
could be amplified instead of being silenced (Cummins 2009, p. 263)—all this could be worth further investigation in respect of this question of resilience. This would enhance their confidence in establishing a professional identity and untie them from their ‘externally-imposed identity cocoon’ (Cummins, 2009). From this perspective, I do think that concepts from other scholars, such as Kearney’s (1998) *ethical-poetical imagination*, Cortazzi and Jin (1997)’s *culture synergy*, and Dillard’s (2006) *community in love*, are helpful for creating such ‘safe spaces’ for these students, as these concepts emphasize the efforts and responsibility of each of the students, teacher educators and school supervising teachers.

From an ethical perspective (Kearney, 1998), the function of imagination as a relationship between the self and the other needs to be reinterpreted, and a democracy of images which cares for the demands of the others is established (Kearney, 1998). The central point of poetical imagination is that ‘poetics is the carnival of possibilities where everything is permitted, nothing censored’ (p. 368).

The notion of *cultural synergy*, coined by Cortazzi and Jin (1997), refers to a process wherein mutual effort from both British teachers (in their research) and international students to understand each another’s culture, is required in their orientation into Anglophone higher education.

By *community in love*, Dillard (2006) refers to an approach to teaching and researching that is established on the theory of spiritual epistemologies, which includes three characteristics: the combination of intellectual and spiritual ways of knowing, perceiving academic life as creative, and seeking to heal people’s mind and spirit, seeing academic life as aiming at peace and justice. Dillard (2006) argues that ‘only when spirit is at the centre of our work can we create a community in love’ (p.
Then, for Dillard (2006), the aim of research and teaching should be conducted with love and with the intention to serve human beings.

To disentangle the sources of their struggles, what AITE students need first is to give up the burden of seeking ‘nativeness’. Instead, they may imagine themselves as belonging to varied communities of users of English. In addition, teacher education institutions, teacher educators and school supervising teachers should reposition themselves with empathy and compassion for the challenges that AITE students face. Finally, it is based on this new positioning that the appropriateness and effectiveness of current practices in teacher education for AITE students can be reviewed and changed, with a view to giving them adequate support. When a safe and encouraging space on which their construction of teacher identity relies is brought about, such students may more readily have a sense of entry into the professional community.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet (Protocol No: H7683)

Dear All,

I am a PhD student from the Centre for Educational Research at the University of Western Sydney and I am currently conducting a research project examining the experience of teacher education students of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) in graduate entry secondary programs.

My research title is: International (NESB) teacher education students-untangling the sources of struggle and success: Implications for teacher education in Australia and my supervisors are Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer and Professor Michael Singh. This PhD research project is examining the experience of teacher education students of non-English speaking backgrounds in graduate entry secondary programs. This project is designed to address the challenges that these NESB pre-service teachers confront in their courses, in particular in the practicum, by investigating the sources of their struggles. It will attempt to ‘untangle’ the sources of their struggles from among a complex of factors such as language, national culture, the culture of schooling etc. Participants will be involved in the identification of the factors which hinder or assist NESB pre-service to access, participate in and achieve their academic and personal potential in the University's teacher education programs.

I would like to identify and interview the relevant NESB students about their perceptions of their experiences in teacher education. I am interested in learning from your experiences and documenting your ideas and concerns regarding these matters. Should you agree, your participation in this research may involve one or two individual interviews of approximately 60 minutes.

If you are interested in participating in this research project, please provide following information: your name, country of origin, and contact details.

Thank you in anticipation of your valuable contribution to this research project.

Yours sincerely,
Jim Peng Lee
PhD candidate
Centre for Education Research
University of Western Sydney
RoomK2.21, Building K, Penrith (Kingswood)
Tel:(02)4736 0760

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No: H7683). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix B: University Of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee

Consent Form for Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews and Disclosure of Personal Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Centre for Educational Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Asian international teacher education (AITE) students in Australia: unfolding the different perceptions of their challenges, and disentangling their sources of struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s) of investigators(1)</td>
<td>Mr. Jim Peng Lee in association with Professor Wayne Sawyer Phone: (02) 4736 0795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s) of participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have received a statement explaining the project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which—including details of the interviews—have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or assistant to interview me.
4. I acknowledge that:
   (a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
   (d) The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. However should information of a private nature need to be disclosed for moral, clinical or legal reasons, I will be given an opportunity to negotiate the terms of this disclosure.
   (e) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the Study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to University of Western Sydney, and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training.
   (f) Any information which will identify me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent
Name: ___________________________ Date: ________________

(Participant)
Name: ___________________________ Date: ________________

(Witness to signature)

Participants will be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: (02) 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix C: Interview questions for AITE students

Part I. Students’ backgrounds

1. Where do you intend to teach after you finish the course?
2. Please tell me your experience about your school and university in your country of origin.

Part II. Images/visions of teaching or a teacher

3. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before this current course?
4. What was your image of teaching (of school and being a teacher) before practicum?
5. Did these images match the reality of what you have encountered in Australia? Why or why not?

Part III. The MTeach Course

6. What would you say now are the biggest challenges you have in the course?
7. What are the particular strengths you bring to the course?
8. What factors have assisted you in accessing, participating in, and achieving your academic and personal potential in this teacher education program?
9. What tasks did you usually have most confidence about or most interest in, in your course?
10. Is this program successful in supporting you? What makes it so?
11. How might this program (M Teach) be improved to assist you or similar students?

Part IV. IETLS

12. Do you think your IELTS scores generally reflect your skills in English?
13. Have you found any differences among NESB students from different countries? If yes, then what is it?
14. Generally speaking, do you think that the students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over the students from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e.g. China) in terms of their academic performance?

Part V. Practicum

15. What would you say are the biggest challenges you have had in practicum?
16. What tasks did you usually have confidence about, or interest in on practicum?

Part VI. Being an Australian schoolteacher

17. Are you confident in becoming an Australian schoolteacher? Why?
18. Is identity/sense of belonging an issue for you? Why? Do you have options other than NS and NNS for your identity construction?
19. What are the most important elements for ‘becoming’ an Australian teacher?
20. If you feel that you have overcome big challenges in this course, what helped you create this resilience?

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No: H7683). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix D: Interview questions for academics

1. What is the main problem that NESB students have in the MTeach course?
2. Are there any differences in English language proficiency within the cohort of NESB students? If there is, what is it?
3. Generally speaking, do you think that the students from a country where English is spoken as a second language (e.g. India) have an advantage over those who are from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e.g. China) in terms of their academic performance?
4. Some of the students (particularly, those from the British Commonwealth countries) before their practicum claim that language will not be an issue for them. Is it the case, even after their practicum?
5. Do you think the current program (M Teach) has adequately reflected diversity and complexity of international students in terms of curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment?
6. What is the biggest challenge for NESB students in this program?
7. Is accent a big issue for them? As a teacher educator, how could you personally provide appropriate assistance to these students?
8. Some NESB student teachers consider identity is a disturbing issue for them. To what extent is this justified?
9. How do the curriculum, design, teaching, research and assessment in this teacher education program assist these NESB students to access, participate in, and achieve their professional goals, if there is any?
10. What strategies do you use personally to assist these NESB students to access, participate in, and achieve well in this teacher education program?
11. What is your opinion about the validity of short graduate entry programs for these NESB Students, in particular those who are having language issue?

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No: H7683). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix E: Interview questions for secondary school supervising teachers

1. What is the biggest challenge for NESB pre-service teachers in practicum?
2. What sort of expectation do you and school principals generally have for these students?
3. What is the biggest benefit/opportunity for NESB pre-service teachers in practicum?
4. As a supervisor for these students, what is your own biggest challenge? What is your biggest opportunity/benefit?
5. Is a sense of belonging an issue for these students in practicum? For instance, have you found any signs or expressions of worries, stress or concern over their own identity?
6. In terms of performance in practicum, have you noticed any differences between NESB student teachers of different backgrounds? (Please describe some relevant instances or provide specific examples)

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No: H7683). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet

Human Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services

Participant Information Sheet (General)

Project Title: International (NESB) teacher education students- untangling the sources of struggle and success: Implications for teacher education in Australia

Who is carrying out the study?
The chief investigator of this project is Mr. Jim Peng Lee, PhD candidate. His supervisors are: Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer and Professor Michael Singh

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Jim Peng Lee, PhD candidate, Centre of Educational Research, University of Western Sydney. The research will form the basis for the degree of PhD at the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer

What is the study about?
This PhD research project is examining the experience of teacher education students of non-English speaking backgrounds in graduate entry secondary programs. This project is designed to address the challenges that these NESB pre-service teachers confront in their courses in particular in the practicum by investigating the sources of their struggles. It will attempt to ‘untangle’ the sources of their struggles from among a complex of factors such as language, national culture, the culture of schooling etc. Participants will be involved in the identification of the factors which hinder or assist NESB pre-service to access, participate in and achieve their academic and personal potential in the University’s teacher education programs.

What does the study involve?
This information sheet is for school teachers. Should you agree, your participation in this research will involve participation in an interview which, with your agreement, will be audio-taped and these audio recordings will be made as part of this research. The recordings will be collected during an individual interview with principal researcher Jim Peng Lee. The information collected by the researcher about the participants will be non-identifiable. Data including the interview recordings will be converted into text files stored in computer with password protection. All hard copies of written information and interview recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet in the supervisors’ offices for a period of 5 years and then they will be destroyed. Only the principal researcher Jim Peng Lee and his supervisory panel will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be used to analyse the issues about NESB teacher education students in practicum and your experience of working with these students. Teachers will receive an interview summary to check for accuracy of information.

How much time will the study take?
The interview the participants undertake will take approximately 45-60 minutes.
Will the study benefit me?
The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to the participants.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?
No, risk of harm is minimal to non-existent. All interviewees will be de-identified.

How is this study being paid for?
It is part of a PhD

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. A report of the study will become part of my PhD thesis, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Any participants who would like to receive information about the findings of the research may contact Jim Peng Lee on (02) 4736 0670 or his supervisor Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer on (02) 4736 0795. You can also e-mail him on 16672260@student.uws.edu.au and his supervisor on w.sawyer@uws.edu.au

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences. An exception is where research data is collected anonymously.

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Jim Peng Lee will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Jim Peng Lee on (02) 4736 0760 or his supervisor Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer on (02) 4736 0795. You can also e-mail him on 16672260@student.uws.edu.au and his supervisor on w.sawyer@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H7683].

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0883 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.
Appendix G: SERAP application letter

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND
PROGRAM EVALUATION BUREAU

Mr Jim Peng Lee
P.O. Box 1090 Epping 1710
EPPING NSW 1710

Dear Mr Lee,

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in New South Wales government schools entitled international (NESB) teacher education students- untangling the sources of struggle and success: Implications for teacher education in Australia, which was received in this office on 19/09/2010.

Your SERAP number is 2010056.

Your application will be processed as soon as possible and you will receive a letter in due course notifying you of its status.

Please note:

All researchers or research assistants who will be interacting with or observing children for the purposes of this research are required to complete Department of Education & Training Working with Children requirements as follows:

Department of Education & Training Working with Children screening is required for all researchers or research assistants who are being paid for their role in the research, regardless of clearances held for other purposes. This requires Forms E & F and certified copies of two forms of identity for each person, one from each of the lists in the guidelines.

Researchers or research assistants who are not being paid for their role in the research must complete a Prohibited Employment Declaration (Form E).

Please check that the above information has been provided for all such researchers on your project and, if necessary, forward screening information for any additional researchers.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone (02) 9244 5619 or email serap@det.nsw.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert Stevenson
Manager, Schooling Research

June 2010

Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau
NSW Department of Education and Training
Level 3, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 – Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone: 02 9244 5619 – Fax: 02 9266 8233 – Email: serap@det.nsw.edu.au
Appendix H: Trajectory of belonging to a community

Cindy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘Teaching is a noble work and teacher will get great sense of achievements.’</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>She imagines that the community of teaching practice she is about to enter would share some similarity to that with which she is familiar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘I am not confident when I discuss with the local students’</td>
<td>Crisis appeared</td>
<td>Initial attempt to be accepted as a member of actual community fails due to language barrier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>‘Language is the main barrier for me, and I was distressed as I don’t have a sense of belonging here’</td>
<td>Confidence gone and depressed</td>
<td>She is struggling to find a place where she could find a sense of belonging and her crisis about community membership deepens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>P1: disappointed and even lost the interest of being a teacher. P2: confidence came back and found my sense of belonging</td>
<td>Fluctuating confidence</td>
<td>A glimpse of hope appears when a member of the dreamed community: her new supervisor offers her a helping hand Cindy was teaching Chinese in her P2 and her confidence seemed to come back as she was dealing with a community of practice she was familiar with, where teachers were respected and she had her authority of being a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>After P1 she lost her interest of being a teacher. After P2: confidence came back (she was teaching Chinese then). ‘Identity is still an issue for me until I fully master the target language’ Self perceived identity: NESB student Confident about teaching Chinese in Australian schools</td>
<td>Confidence weakened A bit of confidence came back Language &amp; identity A Deficit model</td>
<td>Her crisis about community membership deepens A sense of belonging returns when teaching her mother tongue to her country folks: a community of teaching practice she is familiar with Currently she is on a peripheral trajectory, and this seems to never lead to a full participation due language barrier. Realizing that being a teacher who can achieve a sense of professional satisfaction is conditioned in Australia. The barrier to her entry to her desired community of teaching practice is her English language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vivian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously learning experience in China</td>
<td>‘wished to become a teacher like my Maths teacher, he was a cool model of interactive teaching.’</td>
<td>Confident about teaching</td>
<td>She expects herself to be a teacher like her Maths teacher who was a knowledgeable practitioner and frequently involved his students by various activities. The community to which this teacher belongs can be called knowledgeable teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘I still carried that image (my Maths teacher gave me) but it is hard to reach my teacher level’</td>
<td>Not much confident</td>
<td>Her confidence about being a member of a community of knowledgeable teaching is gradually decreasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘No different image of teaching as teaching is pretty much the same’</td>
<td>Relatively stable</td>
<td>Her expectation of joining the Australian school community of teaching practice is still hopeful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>Scared of high school students as she was worried about (of misbehaved students), thinking of quitting</td>
<td>Crisis appeared confidence damaged</td>
<td>Existential crisis arrives earlier, and she is realising that being assigned to a community of teaching which she was familiar with was something she has to fight for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Expectation generally met while there was some shock.</td>
<td>Managed to deal with the crisis.</td>
<td>She experienced some complaint from her pupils because she was an ‘Asian teacher’. While the exact causes of the difficulties were unknown, the incident suggests that her effort to become a member of Australian school community of teaching practice was hindered by the power of the hearers—her pupils in this case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘I finished up enjoying it, but I think it is actually a bit hard to do some interactive stuff’. ‘There is no major challenge’ Self-perceived identity: Quasi bilingual. Yes I am, (confident in being an Australian school &amp; inspirational teacher)</td>
<td>Confused and mixed feelings Peripheral bilingual confident</td>
<td>Desire to be a legitimate member still exists with difficulties to be overcome. However, a real tension is also created: she claims that there were no challenges either in the course or in her practicum, while she admits that language was a barrier for her when she tried to engage her students like her favourite teacher did</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vivian’s case was very typical in terms of her confidence about challenges that AITE students have.
Linda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In China</td>
<td>Born to teach people, Helping students change their lives</td>
<td>confident about teaching</td>
<td>Based on her learning experience, she imagines that the community of teaching practice she is about to enter will share some similarity to that with which she is familiar: teachers have absolute authority over her students and would get a sense of professional achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘Teaching in uni (comparing what is in China) is pretty much the same but secondary is quite different’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity and confidence stable</td>
<td>Majoring in Business English, she has known something about Western school cultures and does expect to face some challenges in particular, when she is being trained to be a member of Australian school community of teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘The course is nearly nothing’</td>
<td>Dealt with first crisis successfully</td>
<td>Her expectation of being offered proper training and scaffolding in order to be part of the Australian school community communities of teaching practice was not satisfied. She thinks AITE students should have been given more scaffolding in order to overcome all the difficulties. Because she can be transferred from the stage of peripheral participation to that of legitimate participation (Wenger, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>She did not expect the same thing happening</td>
<td>Confidence stable</td>
<td>Strong awareness of difference in another community of practice, which she is about to become part of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Expectation not met</td>
<td>Crisis appeared</td>
<td>Existential crisis appeared, attempt to being a member is shattered. A hope to be accepted as a member of Australian school community of teaching practice was further damaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘Teaching was a disaster. You can’t be a native even if you have stayed here (Australia) for twenty or thirty years, there will be a gap there forever’. Self-perceived identity: peripheral bilingual No, I am not (confident in being an Australian school &amp; inspirational teacher)</td>
<td>Has lost sense of the mission of teaching confidence gone</td>
<td>She feels her desired community of teaching practice is not what she expected and the host community of teaching is not accessible for someone like her, because for the language barrier. Expectation to be part of the desired community was shattered. Now her desired communities of practice are the community of TESOL teachers at university or community of Chinese teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### David

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously a coach in China</td>
<td>Disliked/teaching/teachers and had been a coach for years in China</td>
<td>A confident coach in China</td>
<td>David wishes he could have access to the community of swimming coaches while he has no intention to be a schoolteacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘I did not have any image of teaching and I just wanted to be a coach’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity relatively stable</td>
<td>The fact that he is so adamant about his ambition of being a coach suggests he sees himself as belonging still to a community of ‘swimming coaches’, instead of a community of ‘teachers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘I feel that we are isolated and we are struggling with being accepted’.</td>
<td>Crisis appeared</td>
<td>Feeling strongly being isolated and access to his desired community: the community of ‘university students’ is blocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>He felt worried as not much information had been provided</td>
<td>Confidence hit a new low</td>
<td>His uncertainty about obtaining a community membership deepens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Challenge: difference between two educational systems, but having good relationships with supervisors</td>
<td>Confidence was significantly destroyed as the failure of P1</td>
<td>He is rejected to enter the Australian school community of teaching practice because of his language problems and this further clouds his hope of being a member of community of ‘swimming coaches’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘Finding a full-time position at schools is very difficult and the biggest obstacle is language’.</td>
<td>Confidence gone</td>
<td>He feels that it is actually extremely hard for someone like him to be accepted to become a member of mainstream community, which consequently and directly has a negative impact on his expectation of becoming a swimming coach in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived identity: NESB</td>
<td>A deficit model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not confident in being an Australian school teacher</td>
<td>Confidence completely gone</td>
<td>The membership of the community of swimming coaches fails to be constituted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priority: permanent residency</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a member of the community of swimming coach has to be put on hold and gives way to application to entering another community of practice: the community of ’permanent residents’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Jane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously a tutor in China</td>
<td>found tutoring/teaching enjoyable</td>
<td>Full of confidence about teaching</td>
<td>She envisions herself as an inspirational teacher and a model for her students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>Seeking student’s satisfaction and engaging students with different activities</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>Influenced by her American teacher at university, she attempts to follow her teacher’s model which focuses on the engagement of students by creating a relaxing atmosphere. She is relatively confident about conducting the same practice in an Anglophone classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>Challenge: unfamiliarity of the educational system in Australia, but very satisfied with the assistance</td>
<td>Sense of identity and confidence stable</td>
<td>Her expectation of being part of her imagined community is supported by assistance from the MTeach course, which she is quite satisfied with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>Feeling enough information had been provided</td>
<td>Sense of identity and confidence stable</td>
<td>There has been no drama and hardship occurring to her in all her attempts to become a member of her desired community. Having dealt with the differences in the two education systems successfully, she feels more confident about her future endeavour to become a member of the Australian school community of teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>biggest challenge in practicum was language, a sense of belonging, it is kind of hard to get into it</td>
<td>Crisis appeared but dealt with it successfully</td>
<td>Jane indicates that it is hard for NESB pre-service teachers to be accepted by the mainstream community as a legitimate member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>Confident in being an ESL schoolteacher, in particular, in teaching Chinese. Self-perceived identity: a bilingual: particularly in teaching Chinese Confident about being an Australian school &amp; inspirational teacher)</td>
<td>Confidence reinforced Bilingual (conditioned) Full of confidence (conditioned)</td>
<td>Confidence came back perhaps due to her relatively good command of English language and young age at which a teacher may provide her students more interesting activities by use of technology. Jane claims that she really feels she is a ‘bilingual’ when she is teaching her mother tongue—Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Yvonne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In China</td>
<td>Parents are all teaching foreign languages in a Chinese university</td>
<td>Full of confidence</td>
<td>As a graduate majoring in Chinese literature, teaching Chinese in a foreign country seems to be easy as she is still operating within a community of ‘Chinese teaching’ with she is familiar with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘Teaching Chinese (in Australia) will be easy for me’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>Attending lectures and tutorials does not affect much of her confidence in being a Chinese teacher as her comfort-zone is not being threatened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘At the beginning, I was totally lost in tutorials and I hardly understood anything’.</td>
<td>Crisis appears</td>
<td>Her expectation of joining the communities of Chinese teachers was being threatened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>‘Teaching Chinese will be easy for me’</td>
<td>Confidence stable</td>
<td>Although English is a barrier, she remains relatively optimistic about being a member of the community of Chinese teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>‘things were getting so tough in P2 that I really wanted to quit’</td>
<td>Confidence fell to level-low</td>
<td>A sense of belonging to the community of Chinese teachers is further damaged and one of the reasons why might be because she did not go well with her second supervisor, though the main reasons were unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘I felt it is not difficult to teach Chinese language in Australia, the difficult is how to do the classroom management in Australia’.</td>
<td>Has lost confidence of teaching Chinese to some extent</td>
<td>She implies the theoretically it was not difficult for her to teach Chinese but it was the ‘uncooperativeness’ of the actual community of that hindered her attempts to become a member of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self perceive identity: NESB student</td>
<td>A deficit model</td>
<td>identity self-confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Yes I am confident now. Good teaching will depend on one’s experience and time.’</td>
<td>Confidence enabled by her confirmed identity</td>
<td>Confidence is restored partly in being a Chinese teacher is based on the belief that she considers she has all the mechanism needed for being a Chinese teacher. What she lacks is only experience and time. Although she is a new member of another community of teaching practice, she still has something in control, as a graduate of Chinese literature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rachael

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Vietnam</td>
<td>‘Teaching is a very nice job and I love it’</td>
<td>confident about teaching</td>
<td>She imagines that the community of teaching practice to which she is introduced will be the same as what she was taught in Vietnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘The kids are always (listening) to me and no classroom management issue’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>Becoming a member of another community of teaching practice has never been her intention. Therefore, she basically remains within her comfort-zone which has not been threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘Everything seems to be good’</td>
<td>Identity and confident being a particular teacher stable</td>
<td>Viewing what is happening around her as an outsider or a visitor; she keeps herself remaining even outside the peripheral area, let alone take becoming a member of the mainstream community of teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>‘Teaching is a nice job but the reality is not ’</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Existential crisis is approaching but this crisis has always remained in a linguistic domain only and never affected her confidence about who she is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Experiencing different schooling cultures but enjoying rapport with supervisors and other teachers.</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>With a mind-set of a visitor, she does not have the struggles that many of her peers have. Without seeking the legitimacy of being a member of the local community of teaching, both sides would have different expectation for the other. The relation of visitor-to-host is totally different from that of new member-to-host. She frankly admits her poor English language proficiency without that kind of personal struggles and depression that are often seen from many CALD students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘I really enjoy it, still feeling good about it’</td>
<td>Confidence about being a schoolteacher in her own country remains stable Retains a strong sense of what she is</td>
<td>Different trajectories give people different perspectives on their participation and identities at work (Wenger 1998). The fact that she still feels good about her prac suggests that she keeps herself on a peripheral trajectory which never leads to a full participation She is very happy with the term ‘NESB’ as she considers that is what she is. She said it was good that her difference could be identified by members of another community of teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previously a teacher in Turkey</th>
<th>Image of teaching and self</th>
<th>Self-perception of confidence</th>
<th>Membership of an imagined community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An inspirational teacher</td>
<td>Full of confidence</td>
<td>She envisions herself as an inspirational teacher and a model for students. She imagines herself <em>beyond</em> joining the <em>community of teachers</em> into joining the <em>community of inspirational teachers</em>, or what she termed <em>educators which is beyond routine day-to-day teaching work</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. educator/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. a model for students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>'Identity is not an issue for me’. ‘I am a Design teacher’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity stable</td>
<td>The fact that she is so adamant about her teaching role suggests she sees herself as belonging still to a <em>particular community of teachers</em>, here defined by subject content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>‘thinking about changing my current course to child care or primary’</td>
<td>Crisis as a result of lack of confidence about her language</td>
<td>Her expectation of being part of the imagined communities of secondary teachers/Design teachers inspirational teachers was being threatened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>Scared of high school students. Can’t speak to native speakers as they are impatient just ‘close the door.’</td>
<td>Confidence gone and depressed</td>
<td>Her worries about membership of community of ‘Australian schoolteacher’ deepens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Faces a divided set of attitudes: strong support from P1 supervising teacher but rejected by other teachers because of lack of language proficiency</td>
<td>Confused and isolated</td>
<td>Strong sector of the <em>actual community</em> rejecting her because of language problems. Sense of membership of an imagined community was further damaged and the push factors (few opportunities, lack of freedom) were not strong enough to let her get through the gate of the actual community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>'I didn’t want to be a primary or secondary teacher, as they are not creative persons. They are not educators and they are just teachers’. Confident about being an Australian school &amp; inspirational teacher</td>
<td>Has lost sense of the mission of teaching But Retains a strong sense of her original identity</td>
<td>She feels the <em>imagined community</em> of <em>educators</em> does not exist and the <em>actual community of teachers</em> is not worth joining, because for her there is no ‘fit’. But Creates a real tension in the data because at the same time she argues that she retains her original sense of mission and belief in her potential membership of the inspirational teaching community. But now she relies on ‘pull factor’ of someone within the group of legitimate participation (Wenger, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Image of teaching and self</td>
<td>Self-perception of confidence</td>
<td>Membership of an imagined community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously a teacher in India</td>
<td>‘Teaching is a passion for me and it is something I don’t have to work hard for. Teaching is a kind of knowledge flow… making them good human beings’</td>
<td>Full of confidence</td>
<td>She envisions herself as a passionate teacher and a model for students. She imagines teaching is something she was born to and it is a process of transforming the younger generations to good human beings. Then, this can be seen as having a membership to a <em>community of missionary or inspirational teaching practice</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the course</td>
<td>‘Teachers are respected and obedient students’.</td>
<td>Sense of identity and confidence stable</td>
<td>She sees herself as belonging to a <em>community of traditional teachers</em>, in which authority of a teacher is absolute and cannot be challenged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the course</td>
<td>The difficulties she faces are unfamiliarity with the education system and the ‘university norm’</td>
<td>Crisis appeared</td>
<td>Riva is confronted with this unfamiliarity of Australian schooling, battling with obstacles to entering a community of ‘Australian schoolteachers’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before practicum</td>
<td>‘My reaction is always that if there is something hard that means you need to put more efforts on it.’</td>
<td>Dealt with first crisis successfully</td>
<td>This demonstrates that she has a strong sense of belonging to a particular community of teaching in which its members have a proactive and positive attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>‘The image of teaching I had is not much different with the reality except for the part of technology.’</td>
<td>Dealt with second crisis successfully</td>
<td>Riva is suggesting there is little gap between the communities of teaching practices: the one in India and one in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After practicum</td>
<td>‘I am very confident that I could have a very good rapport with students… which was a good part of it.’</td>
<td>Full of confidence</td>
<td>Acceptance confirmed. She is so pleased that her efforts and attempt to become a legitimate member of the mainstream community of teaching are recognized and the feedback of her pupils is suggesting she had obtained some degree of legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-perceived identity: Multilingual
‘Yes, I am very confident because I know I am very good at classroom.’

Identity confirmed
Confidence restored fully as a capable classroom practitioner of the host society.
Appendix I: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Alice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should use student-centred approach, teachers are respected and students are highly-motivated</td>
<td>STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH/EXPECTATIONS</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good teacher is one who can change students’ life</td>
<td>‘A GOOD TEACHER’</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But there is so much limitation because cultural differences and my language.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15 What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Alice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The biggest challenge in practicum is still language. For examples, I cannot pronounce some of the scientific words very well.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: PRONUNCIATION</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First thing is my grammar is not very well</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: GRAMMAR</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vocabulary that I cannot use</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: VOCABULARY</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The third thing is when I was teaching the kids [who]use some secret language I can understand them if they do not speak proper English.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: SLANG</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But the thing is when I need to write my essay I struggle with that.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: ACADEMIC WRITING</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I was teaching my class, my students suddenly throw a pen hit me. Just instantly hit me. I don’t know how to deal with that. I don’t know how to use proper language to tell them like that way</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: CLASSROOM REGISTERS</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think teaching is more about language specially teaching science.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Alice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Competence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers as competent communicators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Cindy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It will be a tough period for me because I am not the native speaker.</td>
<td>NNS: DEFICIT MODEL</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not confident when I discuss with the local students and I cannot express my opinion when I am nervous.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Cindy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since I had prepared for the worst, so the result was not much different from what was expected</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I feared most was not my language but the ignorance of staff and school</td>
<td>AWARENESS OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING</td>
<td>TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And was feeling isolated without a sense of belonging</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eventually, I overcame the issue by adopting a positive strategy by taking some initiatives such as active communication with my supervisor (bring a dish weekly)</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning, the barrier looked like culture, at the end, you may find actually it is language which is the key factor.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Cindy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Competence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher authority</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacit knowledge and cultural differences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS/NNS binary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (David)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not have any image of teaching as I dislike teachers and I haven’t had any good teachers at all.</td>
<td>NEGATIVE ABOUT TEACHING/TEACHERS</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In China, if one child is very poor at his studies, then no teacher would like him. I had never thought of the image of teaching.</td>
<td>LACK OF LOVE</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15 What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (David)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is still the question of whether we can achieve or arrive in a ‘melting pot’ (integration) eventually</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>IDENTITY/SENSE OF BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally, it is the feeling that we are being isolated due to our hair, our skin, our pronunciation and our ethnic background</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>IDENTITY/SENSE OF BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So the biggest challenge for me is integration and it is whether I could be accepted into this group, this class- the main-stream community</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>IDENTITY/SENSE OF BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students’ opinions are often ignored, in particular in group work in tutorial and when I raised this issue, my marks even were deducted.</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>IDENTITY/SENSE OF BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although we have the same teacher in the same classroom, I always have the feeling that we are being isolated and people are reluctant to talk to us.</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>IDENTITY/SENSE OF BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main reasons behind this are because the country we are from and the language we speak. we are non-native English speakers</td>
<td>NNS: DEFICIT MODEL</td>
<td>NS/NNS BINARY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for David

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity/Sense Of Belonging</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasts with home culture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS/NNS binary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Jane)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a teacher, he/she should be able to engage students by as many different activities as possible provided that the curriculum requirements are met</td>
<td>STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here[in Australia], as a teacher, you are not supposed to have any physical contact with your students</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Australia, much attention has been given to the welfare of students instead of that of teacher by public and authority.</td>
<td>WELFARE AND SAFETY</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia students are more active in class, in particular after class and they have much less pressure than their Chinese counterparts</td>
<td>PRESSURE OF SCHOOLING</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Jane)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I taught Chinese and ESL in my P1 and P2 and I reckon my biggest challenge in practicum was language.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my English had been better, I would have taught them more and done more activities with them. So it is my English that limits my teaching capacity</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slang is also an issue.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE: SLANG</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Jane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrast with home culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language competence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as competent communicators</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Linda)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in uni [comparing to what is in China] is pretty much the same but secondary [school] is quite different.</td>
<td>DIFFERENCE IN TEACHING: SCHOOL EDU VS. TERTIARY EDU.</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However, I did not expect the same thing happening in Australia because my English major when I was in uni, I had a little bit of image about what is in Australia.</td>
<td>AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Linda)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In My first practicum, I was teaching Yr 7 geography and during that time, language and content were both challenging for me. I had to recall my Chinese memory and translated into English.</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: TEACHING GEOGRAPHY</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I guess language and cultural difference are challenging for me.</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was scared in one of the classes as the students were controlling the class. I had to raise my voice sometime in particular in my first week.</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second was ESL which was quite easier for me.</td>
<td>'THE POWER OF THE HEARER'</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Linda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language competence and culture difference</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher authority</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast with previous culture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Rachael)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is a nice job but the reality is not</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just want to give my knowledge to my students but sometimes they did not get it</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Teaching] is more respectful in my country and everyone no matter who you are a doctor a lawyer, a person who has very high position, they have to go to school. It is a good job.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>CONTRAST WITH PREVIOUS CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In reality it is hard because of communication; you need to understand the talk of students</td>
<td></td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Rachael)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, In my case, language is my biggest problem.</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know Maths, everything like, is just number but it’s just the way to explain in English is very hard.</td>
<td>EXPLANATION IN ENGLISH</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ways they [students] use the words like prove and say are different, different (from) what I think, That is why students did not get it.</td>
<td>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Rachael

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language competence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast with previous culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum *before* and *after* practicum (P1)

**Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Riva)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is a passion for me and it is something I don’t have to work hard for</td>
<td>OVERALL VIEW of TEACHING</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So teaching my students what is appropriate and what is inappropriate is part of my classroom management strategies.</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider teaching is a kind of knowledge flow which gets transferred to younger generations…</td>
<td>TRANSMISSION MODEL</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The source of image came from my teaching experience</td>
<td>SOURCE: EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving chances for students to think over the good things and bad things they should not follow, these are actually making them good human beings</td>
<td>AIM of TEACHING</td>
<td>TEACHERS AS COMPETENT COMMUNICATORS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Riva)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I first came here, there were so many difficulties I faced, especially the educational system, which was totally different for me</td>
<td>DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was difficult for me as it has been nearly twenty years since I graduated from my first degree in India in 1991</td>
<td>GAP BETWEEN DEGREES</td>
<td>AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I struggled with that and I am still struggling with academic writing which is both a language issue and cultural issue</td>
<td>ACADEMIC WRITING:</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially, there was the accent problem; I had difficulty to understand the local people’s speaking.</td>
<td>ACCENT: LISTENING</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Riva

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers as competent communicators</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language competence and cultural difference</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast with home culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1) Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Vivian)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (1)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because in China, I also did a teaching degree, teaching degree in Maths. So I kind of don’t really have a different image of teaching students.</td>
<td>IMPACT OF PREVIOUS LEARNING EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>CONTRASTS WITH HOME CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of my friend did the teaching degree here they kind of told me the school here is pretty different from what in China, it is like kind of a lot of misbehaved students, so I kind of get nervous.</td>
<td>STUDENT BEHAVIOIRS IN CLASS</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So they told me kind of especially like western suburbs of Sydney, hard to manage the classroom.</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So I kind of decide to go to a school maybe with more Chinese students so actually I choose to go to [the present school].</td>
<td>IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Vivian)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidentiary extracts (2)</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I used to think language was the main issue but it was not really the case</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BARRIER</td>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s still managing the class.</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think language is an issue for me because my class is kind of actually an average class and my supervisor told me other class would be more noisy (noisier), more like disruptive students.</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor just told me just as the same as what my friend told me, students more disruptive and we had to control it</td>
<td>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>TEACHER AUTHORITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Vivian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher authority</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasts with home culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language competence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 4.2 and 4.3: Perceptions about practicum before and after practicum (P1)

Q4: What was your view of what school and what being a teacher was going to be like before practicum? (Yvonne)

Evidentiary extracts (1) | Codes | Categories of codes
--- | --- | ---
I thought it would be easier teaching Chinese in Australia in my first practicum and | AWARENESS OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING | TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Things were getting so tough in second practicum that I really intended to quit. | AWARENESS OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING | TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Q15: What would you say now were the biggest challenges you had in practicum? (Yvonne)

Evidentiary extracts (2) | Codes | Categories of codes
--- | --- | ---
The most important element in practicum is how to engage students. Language is certainly involved in this engagement. | ENGAGING STUDENTS/LANGUAGE | ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE
As I am not a native speaker, sometimes I did not understand what the students were talking about. | NNS: DEFICIT MODEL | NS/NNS BINARY
The biggest challenge for me seemed to the student-centred approach which I am not used to, in particularly, I am still new to this country. | STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH | CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
Classroom management is key issue. | CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT | CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
The effective approaches to deal with it are teaching method, teaching content and most importantly letting the students be consciously aware that you care about them | CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: SOLUTIONS | TEACHER AUTHORITY
So, during class, I will try to let them have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities; and then hang around with them during recess | RAPPORT WITH STUDENTS | TEACHER AUTHORITY

Table 4.4: Summary of categories in Evidentiary Extract (1) and (2) for Yvonne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of times revealed in the extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher authority</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacit knowledge and cultural differences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language competence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS/NNS binary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J: Letter to the school principals whose staff were to be involved in the project

Dear Mr/Ms Principal,

Re: Requesting approval to carry out a research in your school

My name is Jim Peng Lee. I am a PhD student from the Centre for Educational Research at the University of Western Sydney and I am currently conducting a research project examining the experience of teacher education students of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) in graduate entry secondary programs. I would like to invite some teachers in your school to participate in this research project.

This project is designed to address the challenges that these NESB pre-service teachers confront in their courses, in particular in the practicum, by investigating the sources of their struggles. It will attempt to ‘untangle’ the sources of their struggles from among a complex of factors such as language, national culture, the culture of schooling etc.

Across the total study, focus group interviews and individual interviews will be conducted and participants in the interviews include NESB teacher education students, academics and schoolteachers who supervised the relevant NESB teacher education students in their practicum.

However, in your school, I would simply like to interview the teacher(s) who supervised Mr/Miss.XXX (a teacher education student from University of Western Sydney) in his/her practicum in 2010, with a view to identifying key practicum issues for this student. Students are aware that their teachers are being interviewed.

Should you agree, your staff’s participation in this research will involve an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes to discuss:

- factors that assist and/or may hinder NESB student-teacher (and others) to access, participate in, and achieve their potential in teacher education, particularly in practicum.
- strategies that assist the NESB student (and others) both in his/her course of study and into the teaching profession.
To minimise possible inconvenience to teachers and school operations I propose to interview the teacher(s) during their free periods, after school, or at lunch time.

The teacher(s) will not be identified in any reports or publications arising from this interview, as pseudonyms will be used in reporting the research findings.

The data including any written documents or audiotapes will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet for a period of 5 years. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this primary evidence. The data will be analysed and documented in a report to be submitted to the University of Western Sydney and the NSW Department of Education and Training. I will also be able to provide you with copies of project reports and publications should you be interested.

Please find attached research instrument, information sheet and consent form to be provided to relevant supervising teacher(s).

If you wish to know more about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 47360760 or my supervisor Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer on (02) 4736 0795.

You can also e-mail me on 16672260@uws.edu.au and my supervisor on w.sawyer@uws.edu.au

Thank you in anticipation of your valuable contribution to this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Peng Lee
PhD Candidate
Centre for Educational Research
University of Western Sydney

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No: H7683). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4736 0883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
## Appendix K: Project Management Gantt Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project step</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Mar-Dec</td>
<td>Mar-Dec</td>
<td>Mar-Dec</td>
<td>Mar-Dec</td>
<td>Mar-Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preparing CoC proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>candidature confirmed 24 Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preparing the ethics application</td>
<td></td>
<td>HREC Approval 5 Feb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>12/14 Apr first interview</td>
<td>Jun 2011 interviews finished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERAP</td>
<td></td>
<td>22/July DET approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing up Chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepare papers from thesis for publication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb. paper submission</td>
<td>Revision and resubmission in December 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have thesis edited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finalise appendices and front matter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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