Chapter 1

Introduction to the Phenomenon of Hosting

Towards an Understanding of the Experience of Hosting

*Education has really one basic factor, sine qua non - one must want it.* [George Edward Woodberry: John Goffe's Mill].

**What has the experience of hosting got to do with learning?**

This study is concerned with participants' conceptions of learning during the experience of hosting in the curricula of student exchange programs and in particular, the phenomenon of hosting, itself. Knowledge about intercultural understanding and participation in student exchange programs has developed since the 1960s into a distinct area of research broadly based within the context of an overall education design. At the same time, new ways of understanding variation in the processes of learning, beyond mere learning content, have given educators cause to explore ways to facilitate learning in the students they teach. This study is innovative as it uses a phenomenographic approach to bring these two bodies of knowledge together. The focus of this research is an examination of the meeting point between learning, taken from an experiential perspective, and the reflexive perceptions of the experience of hosting in student exchanges.

*Where does the host family fit into a student exchange program?*

What is to be gained from participation in a student exchange program has been the concern of related agencies for whom the potential of an intercultural exchange experience lies in
accelerated learning and the growth of competence of participants. Learning from the experience of an intercultural exchange is "potentially one of the most broadening and maturing educational experiences that a young person can have" (Grove, 1989:10) and an experience in which students can undergo "essential and desirable personal change" (Wood, 1982:1). The number of organisations that sponsor international exchanges for school age people has risen dramatically since the late 1960s (Education Programs, 1999). Participation in an exchange event necessarily involves particular groups of people ranging from government officials, educators, employers and parents. No matter how many groups are involved, the fundamental components of any exchange are the exchange student and the host family who share the experience. Previously, the experience of hosting and the host family perceptions of the relationship with the host student have been given little attention in educational research. The host family experience has in many ways been taken for granted rather than systematically explored, even though it has been suggested that the role of the host family is critical and central to a student exchange event (Hansel & Grove, 1982; Hansel & Grove, 1984; Miller & Painter, 1985; Noesjirwan, 1985; Walsh & Helman, 1989; Grisbacher, 1991; Rivers, 1998).

The experience of hosting is therefore, the counterpart in the intercultural exchange event. Some host families may find the experience of an intercultural exchange successful, purposeful and rewarding. For others, it is not. Some host families find the intercultural exchange memorable and positive. For others, things go terribly wrong and the experience of hosting takes on extreme, even tragic, proportions that make lasting impressions upon their lives. To date there has been a betrayal of truth in the advertisements of exchange programs that does not fully prepare the host family for the range of experiences they are likely to meet. Unanticipated dilemmas create the need for solutions, coping skills and degrees of discernment and become the uninvited intruders into the lifeworld of the unsuspecting host
family. Participation in an intercultural event, whether it be as an exchange student or as a host family, in the first instance, is a human life experience that subsumes the profundity of human emotions from great tragedy to phenomenal joy. Consequently there is a need to refine best practice and best preparation for families who desire to participate in host family programs in the context of extracurricular learning in the 'classroom' or lifeworld of the host family. Best practice and best preparation of the host family for the hosting experience require increased understanding of the experiential learning and change brought about by this type of experience.

Research (Hansel, 1984; Crano, 1986; Cushner, 1987; Grove, 1989; Grisbacher, 1991; Rivers, 1998) has suggested that exchange students and host families may face special problems that, over time, can affect the quality and success of intercultural exchange experience. For the current research, the special problems that may be met by the host family are often serious dilemmas involving cognitive awareness and active discernment for resolution. The quality and success of intercultural exchange experiences from the perspective of the exchange student, have been shown to be related to screening and selection, immersion, sustained support and communication (Grove, 1989:10, Rohrlich, 1993; Loxleigh, 1996; Southern Cross, 1999). Other reported factors in cross-cultural experiences are responsibility, persistence, tolerance for ambiguity, self-concept and interpersonal skills (Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Hawes & Kealey, 1979; Brislin, 1981; Grove, 1989; Gochenour, 1993). In relation to the exchange student, researchers have explored the areas of expectations and attributional style as well as the effect of immersion into community life (Wallin, 1983; Zaremba, 1984:76; Noesjirwan, 1985; Crano, 1986:4; Cooley, Beard & Ayres, 1994:156).

Since these aspects have been identified as critical attributes in overseas adaptation experiences for exchange students, they may, in turn, signal factors that also shape the experiences of the host family. What has been omitted from the literature that emerged as
significant in this study was the transference of intercultural issues from the context of the exchange student across to the host family itself. To varying degrees, the host family members found themselves plunged into an intercultural context in which the impact of prior intercultural experience, financial investment and perceptions of Synergy (good fit or match) with the exchange student became predictive indicators of the reported success of their intercultural experiences.

In the host family situation, participation in an exchange event is voluntary and extra-curricula in the school context. The involvement of the host family is the result of some form of preconceived desire or motivation since they must seek out and apply for their participation in the hosting event. By examining the educational orientation of the learner (the host family participants) it is hypothesised that it is possible to build up a broad picture of their world and to explore the various levels of description for learning approaches and outcomes (Entwistle & Marton, 1984:221). A broad picture could be described as having four types of educational orientations that comprise the world of the learner: academic, vocational, personal and social. In the host family situation there is a further complication to the lifeworld of the learner as a result of a paradigm shift in ways of understanding the world, brought about by the hosting event itself. It is hypothesised therefore, that the hosting event necessarily positions the 'new' family group within the influence of an intercultural context. The host family is to be viewed in terms of an intercultural context, in which the participants are subject, more or less, to some degree, to issues of cross-cultural learning. Understanding the issues, the dilemmas and discernment within the host family personal context may provide an holistic description of the motives and purposes of participation, involvement and outcomes in a hosting event. An empirical understanding of the experience of hosting, which is the counterpart of student exchange programs, is thus a valid area for research and illumination.
**What is known about learning from experience?**

Little is known of the educational implications of the learning experience for the host family in an exchange event. Interest in learning has been focused generally, on types of learning, the ways students conceptualise learning, and the nature of knowledge. No longer is knowledge viewed solely from a scientific, cognitive, constructivist framework. With an emphasis on understanding rather than memorising or applying ideas, learning becomes a creative process (Brew & Boud, 1995). For example, Dahlgren (1984) has shown a distinction between quantitative and qualitative forms of knowledge and Marton (1981) has described deep and surface approaches to learning and experience as a base for learning (Boud, 1993). Since people learn from their own experiences and the reflections that are central to an understanding of the experience, a relational view of knowledge has emerged that stresses a vital connection between learning and what is learnt (Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle 1984). When using an experiential basis for learning, prior experience, constructing experience and transactions with the world are part of a holistic view of an individual’s learning and understanding (Boud, 1993). The need for student autonomy and responsibility in the learning process is necessarily implicit to experiential learning (Boud, 1988; Wallace, 1993; Edwards, 1994; Washbourne, 1996). In order for education to be experiential, there is a need for planned, affective, individual and evaluative components, since not every experience is necessarily useful. Interest in experiential learning through intercultural interchange has noted the need for attending to exchange students' personal and social needs for better experiential learning to occur (Grisbacher, 1991; Batchelder, 1993; Rivers, 1998; Xu, 1998). The type of experiential learning for the exchange student will involve self-awareness, learning how to learn, adaptability, knowledge of the host culture and action skills.

Individual development within a socio-cultural context was the nature of the learning theory put forward by Vygotsky (1962, 1978) at a similar time to the work of Piaget.
Vygotsky did not support the Piagetian view of universal stages of development for all children of the same age. Rather, the Vygotskian perspective considers learning in terms of shifting historic and cultural contexts between the environment and the individual. In this way, learning is viewed as an intrinsic process over which the individual has control. The process of cultural development leads to higher structures of thought and reasoning, which in turn give meaning to lower order concepts. It is in the Zone of Proximal Development where internal developmental processes are ignited in an individual due to the influence of more able others in that environment (Vygotsky, 1962). In the hosting experience, the role of the host parents may be seen as being the 'more able others' in the Zone of Proximal Development that is created by the host family environment.

Alternatively, a Deweyan viewpoint is concerned with bringing experience into focus as a means of uniting the dualism between the individual and the context, that is, the subject and object. There are recognisable links here with the non-dualistic nature of aspects of phenomenography (Marton, 1992:10). According to Dahlin (1994) the 'experience' label used by Dewey referred to the knowledge base of experience, together with pre-reflective experience, true or otherwise. In this way, thinking is part of experience, pre-reflective thinking is also part of experience and from this connection, Dewey provides that experience is pre-structured. According to Keeton (1974:180) a learning situation that applies a Deweyan form of experiential education is found beyond the traditional classroom and is one:

in which the relative priority for effort is not upon work with symbols but with their referents: observing, interacting, performing, making things happen, feeling the effects of these activities and others' responses.

In other studies the focus has been on the different ways of understanding the content learned. Finding the critical differences in which central phenomena, concepts, principles in specific domains can be understood is significant for the development of knowledge and skills within
these domains. For example, Bowden et al. (1992) noted that students might give an identical answer to a quantitative question but actually understand the phenomenon in different ways. There are implications here for assessment and measurement of student learning outcomes. More recently, learning from experience has been described in terms of the individual and the change in the structure of awareness of simultaneously discerned objects (Marton & Booth, 1997; Bowden & Marton, 1998; Runesson, 1999; Marton & Pang, 1999). Qualitative differences in the outcomes of learning were found to be linked not only to variations in approach to learning but also in variations in the ways of experiencing something. The extension of analysis of qualitative differences to an understanding of what and how has led to considerations of possible theoretical grounding for research interests in learning about specific phenomena. The suggestion is made that research into the qualitative differences of learning in the experience of hosting may give rise to a better understanding about the phenomenon of hosting as well as progress towards a theoretical view of participation and learning.

*Why should there be interest in student exchange programs and hosting?*

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

*Hebrews 13:2.*

The popularity of intercultural exchange experiences has increased greatly to become not only an option for school leavers and tertiary students (18 years plus) but more commonly an education option for students in their middle to senior years of secondary schooling (12 to 18 years). This type of involvement is not about improved economy, national betterment or religious conversion, but specifically as an end in itself, about the personal maturity and awareness that learning from cross-cultural immersion can contribute toward building a closer global community.
Studies in the related literature (Brislin 1981; Parent 1983; Noesjirwan 1985; Miller & Painter, 1985; Cushner 1987; Paige, 1993; Xu, 1998) have examined students' understanding and acceptance of foreign differences and similarities, the impact of different types of exchanges, component parts of successful international exchange experiences and the value of orientation programs. Studies sought to identify the dynamics of reasonably satisfactory hosting experiences, the ups and downs of students' satisfaction with cross-cultural contact or students' readjustment and life satisfaction after returning home to a developing country (Lysgaard, 1955; Sewel & Davidson, 1961; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Grove, 1981; Dreisbach, 1986; Nash, 1991; Zapf, 1993; Kenyon & Amrapala, 1993; Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima, 1998; Halse, 1999).

A seminal study that focused on host family participation in student exchange programs was conducted by Miller and Painter (1985). Case study methodology was used to describe the experiences of a series of host families. The focus of interest was the pattern of adjustment for the host family during the duration of the hosting event with the purpose of identifying the dynamics of normal, reasonably satisfactory hosting experiences. In each case one major operating dynamic for every family was identified. Factors such as the failed expectation of the exchange student being a good role model, the lack of exchange student commitment to the program, mismatched expectations and a tolerant non-authoritarian family climate were noted as measures which defined the success or lack of success, in the programs. Although an adjustment cycle was plotted, the variations in the learning experiences of the participants were undocumented. Similarly, the nature of the learning experience from a hosting event was not identified. In the current research, this omission is addressed because the learning experiences of the host family participants are of central interest. Controversial concern for the host family was expressed by Wallace (1993) who noted their potential role as guinea pigs in intercultural experiments that view the host family culture as a laboratory for
experiential education. In the context of the current research however, the suggestion is made that since participation in a hosting event is a voluntary extra-curricular option made by individual families who desire an experience of educational value, then an understanding of the nature of the potential learning from an experience of hosting is justified.

What is the Research Problem?

The research problem lay in producing knowledge about the phenomenon of hosting in relation to host family participation in student exchange programs together with filling the gap of understanding about the content of learning that the host family gains through participation in a hosting event. In many ways the experience of the host family has been taken for granted rather than systematically explored. The exchange experience has enormous educational implications for students since they stand to gain more knowledge, competence, and self-confidence together with a broader perspective on world issues and a deeper insight into values and patterns of intercultural behaviour. But, little is known of the potential educational gains for the participant host family. Less is known of the associated dilemmas and discernment that are experienced in varying degrees by families in hosting events.

Gibbs, Morgan and Taylor (1984) have recognised the progressive widening of the focus of research into student learning that now embraces the 'world' of the learner. A total world view of learning encompasses both an institutional context and a personal one. Similarly, Entwistle and Marton (1984) have described the world of the learner in terms of four educational orientations. The four areas comprise academic, vocational, personal and social characteristics. By examining the educational orientation of the learner it is possible to build up a broad picture of the world and to explore the various levels of description for learning approaches and outcomes. In the host family situation, a broad picture of the world
of the learner becomes relevant since participation is voluntary in nature, as is the type of learning experience that they are engaged in. It has been suggested that the role of the host family as central to a student exchange event is critical. Understanding the conceptions of learning within the host family personal context may provide for a more holistic description of the motives, purposes and outcomes of this kind of involvement.

There are well-documented reasons for participating in student exchange programs since students engaged in intercultural exchange experiences undergo "essential and desirable personal change" (Wood, 1982:1). If the same can be said for the participant host family, it is an undocumented feature of intercultural relations. A better understanding of the concepts of learning in the host family experience in intercultural interaction and adjustment may assist in the development of cross-cultural understanding regardless of the cultural groups involved. One perspective of intercultural exposure is the potential for students to learn a world view or global perspective for every subject they study providing they make the effort to immerse themselves into the daily life of the new community (Wallin, 1983; Grisbacher, 1991). That the host family is central to this immersion in the new community again emphasises the significance of the host family role and the lack of empirical understanding of the function and experience of this counterpart side of student exchange programs.

The Traditional Historical View of Student Exchange Programs

Participation in an educational experience may be voluntary or mandatory, satisfying or unsatisfying and from a phenomenographic perspective as used in the current research, there will be a variety of qualitatively different ways in which individuals understand the same experience. The experience of hosting an intercultural exchange student is essentially a learning experience but exactly what and how this is understood is not readily identified. In
order to begin understanding this phenomenon, some of the theoretical components that emerge from the literature, will be examined to establish a behavioural model of hosting in student exchange programs. The model (Fig. 1) that is used to locate the experience of hosting, has been diagrammatically presented based on a reading of the literature of intercultural and hosting experiences. Traditional theory has followed a behavioural framework and so the model maps behavioural theories and relationships in the existing literature.

Figure 1: The context of the host family event from intercultural literature.

The boundaries of the study.

The existing literature of intercultural experiences (see Chapter 2) indicates that the event of hosting an individual in student exchange programs comprises six descriptor components. These components are: the family members, the options within school curricula, preparation, participant expectations, the actual living out of the hosting event and the learning outcome
for participants in the experience of hosting. The literature recognises the host family merely by inclusion as host nationals rather than featuring the host family contribution to the exchange event itself. Other perspectives that help to illumine the host family position are also examined to present the emergent operative factors of the phenomenon of hosting from a number of different dimensions. For example, motivation, participation and reflection in a learning experience are central components of this study since they have application to the before, during and after of an intercultural hosting event. Sub-groups of motivation, participation and reflection will be presented in this survey of the literature since they form the building blocks that are fundamental to a complex situation. Similarly, participant satisfaction, achievement and success are also important concepts that are predominantly concerned with human perception and these variables will be generally defined in terms of the contributing factors. For the current study, it is necessary to understand concepts of expectations and satisfaction as component aspects of motivation theory before applying them to the learning experiences and perceptions of participants in intercultural hosting programs.

**Contribution of the Study: an Alternative to the Behavioural Model**

The behavioural model used to locate the host family in the context of intercultural events is inadequate on several levels. Much of the literature is taken exclusively from the perspective of the exchange student and merely acknowledges the host family as being loosely associated with the exchange process. In contrast, this study not only identifies the centricity of the host family in an exchange event but also expressly defines the critical components of the experience of hosting. In order to understand the phenomenon of hosting in an intercultural exchange event and to produce knowledge about the type and nature of learning for the participant host family, a new model is presented from the findings of a phenomenographic
investigation. The phenomenon of hosting is defined in terms of a spectrum of experience. Participant expectations and adaptation are expressed in terms of perceptions of learning. The four key component areas of the conception of Synergy concern participants' understanding of fit, responsibility, investment and learning. These component areas, that represent the outcome space of the phenomenon of hosting, are significantly and operationally different to the behavioural model. In the new model, the central context is removed from the exchange student to the host family itself. The model is a representation of a phenomenographic approach and is able to highlight the experience of hosting and the nature of learning from participation in a hosting event in a way that has previously been unavailable.

The Organisation of the Thesis

The experience of hosting is the focus of this research with particular interest in the phenomenon of hosting itself as well as the nature of the experiential learning in a hosting event. The title "Dilemmas and Discernment" has been used to describe the problems faced by host families (dilemmas) together with the resultant experiential learning (discernment). The word 'discernment' is also used with the intention of providing an overlay with the terminology of phenomenographic analysis technique.

Chapter 2 provides a survey of the field of intercultural participation. In order to make sense of the behavioural model that dominates intercultural research, the body of literature related to student exchanges, the various categories and the subsets of those categories are discussed with reference to their application. A discussion of motivation theory is followed by descriptions of satisfaction theory, attribution theory, experiential theory, and the theory of adaptation.
Family systems and the sub-system characteristics are presented in order to explicate possible influences on the entity of the host family.

The next section is concerned with the broad spectrum curriculum that schools today offer as part of educational choice and the developing trends towards experiential education of which student exchange and hosting programs form a part. The curricula of cross-cultural contact and some of the critical features of intercultural relations are described. Cultural differences, problems of adjustment and the development of programs to facilitate cross-cultural assimilation are outlined since it is not only the exchange student but also the host family who become entwined in intercultural exposure and cross-cultural influences. The phases of an intercultural exchange experience are described drawing upon international research.

As the behavioural model is explored, the problems associated with the model and the lack of insight into the experience of the host family will be presented for each context examined. The behavioural model will be shown to have serious limitations for understanding the experience of hosting in student exchange programs.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodological approach. Phenomenography is presented and shown to be characteristically suitable for the current research problem. The use of content analysis and the 'new' phenomenography are shown to be linked to an understanding of the research problem. The setting up of the study, the gathering of participants and the way in which the information was analysed are outlined.

Chapter 4 reports on the results of the research using phenomenographic strategies. The phenomenon of hosting is presented. The spectrum of the experience of
hosting is examined in terms of the conception of Synergy. The four components of the experience of hosting and their categories of description are detailed in relation to the conception of Synergy.

Chapter 5 describes the results of the research using content analysis techniques. The perceptions of the content of learning in the experience of hosting are presented. Four categories and their dimensions are explicated. A diagram is presented to show the relationship between the categories of description and the nature of learning from the intercultural exposure of a hosting event.

Chapter 6 provides further analysis of the phenomenon of hosting using the 'new' phenomenography. The critical aspects of the phenomenon are explored in terms of referential and structural features within the dynamics of awareness.

Chapter 7 discusses the phenomenon of the experience of hosting and the component areas of learning in the experience of hosting in the context of a spectrum rather than a hierarchy of experience. A relational model for understanding the experience of the phenomenon of hosting is presented. Learning, which occurs throughout the duration of the hosting experience itself, is formed by a whole series or spectrum of relational factors that are categorised, examined and explored. The alternate relational model presents a unique view of the experience of hosting that has previously been missed.

Chapter 8 identifies the contribution of the analysis of the research to the existing literature. The nature and extent of learning in the experience of hosting are explored. Critical implications for parents, teachers and organisers who desire cross-cultural exposure in an intercultural event that will be perceived as purposeful and satisfactory participation, are identified.
Chapter 2

A Survey of the Field

The Components of Participation in Intercultural Events

The literature relevant to the experience of the host family in student exchange programs can be loosely divided into three significant bodies of theory and research: motivation and attribution, the curricula of cross-cultural contact and finally, intercultural exchange systems within which the hosting experience is located. The behavioural model is made up of the key operating factors historically found in a hosting event as a subset of student exchange activity. The organisation of this research design begins with motivation (the initial spark for participating in a hosting event) and family systems (the 'new' family system created by the addition of the exchange student). These two areas of influence are brought together with curriculum options (in contemporary education design) and preparation variables (prior experience and training that set up the particular family for the hosting event).

The central component in an exchange event: the host family.

*But who guards the guardians?*  
*(Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?)*  
*[Juvenal: Satires VI]*.

An intercultural hosting event, for the purposes of this study, is one that involves a family who has the desire (motivation) to participate in an experience that will affect the basic family unit (family system) for a variety of reasons (expectations) with a broad range of learning outcomes (satisfaction). Activity towards participation in a hosting event is a developmental and temporal process. The literature will show that the resultant set of expectations that are
produced by the host family may greatly influence or even predetermine the success of the experience of hosting.

*Desire for participation in a hosting event: the role of Motivation Theory.*

The reasons for participating in a student exchange hosting situation can be explored in terms of motivation theory since family involvement in a hosting event is brought about by voluntary participation due to some seed of motivated interest.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 2: Motivation as a key component of participation in an intercultural event.*

Models and theories about motivation stem from both the natural and behavioural sciences and are concerned with the way in which motivational systems work. Theorists have classified motivational systems into distinct categories that involved components of instinct, drive, reinforcement and incentives (Bindra, 1959; Bolles, 1967; Cofer; 1980; Weiner, 1990; Pardee, 1990; Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Gawel, 1997). Further developments into the understanding of motivational systems led to the inclusion of additional components of
emotions, social motivation and balance theory. A critical advance in the understanding of motivational theory and its application to educational research came through the work of Bindra (1976, 1978) who presented a theory of motivation that identified links between the concepts of drive and incentives with learned behaviour. Later, Toates (1986) proposed a further classification of motivational systems that separates cognition-related theories from non-cognitive theories.

From an historical viewpoint, therefore, general theories of motivation have given rise to more specific theories of motivation that have been applied to a subsystem of categories. Here is the preliminary but necessary link for merging motivational forces and the options provided by educational curriculum design to support a description of the host family context. From the basis of motivation theory, theories of worker motivation can be explained in order to provide a conceptual framework for understanding participant involvement, expectation and satisfaction. The main theories of motivation are examined for particular reference and applicability to voluntary participation as in the hosting experience.

Maslow's theory of hierarchical development (1954) involved a five level taxonomy of human needs that embraced physiological, security, social esteem and self-actualisation concepts. Simply stated, if needs were met at one level then the individual's attention would shift up the hierarchy to focus upon meeting a higher level of need in a process or progression to fulfilment. Alderfer (1972) extended the notion of an hierarchical system with the ERG theory of Existence, Relatedness and Growth, which challenged Maslow's satisfaction of lower order needs path. Aldefer proposed the existence of a frustration-regression process in which multi levels of need may be operating at one time. An individual may redirect attention to lower order needs if experiencing frustration with higher order needs. Aldefer proffered three factors or layers of satisfaction that varied directly with environmental returns and inversely with individual needs. The suggestion is made that a system in which there are
multi-layers and movement back and forth could be considered a spectrum, rather than a fixed hierarchy, of potential experience. A spectrum of experience, rather than a hierarchy, will be presented later as a useful analogy of the phenomenon of hosting.

Herzberg (1966) developed a two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene that contrasts with Maslow's five factors and Alderfer's three factors. Herzberg's theory proposed that maintenance needs or hygiene needs together with growth or motivator needs, could be used to describe all the basic needs of an individual. Positive factors or motivator needs result in satisfaction and are primarily related to intrinsic aspects of work including achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. Negative factors or hygiene needs result in dissatisfaction and are mainly related to extrinsic aspects of the work situation identified as policy, administration, technical supervision, interpersonal relations and work conditions. Some researchers questioned the application of a multi-layered hierarchical taxonomy of motivation in work contexts (Lawler & Suttle, 1972) just as criticisms of Herzberg's work were concerned with the implementation of the theory and its application to ongoing organisations (Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975). The theory has however, been applied to the field of education and Kaufman (1984) and Griggs (1993) found that Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory could be used in education to distinguish between motivation seekers and non-motivation seekers. The suggestion is made that if motivation factors and hygiene factors can be used to describe all the basic needs of an individual, then the implications for the host family may be found in the degree of balance between factors such as the job of hosting itself and the interpersonal relations created by the hosting situation.

*Motivation and the role of expectancy theory.*

Any discussion of motivation theory necessitates recognition of the impact of expectations upon motivation systems since there is the inference of a desired result. In the current
research, the role of expectancy theory will be discussed in two main categories. In this section motivation and expectancy theory are explored. Later expectancy theory will be examined in relation to intercultural perspectives.

In considering motivation theory and the theory of expectations, a link has been provided by the work of Vroom (1964) in which the importance of goal attainment for individuals in work related settings was considered. A cognitive framework is fundamental to Vroom's theory and the concepts of Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy are involved. Campbell and Pritchard (1976:74) explained how Vroom's model was used to define choices among tasks, and effort levels within tasks. Accordingly, an individual looks at the perceived value of the outcomes of an action weighed upon the expectancy or belief that the actions or behaviour will result in the desired outcomes. Goal attainment was an important modification of Herzberg's findings since it suggested that an individual attributed dissatisfaction to external factors but satisfaction was instead internal that is, from within the person. Expectancy theory holds that what an individual anticipates has a direct bearing on what he or she experiences since an individual who holds positive expectations regarding a venture has ample reason to believe that their expectations will be fulfilled (Rohrlich, 1993). This aspect of expectations therefore, has particular significance for the current study since a family's motivation for participation in a hosting experience can be reasonably assumed to be desirous of a positive venture.

Motivation and expectation theories are also linked in other seminal models of organisational behaviour such as those of McClelland (1961), Argyris (1964), Lawler (1973) and Deci (1975), who explained the behaviour of the individual in an organisation in terms of the satisfaction of certain needs. This was called achievement motivation theory or N-ACH. In the N-ACH model, a trait or traits interact with cognitive factors (expectations and
incentive values) to produce motivation and so a match between job satisfaction and job
design would bring about optimum productivity.

Often, other cognitive theories of motivation have been used to explain individual
differences in the strengths or expectations of particular needs and goals (Adams, 1965;
Pritchard, 1969; Landy & Trumbo, 1980:351). In contrast, non-cognitive theories have been
termed "homeostatic" or balance theories since they define an individual's attempts to
maintain some internal balance that enables a return to normal, or the restoration of balance
after a disturbance (Toates, 1986:35). Bindra (1979) criticised the non-cognitive balance
theory since it assumed that the individual knowingly translated drives into appropriate goal-
directed activity.

Some cognitive theories of motivation recognise internal factors (drives) and external
factors (incentives) as well as the impact of expectation upon human behaviour (Spence,
1956; Atkinson, 1957; Rotter, 1966; Toates, 1986; Weiner, 1990; Gawel, 1997). This version
of motivation theory involves the concept of locus of control as is found in psychology
Kulas, 1996; Schunk, 1996; Stage, Muller, Kinzie & Simmons, 1998). The locus of control
refers to the general expectation that behaviour as well as events are controlled by internal or
external forces. 'Internals' are individuals who believe that their own actions control their lives
while 'externals' believe that control in life comes from outside of themselves. The
implications of the theory of locus of control are that 'externals' attribute behavioural events
and other life situations to luck and chance. Others have described the sense of internal
control in individuals associated with decreased depression and the sense of external control,
that is, outcomes being controlled by extrinsic or external factors, associated with increased
depression. A sense of control was related to active and attentive problem solving since
individuals with a history of meeting and solving problems successfully had a well developed

The suggestion is made therefore, that an extension of the idea of locus of control in the internals/externals classification of individuals would be to identify 'internals' as proactive generators of their life situations and 'externals' as reactive agents in a sphere of uncontrollable forces. The current research will show, however, that the classification of individuals is not fixed and indeed there may be movement back and forth in a spectrum of reactive and proactive participation. For example, if the participant host family, who has been proactive in embarking on a hosting event is identified as an example of 'internals', then there will be a necessary change of status to 'externals' when circumstances intervene. Dilemmas and discernment arising from problematic situations in the hosting experience may create for them the perception of a negative hosting experience that is beyond their control.

General theories of motivation therefore, have stemmed from behavioural and biological roots and are made up of components of instincts, drives, reinforcements and incentives linked to expectations. More specific theories of motivation (discussed below) have been developed and these include attribution theory and satisfaction theory which together have implications for family systems in the hosting experience.

*Attribution theory and others in intercultural events.*

Attribution theory is concerned with the bases of judgements made about the causes of others' behaviours and has implications for family systems, expectations and maintenance of the family climate in the hosting experience. Very often people attribute the behaviour of others to their personal traits rather than to situational factors and this is especially evident when judging the behaviour of others who do not form part of the primary group (Heider, 1958;

In the hosting situation, the exchange student does not form part of the primary group of host nationals but does form part of the host family unit. Although salient factors may be contributing to an individual’s behaviour in a given situation, it is the personal traits of the individual’s behaviour that are most explicit. The suggestion is made that for a family in a hosting situation, the personal traits and behaviour of the exchange student in a given situation may be recognised more readily than other salient contributing factors such as the effects of culture shock.

A bias or tendency to underplay situational factors in preference to personal trait attributions was coined the "fundamental attribution error". A relationship between these variables was found such that if the individual was a member of one's in-group and the behaviour was desirable, then the behaviour was attributed to positive personal traits (Ross, 1977; Martin & Rohrlich, 1991a; Chamberlain & Zika, 1992). If however, the behaviour was undesirable then the behaviour was attributed to situational pressures. The application of 'fundamental attribution error' to the host family situation does not readily fit, however, since undesirable behaviour on the part of the exchange student would be attributed to situational pressures that would implicate the hosts themselves. The suggestion is made therefore, that in the host family situation both positive and negative behaviour on the part of the exchange student will be attributed to personal traits rather than situational factors.

Another attribute that can be related to intercultural investigation is category width or the range of variable differences that an individual considers as acceptable components in a cognitive variable (Detweiler, 1975; Pettigrew, 1982). Differences between broad and narrow categorisers as an aspect of attribution theory were found to be related to ethnocentrism and tolerance for ambiguity in groups featuring cultural dissimilarity. The "ultimate" attribution
error was described by Pettigrew (1979) as an observation that related to ingroup/outgroup systematic misattributions or social prejudice. An implication of ultimate attribution error was noted by Brislin (1981) who stated that a desirable goal of intercultural programs was to encourage participants, and exchangees in particular, to make an increasing number of situational attributions toward the behaviour of their host family over the duration of the hosting event. There were critical implications here for exchanges of very short duration since exchangees would be more likely to make negative trait attributions than positive ones. The suggestion is made that in the reverse context, that of the host family, negative trait attributions may also occur in reference to the exchange student, particularly since in the current research, many of the hosting events are in the category of short duration.

Brislin (1981) also recognised the possibility of individuals perceiving another person’s attributions as being specifically directed towards them. According to this notion, an exchangee may perceive or attribute "personalism" when it was not at all the intention of the host. Personalism may become less intensely focused over time just as one more aspect of attribution theory, the factor of persistence, implies a temporal influence. Fowler and Peterson (1981) found that a modification of an individual's attributional style could increase persistence on behavioural tasks in the face of failure. Similarly, consideration of persistence as a behavioural correlate of motivation was the focus of studies by Feather (1962) and Maehr and Braskramp (1986). Expectations for success and persistence in the face of failure are demonstrated by the current research to be recognisable aspects of the experience of hosting family. Since persistence is also considered an attribute of self-concept, it is of particular interest to the current study. The expectations for success that were strongly envisaged by the participant host families were not always the experienced reality and therefore, the modifications and concessions made to the expectations, in view of problematic issues, may be related to the attribute of persistence.
Attribution theory and the individual self-concept in the intercultural event.

An understanding of self-concept, as an aspect of attribution theory, in an intercultural event, is considered fundamental to the current study since the phenomenon of hosting is essentially about participants in a human experience. The range of human experience in a hosting event is in question and the current research will show that there are a number of qualitatively different ways in which this particular lifeworld is understood. The provision of self-concept as an aspect of attributional style extends this investigation to a personal, grass roots level that allows potential insight into the humanness of the experience of hosting for participant host families. Self-concept is concerned with oneself, awareness and others and is therefore an ingredient in the host family complex.

Self-concept is a person's total personal assessment of their appearance, background and origins, abilities, resources, attitudes and feelings that are expressed within a person's awareness to govern, regulate and control behaviour, performance and actions. Aspects of self-concept embrace cognitive, descriptive, evaluative and comparative beliefs about one's characteristics. Although self-concept is intangible, the resultant behaviour is observable and from a psychological perspective could be used as a measure of an individual's self-concept over a period of time. Self-concept therefore has multidimensional properties (Rosenberg, 1965; LaBenne & Greene, 1969:10; Marsh & Byrne, 1990; Canfield & Wells, 1994). The status of an individual's self-concept has been plotted according to a framework that includes these guidelines presented by LaBenne and Greene (1969:12)

1. introspective self-reflections in personal, family, social and school or work settings
2. congruence between descriptions of current self-concept and ideal self-concept
3. congruence between subjective self-reports and actions and the objective reports of clinically trained observers
4. non-introspective inferences derived from projective techniques, clinical interviews.
The development of self-concept is, according to interpersonal theory, a process of self-concept selection in which behaviour and learning are products of perception. In this way the quality of an individual's experiences is an indicator of those with good self-concept or weak self-concept. LaBenne and Greene believe that an individual's self-concept is built or achieved over time in relation to the accumulated social contacts and experiences of interaction with others. This idea was described by Sullivan (1947, in Brislin & Pedersen, 1976:13) as learning about the self from the "mirror of other people".

Another factor in the development of self-concept relates to the influence of significant others (parents, friends, teachers). Significant others are the people who are most likely to be in the position to administer rewards, positive reinforcement, discouragement and punishment in the person's life. In the host family situation, each participant member is a significant other, be they host nationals/parents, siblings or the exchange student. Rogers (1951:503) explained that as an individual accumulates life experiences, these are symbolised, perceived, interpreted and organised in relationship to the self, or denied or dismissed if they are inconsistent with the image of the self. Thus, a perception is selective according to whether or not the experience is consistent with the current image of the self.

The argument in this thesis is that in the host family situation where there are many shared experiences to be perceived and interpreted against an image of self, there is a further complexity created by the intercultural context. For the duration of the hosting event there may be a greater than usual set of challenges to the image of self due to the impact of intercultural learning and cross-cultural confrontation.

According to Shaffer and Shoben (1969) much observable behaviour can be interpreted or understood as a person's attempts to maintain a consistent self-concept. An individual with a weak self-concept will live in a narrow perceptual field that defends already existing perceptual organisations. Alternatively, the individual with a positive or strong self-
concept is motivated to explore and accumulate personal meanings for events in their world. Past events form an experience base of acceptance and success in which positive relationships are anticipated and activities are primed by dynamic expectations. Martire (1956) and Steiner (1957) located self-concept as a factor that influences behaviour patterns and adjustment while Sheerer (1949) was able to demonstrate that self-concept created a positive correlation between acceptance of self and respect for others. If acceptance of self and respect for others can be reasonably identified as desirable attributes of participants in an intercultural experience such as a hosting event, then there may be implications for self-concept and participant selection in intercultural programs. In the current research, the multidimensional nature of self-concept is apparent due to the highly interactive behavioural nature of ongoing interaction between the members of the host family.

Burnett (1994) researched self-concept and self-esteem in elementary school children. He concluded that self-concept was a focus on beliefs that people hold about specific characteristics associated with themselves, while self-esteem related to the global beliefs and feelings, that is, how people perceive themselves as people. In the study, self-esteem was described as feeling satisfied with oneself as a person, while self-concept was related to knowing and liking how one went about a particular task. In another study, Crano (1986) reported that many exchange students to the United States of America had a range of adjustment problems and difficulties in adapting to their new life and she concluded that there was a relationship here with their own self-concept. Crano observed that self-concept measures in Latin American students fluctuated in relation to the adjustment difficulties that they encountered. The students with high self-concept had fewer problems academically, reported better relationships with their host families and had fewer adjustment problems than the students with low self-concept. Crano (1986:7) concluded that this relationship was
consistent with traditional views that the self is a "central, fairly permanent, and stable organization that provides consistency to personality".

Lecky (1945) described self-concept as "an organisation of values that are consistent with one another" in a process in which new ideas and beliefs are continually assimilated, accepted or dismissed. There are implications here for exchange participants who are experiencing difficulties since those trying to assist them by giving immediate attention to language difference, culture shock, homesickness or unfamiliar social cues might be better advised to address their needs from a self-concept perspective. Such a perspective would require a level of expertise not normally accessible to the host family. Sekaran (1986) identified the role that self-esteem played in overcoming negative situations in life when links were found between positive self-esteem and reports of higher life satisfaction. Also, Hong and Giannakopoulos (1994) found that individuals with high self-esteem were more likely to be satisfied with their lives and that when life satisfaction increased, so did self-esteem.

Satisfaction as a response to motivation and participation.

Most of the literature concerning satisfaction comes from job satisfaction research and consequently participant satisfaction in an intercultural exchange cannot be explicitly predicated from models of worker satisfaction. In this section, however, the related areas of life, leisure, education and adolescent satisfaction will be reviewed in an attempt to show how participant satisfaction in hosting events is related to, but distinct from other models of satisfaction generally. Tinto (1986:377) noted that the application of theories of work organisations, such as worker satisfaction theory to other contexts of satisfaction, should be carried out judiciously since it is doubtful that students would see themselves "in the same light as workers generally". The hosting situation may however, have special application to
theories of worker satisfaction since the host family was specifically engaged for the duration of the event in the 'job' of hosting.

*Varying descriptions of satisfaction: worker satisfaction.*

Interest in worker satisfaction can be traced back to the studies of Mayo who found that changing the conditions of work resulted in an improvement in attitude as well as in the effectiveness of workers (Mayo, 1949). Worker satisfaction studies have shown various models of job satisfaction, whether they be concerned with increased productivity or with increased satisfaction on humanitarian grounds. Studies have tried to identify individuals in terms of satisfaction criteria and consideration has been given to job design and worker suitability. For example, Wanous and Lawler (1972) studied telephone employees and developed nine operational definitions of job satisfaction that assumed that job satisfaction was additive in nature and dependent upon facets of a job. Similarly, Brief and Aldag (1978) found that higher order needs required effective performance and incentives for continued effort. They concluded that a linear model of job satisfaction, which assumed an additive function of independent variables, could be successfully used to measure facets of job satisfaction.

Early interest in teacher job satisfaction research was conducted by Hoppock (1935) who found that satisfied teachers expressed perceptions of being emotionally adjusted, enjoyed good interpersonal relationships with superiors and colleagues and generally felt successful in their careers. Later, potential opportunities for greater intrinsic satisfaction were identified (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Staw, 1974; Nederveen, 1982). These bodies of research stated that teachers' work could be changed to increase opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction if their assignments involved increased task variety and complexity, opportunities
for social interaction, task identity, work significance and teacher responsibility. In this way, reports of satisfaction were affected by specific facets or variables.

Landy and Trumbo (1980:414) noted that overall job satisfaction and facet satisfaction of component parts of a job have in practice been measures of attitude. An attitude is a "feeling, belief, or action tendency toward a psychological object" and job satisfaction inventories have generally measured feelings and beliefs about the job. Feelings about a job however, are not the same as beliefs about a job. Consequently, methodological problems in reporting feelings of satisfaction were identified since responses did not provide meaning outside a continuum. In the current research, the phenomenographical style of interview schedule is not delimited by closed question construction and is specifically concerned with extracting meaning (Theman & Svensson, 1983).

Life Satisfaction.

Research into learning, success and achievement has included investigations concerning life satisfaction. According to Diener (1984), life satisfaction is a measure of an individual's personal judgement of well-being, happiness and quality of life based upon a selection of criteria. Hong and Giannakopoulos (1994:28) explored the relationship of satisfaction with life to personality characteristics and found that self-esteem, depression, trait anger, locus of control and religiosity were significant factors. In this study self-esteem and depression affected levels of satisfaction more than any other variable. They concluded that as life satisfaction increases, self-esteem increases also and they believed that self-esteem helps to surmount negative experiences. This supported the notion of Sekaran (1986) that those individuals who view themselves positively and tend to observe life events in a positive way (positive self-concept) show corresponding high life satisfaction.
From another perspective, levels of satisfaction were conceptualised as a decreasing function of the perceived difference between levels of aspiration and achievement (Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976; Mason & Faulkenberry, 1978). The comparison between an individual's perception of life with aspirations and achievements was made. Satisfaction was thought to be greater if the perceived gap between achievements and aspirations was less. The greater the difference between aspirations and achievements, the greater the level of dissatisfaction. The smaller the difference, then the greater the level of satisfaction. Personal interview analysis revealed that as the gap between aspirations and achievements narrowed due to some third variable of interest, (this could be age or income level) then satisfaction was said to increase. A wider gap between these attributes led conversely to dissatisfaction. A methodological weakness was the need for a more rigorous test of the changing gap hypothesis that would be facilitated by the development of a direct measure of achievement. Perceptions of life aspirations and achievements however, can be related to expectancy theory which is discussed later.

Other measures of learning, success and satisfaction have concentrated on different life sectors and the influences of community variables. Related categories have included psychological, educational, social, relaxational, physiological and aesthetic components of satisfaction within life satisfaction, job satisfaction, marital satisfaction, leisure satisfaction and global satisfaction (Hulin, 1969; Miller & Sjornberg, 1973; Andrews & Crandall, 1976; Beard & Ragheb, 1980:22). The components of satisfaction were derived from work related settings and sought to define a person's life in terms of three spheres of activity: work, play and kinship. There is a relation to the hosting situation in the current research with the three spheres of activity since school (work), relaxation (play) and family systems (kinship) as readily recognised components.
**Education and satisfaction.**

Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) examined the nature of instruments used for measuring education satisfaction and they defined satisfaction in two ways. Satisfaction could be viewed as an overall measure, (i.e. globally), or satisfaction could be viewed in a complex, additive way. In a global measure of satisfaction, it is assumed that the difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be stated in a clear choice when social and psychological factors are weighed in terms of a given situation. In the second view, the theory of dissonance is operational since it explains how an individual interprets the various aspects of a situation or experience in relation to their particular and personal expectations.

Domer (1983:6) stated that individuals strive to maximise their outcomes and they have feelings of satisfaction when they perceive that they are receiving a fair return for their social investment. If expectations fail to eventuate then a degree of dissonance will result in feelings of dissatisfaction. In this model, both expectations and experiences are measured on a scale within a bipolar axis. Satisfaction is defined as an additive index of aspect dissonances weighted by the relative importance that the individual attributes to each aspect. In this theory, the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors is minimal in contrast to the significance Herzberg placed upon these factors. A number of studies have established positive correlations between expectations and satisfaction (Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976; Kealey, 1989) and this aspect of satisfaction is of special significance for the current study since family participation in a hosting event is voluntary and essentially has expectations for an educational experience.

Domer (1983) was able to construct a basic index of satisfaction from the dissonance between expectations and experiences for professional architects who were asked to indicate their educational satisfaction with their careers. This study concluded that educational satisfaction was difficult to understand because of its essentially subjective nature and its
inter-relationship to the complex nature of human experiences and perceptions, educational satisfaction was however, best understood in terms of how it was affected by psychological and social variables.

Adolescent satisfaction.

More recent interest in satisfaction research has centred on the satisfaction experienced by adolescents. In particular, adolescent satisfaction has been related to self-concept. Aspects of attribution theory have recognised the role of self-concept upon an individual's behaviour. The significance of these concepts for the current research is found in the crucial link with adolescent life satisfaction. There have been studies focusing on adolescent satisfaction such as that of Leung and Leung (1992). They explored the relationship between self-concept, parents and life satisfaction for Chinese junior high adolescents. Self-concept was measured globally together with academic ability, physical ability, social ability and physical appearance. A strong correlation between self-concept and life satisfaction was related to the adolescent's relationship with parents. The link between self-concept and life satisfaction is of prime interest to the current research and the host family intra-relationships. The maintenance of life satisfaction for the duration of the hosting event has implications since Grove (1989:16) claimed that host families had a critical role to play in the level of satisfactory outcomes for intercultural exchange students. The critical role of the host family was due to their primary provision of physical care, cultural guidance and emotional support for exchangees.

Much of the literature into satisfaction therefore, comes from fields other than participation in cross-cultural contact and has focused upon facets as well as global satisfaction. A change in the condition of facets of satisfaction has been shown to correspondingly affect individuals' attitudes and effectiveness. Satisfaction has been linked to
perceptions of life, aspirations and achievements. The theory of dissonance is a measure of the gap between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and is related to individual attributes and particular personal expectations. Life, leisure, education and adolescent satisfaction have related facets of self-concept and self-esteem that are affected by psychological and social variables. In the hosting situation, aspects of motivation, expectations, attributes and degrees of satisfaction are all clearly evident influences upon the family unit. Just how these factors may affect the members of the host family, which is essentially made up of host nationals and the exchange student, will be examined in view of family systems theory.

**Family Systems Theory and the Host Family Unit**

Such is SOCIETY, the vital articulation of many individuals into a new collective individual. [Thomas Carlyle; Characteristics].

An understanding of family systems theory is critical to this research. Prior to participation in an exchange event, a family system exists that is necessarily altered and changed to some degree by the addition of another member such as the exchange student. The family is described as a living system since families do not retain constant membership over time and the addition or subtraction of any member has dramatic implications for the structure of family interaction (Hall & Fagan, 1956; Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Broderick & Smith, 1979; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1989; Whitechurch & Constantine, 1993; Henry, 1994; Larson, 1995). According to Hall and Fagan (1956) a system is a set of objects together with relationships that exist between the objects and their attributes. For any given family there is a system; in the hosting situation, the 'new' family system will be in operation to some identifiable degree for a period of time that is the duration of the hosting event. The 'new' family system is further challenged by the nature of the additional membership that is
intercultural in origin. The suggestion is made therefore, that in the hosting situation, aspects of family systems theory together with intercultural issues must be considered.

Figure 3: The host family members in an intercultural exchange event.

Systems theory when applied to the family situation can be identified as a set of family dynamics that are organised according to a hierarchy of systems that represent the qualities of the combination of individuals as well as the subsets of relationships within the overall system. At the most global level, a family system establishes boundaries that define the nature of contact between the overall family unit and others outside the family. Kantor and Lehr (1975) described the process of bounding through which external elements that are hostile to the family system may be filtered out or expelled while those that are in accord with the family system goals are actively pursued.

Research has noted that by the time a family reaches the phase wherein the children are adolescents, it has faced a variety of predictable and unpredictable stressor events (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1989). How the stressor events impact on family circumstances
will depend upon the family's social and psychological assets. Assets of this kind are social and psychological resources that have the potential to act as a buffer when difficulties arise. After a family has attempted to resolve difficulties that have emerged as stressors, family systems theory can be applied to identify the level of family adaptation in consideration of the overall family system or the individual family members. In the case of student exchange experiences, the family system may be said to include adolescents in the (host) family.

Previous research into family systems has revealed sets of family characteristics that include bonding, cohesion, adaptability, flexibility, patterns of stability and parenting behaviours such as support and control (Broderick & Smith, 1979; Peterson & Leigh, 1990; Henry, 1994). Adolescent adaptation is said to depend upon family system characteristics together with parent-adolescent subsystems. In Fig. 3, adolescent adaptation is linked to strengthening family resources within the family system. Similarly, a family system can be seen to have sets of expectations for behaviour, both explicit and implicit and these will govern day to day interactions within the overall family unit. The key aspect of family systems theory concerns any stimulus from the environment that enters the system (input) and how it is processed or emitted back to the environment (output). Systems theory makes an examination of what happens to the input in the process of becoming output. In the family situation, the process may be directed by a set of family rules or norms or by a set of responses that emerge to meet new challenges. How a new family member (input) is integrated into the new family system is governed by rates of interaction, a hierarchical feedback structure or loop and rules of transformation (output). Feedback and integration boundaries are control related and dependent upon attributes of family group members.

Adolescent family life satisfaction, as part of family systems theory, is defined as the extent to which adolescents perceive their families in a positive manner. Adolescents who are more satisfied with their families engage in greater emotional disclosure with their parents,
are more compliant with parental expectations and report greater quality of life (Henry, 1994). Evidence also exists to support that adolescent’s perceptions of specific parenting behaviours that occur within parent-adolescent subsystems are another type of internal family resource that is related to adolescent adaptation (Roberts, 1994). The suggestion was made that further research into family system characteristics could set the stage for interactions in parent-adolescent dyads and parent-youth interactions in overall systemic dynamics in families. This was explained to have significance for enhanced adolescent adaptation in a variety of family forms. Similarly, the dynamics in the broader family system could relate to outcomes in adolescents. The focus of exchange student adaptation with host family integration was not addressed by Henry (1994) but it could be hypothesised that some of the operative dynamics of family systems theory must in part be involved in the host family situation. Certainly Grove (1981) sought to identify the major dynamic of the ‘normal’ exchange experience and the notion of the adjustment curve was considered. The application of family systems theory however, throws a new light on the host family group experience. The entire host family (host nationals and the exchange student) is therefore viewed in the current research, in terms of family systems theory.

Henry (1994) noted that adolescent family life satisfaction was different for those in traditional families compared with step-families and single parent situations. What, for example, is the experience and satisfaction of the exchange student who leaves a traditional family and is exchanged to a split family where weekends are shared about between the single parent and the newly remarried other parent? Henry’s (1994) results also indicated that adolescents with greater satisfaction with family life and reports of family connectedness were especially prepared for intercultural adaptation. The suggestion was made that adolescents in this category had already in place, an emotional foundation from which they could explore the world and a good base from which to venture away. For individual
participants in an exchange program, the timing of the event could be determined as critical to success since contrasting reports indicated that adolescent separation from the family, that is, constructed independence such as is afforded in an exchange, would promote healthy adolescent development. When there are indications of a good emotional family base, the suggestion is that then only, is the student ready to venture the world and equipped for intercultural exposure.

This research suggests that there may be implications for selection criteria for high school student exchangees and organisers may well wish to interview natural family members to ascertain the student's suitability, or emotional base, to leave their family, embark on an exchange and integrate with another family system. Some examples of selection criteria (Griggs, 1996; Whatterson, 1996) omit family group participant interviews entirely and consult with the designated student exclusively while others are rigorous and scrupulous in their attention to detail when making their choices. Aspects of selection criteria are discussed later.

Nomura, Noguchi, Saito and Tezuka (1995) explored family behaviour in American and Japanese families in terms of the psycho-social environment and cultural dynamics. The family characteristics involved were: cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement, orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organisation and control. They noted that despite increased knowledge and interaction of Japanese and American peoples in trade, politics and international co-operation, there exists a basic cultural gap that is fundamental to how people perceive the self and society within their own cultures. Since there has been little research dealing with the family behaviours of the two societies, a study was set up using an instrument called the Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Moos and Moos in 1986 which was used to show aspects of intellectual, social and cultural factors.
Previous research by Caudill and Weinstein (1969) had reported significant differences between the maternal parenting behaviour of Japanese and American mothers. The most noticeable differences were in the patterns of communication with infants, adult/children sleeping practices, expectations and images of the family to do with compliance, individualism, self-reliance, developing social skills. There were also notable differences in the path from dependence to independence or immature/mature dependency between the American and Japanese adolescents. It was concluded in this research that the differences could represent a segment of each society's approach to particular concepts in general. For example, the way in which communication and one's personhood is viewed by each culture was found to be profoundly different. The Japanese and American respondents had similar characteristics for intellectual-cultural involvement, social-intellectual curiosity, conflict and commitment (possibly due to a System Maintenance factor) but cultural differences were found in group/individual concepts. In particular, the notion of family cohesion when applied to family decisions/house rules and differences also in the recognition of achievement or the belief of competition for the group versus the individual were found. Other differences were concerned with aspects of moral-religious training and collective agreement resulting in "everyone in harmony" versus individual's personal growth. These constructs were further dimensionalised in terms of opaque and transparent correlations.

Some of the different maternal or parenting behaviours between the American and Japanese mothers were shown to result in differing views of what constituted the "good" child for each culture. The dissimilar views were thought to relate to the horizontal peer relationship focus in America versus the vertical parent-child relationship found in Japan (Nomura et al., 1995). Dissimilar cultural indicators between America and Japan have led to the need for alternate versions of survey instruments. The need for different versions highlights some of the issues for studies in intercultural relations since the modification of a
survey instrument may involve translators, pre-tests, bilingual readers, construct and criterion-related validity, consultation with anthropologists and social scientists.

Another significant result that has implications for host families was in the area of cohesion versus control between parent and youth generations. Furukawa (1992) studied the psychological adjustment of Japanese teenagers who were enrolled in a foreign exchange student program and sought to determine if parental practices influenced personality features in their children. It had been suggested that a measurement of care and protection in the first sixteen years of a child's life related to parental bonding. An aspect of parental bonding, "affectionless control", could be translated into personality features, mental health status and anxiety disorders in Japanese students. About 200 Japanese teenage students who were going to spend a year with a host family in various countries through an international exchange student program were surveyed. Furukawa (1992) found that for this sample of Japanese students who had volunteered to become foreign exchange students, neuroticism correlated negatively with maternal care and positively with maternal overprotection and personality characteristics were found to be significantly associated with general health. In the area of reported parental "affectionless control" however, the findings showed that these students did not have depression or anxiety disorders which was hypothesised in keeping with previous research. The author concluded that help-seeking behaviour might be the reason for the observed difference and stated that it was plausible to assume that parental rearing practices would contribute to any developmental changes in the personalities of the exchange students in foreign cultures. In the hosting situation a range of parental rearing practices are apparent and the fusion, happy match or confrontation of exchange versus host national family types are recognised in the host family system in the current research.

Furukawa (1992) found that the type of student involved in the sample scored high on the extroversion scale in the General Health Questionnaire, since they had applied for the
exchange and been accepted. This type of student is probably the ideal selection, one who will speak up and engage in relationship-building behaviour in the host country and yet research shows that this is not always the case. The issues raised here involve student selection criteria, expectations, responsibilities and commitment, persistence and tolerance for ambiguity. Similarly, the type of family and the nature of parental rearing practices were addressed. It would be interesting to explore this area in terms of cross-cultural differences. The notions of "affectionless control", care and overprotection may be reinforced in a family situation for the first sixteen years of a child's life and so represent the 'norm'. This 'norm' may be culturally dependent and indeed, the author mentioned that such a discrepancy could possibly be found in the different populations and cultures of Japan versus Australia or Sweden.

Family systems theory therefore, is concerned with family dynamics that represent the combination of individuals as well as the subsets of relationships. Families have social and psychological assets that they use as buffers when difficulties arise. Adolescent adaptation is related to family system characteristics that include expectations, life satisfaction, family connectedness, self-concept and communication. The characteristics of a family system are used in the current research to describe the augmented group of the hosting family in an intercultural student exchange event.

How then does a teenager from one type of home adjust into another when placed in a host family situation that is a long way from their natural home and a lot different in terms of parental control, protection, affection, expectations and responsibilities? Research has addressed these issues in terms of student adaptation and adjustment but the literature on host parents' views, back translated, is scarce and needs to be addressed in future publications.
Cross-cultural training programs have been developed with the main purpose of facilitating and encouraging non-stressful and ideally positive interaction between members of different cultures (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976; Grove & Torbiörn, 1993; Gochenour & Janeway, 1993; Madden & Myers, 1994). The focus of preparation has traditionally been towards the individual who is making a sojourn in a new country. Little attention has been given to preparation, training and orientation for the host family who too, are participating in cross-cultural contact. Researchers have identified goals for cross-cultural training which include methods to improve an awareness of customs and interpersonal skills. Basic communication skills, providing information about the foreign culture, raising issues of sensitivity and respect, reducing prejudice and inducing enthusiasm and honesty in all relationships, or at least rational cooperation together with the need for debriefing after the intercultural experience have all been described (Guthrie, 1966; Triandis, 1977; Zaremba, 1984; Grove, 1989; Hill & Thomas, 1997; Smith & others, 1992; Kealley & Protheroe, 1996). The suggestion is made that many of the areas targeted for awareness raising have significance for enhancing host family participation in exchange events.

Brislin (1993) has made an extensive study of cross-cultural encounters and concluded that not all contact between members of different cultural groups will have positive outcomes. Most of the difficulties experienced are related to the unfamiliar people with whom an individual must interact and the associated problematic abstract concepts that focus on people's characteristic behaviour, ideas and values since people become very comfortable or "at home" with their own culture.
It is necessary at this point to provide a central definition of culture that serves as a basis for cultural understanding in this study. A useful definition is provided by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952:180). Culture is explained as follows:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached value; culture systems may, on one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

From this definition several observations about a culture and cross-cultural contact can be drawn. For example, in any culture there will be an enormous number of behaviours that are related to daily life, including traits of individuals and groups as well as standards or norms of acceptable behaviour. Expectations of what is good or proper are viewed as standards of morality for that culture or group and socialisation from childhood ensures that this process is ongoing and successful.
There are a number of factors that can be presumed to affect cross-cultural contact suggested from empirical research and the body of literature. A number of studies have investigated ways of improving intercultural interaction. Cushner (1987) identified three distinct areas that related to cross-cultural outcomes and these were people’s intense feelings (anxiety, belonging, ambiguity, disconfirmed expectations), knowledge areas (language, roles, value of group versus value of the individual, time and space) and the bases of cultural differences (categorisation, ingroup versus outgroup distinctions, learning styles, attribution). To maximise the potential for a successful cross-cultural encounter much interest has gone into the development of preparatory skills and programs. The nature of preparation for cross-cultural exposure will now be explored.

Zaremba (1984:35) identified four key features of a person’s life that are interrelated by culture which embrace basic assumptions about the nature of the physical world and human relationships, values and attitudes for the self and others, habits of thought and patterns of behaviour in social settings. Any observation made by an individual is always personal and historically and culturally biased since people tend to see things in different ways in accordance with their own particular models of reality, background, experience and personal preferences and relationships. Similarly, Brislin (1993) considered cross-cultural contact in other contexts and was able to show that the history or background of a cultural group together with individual variables of human behaviour, group, situational and task factors and cross-cultural adjustment were critical aspects for understanding the nature of intercultural experience. Previously Hoffman (1977) identified the role of an observation of group differences while Ashmore (1970) believed that only intimate sharing of personal feelings, concerns, values and goals with individuals from another culture was the real beginning of an informed appreciation of intercultural dimensions.

44
Gudykunst (1991) provided another perspective and found that culturally based expectations of strangers, intergroup attitudes such as ethnocentrism, prejudice and stereotyping all had critical impact when difficulties were encountered such as communication breakdown and negative intergroup outcomes. Hewstone and Giles (1986) defined communication breakdown in terms of a feeling of dissatisfaction that detracts from the full potential of intercultural encounters due to negative attribution influences. Brewer and Miller (1988) found that intergroup expectations could be altered to facilitate positive outcomes in intercultural encounters. A change in attitudes, increased complexity of intergroup perceptions and the decategorisation of individual members from the social group as a whole were found to be manipulatory variables.

Grove (1989) has outlined twelve basic principles that formulate exchange orientation for adolescents to assist in intercultural learning, personal growth and stressful challenges during the exchange program. Grove argued that the design of some programs is relatively unsophisticated, and unsuspecting participants consequently encounter problems that adversely affect their perception of intercultural interaction. It is stressed in the current study that when problems are encountered due to unsophisticated programs; the unsuspecting participants are not only the exchange students but the members of the host family also.

The principles for exchange orientation that Grove has described are prioritised with the fundamental principle concerning the facilitation of learning through appropriate experiences. Grove has suggested that there is a critical need to support intercultural learning experiences in an informal way with personnel skilled in this area. The prevention of culture shock is a high priority for orientation of participants since research shows that it can be prevented or at least, alleviated through proper care and understanding. A key factor here includes reducing some of the unpredictability facing the exchangee in a supportive atmosphere. Unsaid, but nevertheless explicit, is the role of the host family as the practical
component of the desired 'supportive atmosphere'. Again, the literature of student exchange systems does not observe the centricity of the role of the host family but rather gives a focus to organisers and officials who cannot be and are not, the main contact with the exchange student.

Another key area of interest in cross-cultural preparation and training concerns the degree of ethnocentricity with which the exchangee views the values, habits of thought and patterns of behaviour of unfamiliar cultures. Ethnocentrism refers to attitudes and adjustment in cultural awareness where the host culture is considered by the sojourner as inferior to the home culture to the extent that an assumption is made that "the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (M. J. Bennett, 1993:30; Paige, 1993:6). The degree of ethnocentricity must be reduced since it is an obstacle to intercultural learning just as stereotyping and racism are other negative outcomes of learning about dissimilar cultures (Grove, 1989:10; M. J. Bennett, 1993:30). It was concluded that a model of intercultural adaptation and effectiveness that aimed to reduce ethnocentrism should provide orientation events throughout the entire intercultural experience. The suggestion is made that orientation is not purely for the exchangee but should be ongoing for the natural and host family members also. It has been reported however, that host family participants often do not receive adequate orientation for a variety of reasons including a lack of time before the arrival of the exchange student as well as a lack of organisational concern or priority to host orientation (Grove, 1989).

Effective orientation should include a variety of activities and events that are culturally appropriate for the learners and should be undertaken as serious learning experiences (Grove, 1989). A number of approaches that have been used include the fact oriented approach, the attribution learning approach, the cultural awareness approach, the cognitive-behaviour modification approach, the experiential learning approach and the
interactional learning approach. Lectures on geography, history, travelogues, food and dance evenings (for host families as well as exchange students) are regarded as inferior approaches since they have very limited value and do not contribute to the understanding of the nature of culture. Grove concluded that ultimately the preferred learning style of the participants was the most important consideration in selecting a learning style for any program of orientation. The suggestion is made that for participants in a hosting event, the motivation to learn about intercultural differences is as critical as the preferred learning style. Much of the learning from the cross-cultural exposure occurs experientially during the hosting event and it is when problems or differences are confronted then the need for solutions and understandings will emerge.

Noesjirwan (1985:14) presented another view of orientation goals based on Australian findings with Asian students and reported a conflict in priorities between what organisers perceived as critically relevant and the reported responses of participants. Of note were the low priority scores given to language learning, personal growth, student responsibilities, support networking, general culture learning while the highest priority was given to strategies for coping, developing realistic expectations and meeting other students. She concluded that although much of the information presented to the students was relevant, little of it was digested. Information that aims to orientate students is often devoid of meaning when students do not have an experience base to work on (Grove & Hansel, 1985). It was suggested that after the students had been on exchange for around two months, only then were they seriously concerned with coming to grips with problems of adjusting to the new culture. The orientation program content at this stage only, would be relevant and full of meaning. There are implications here for the host family participants in the current research since most of the hosting events had a duration of two months or less.
The culmination of any exchange orientation should be the participant's judgement of the worth of the program. It has been suggested however, that it is not realistic to expect to gain a consensus about the worth of an educational program due to the varying perceptions and needs of people. Yet, any insight into developing a more competent educational program could be of benefit to those concerned (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Grove, 1989:24).

Critical aspects of cross-cultural encounters therefore, include the cultural and historical background of a group as well as individual variables of human behaviour. Expectations and attitudes are perceived according to an individual's particular model of reality. Outcomes of cross-cultural contact are affected by peoples' intense feelings, knowledge areas and the bases of cultural differences. Culture assimilator programs are used to facilitate positive interaction between members of different cultures and these will now be examined.

*The Culture General Assimilator as an aid to preparation of sojourners.*

A culture general assimilator is basically an instrument developed to be of practical use for sojourners who are preparing to embark on an intercultural endeavour. Unlike general culture training, a culture general assimilator is typically designed for a culturally specific orientation. Interest in this area has grown steadily in recent times and a number of instruments have been developed (Cushner, 1987). A basic tenet of a culture general assimilator is that it should be congruent with the expectations and likely experiences of the individuals for whom it is applied. Cushner (1987:9) described the goal of the culture general assimilator as follows:

[It] is to improve sojourners' abilities to adjust to the demands of an intercultural sojourn, first by increasing awareness and understanding of concepts of intercultural interaction and adjustment, and second by encouraging the integration of these concepts into their daily interactions with host nationals.
One of the aims is to equip individuals with skills that will enable them to deal successfully with potential problems and to solve these in culturally appropriate ways. The process involves participants reading a selection of incidents and then they are questioned as to which answer from a set of possibilities, best satisfies a logical explanation of the incident. Sometimes four or five possible answers are suggested and once a solution has been suggested, then each of the possible resolutions is discussed in a culturally specific and appropriate way until the best explanation eventuates. This type of instrument is usually designed for the exchangee but could be of special use for novice host families also. The suggestion is made that once a host family is formed and in operation, there is potentially, or indeed, an intercultural situation. It is likely that between host family members there will be intercultural exposure, interaction, growth and adjustment at best, or possibly a lack of communication, stereotyping, and breakdown in understanding or worse. What could be considered appropriate preparation for a host family is therefore, no less than what is traditionally accepted and recommended for the exchange student.

Dragonas (1983:32) examined the nature of meetings set up for American host parents to plan events for their German visitors. There was talk about some of the apprehensions of young teenagers away from home for the first time, their mannerisms, cultural differences and attitudes so that the host parents could be better prepared to deal with "the initial culture shock and the occasional problems that are sure to arise". These kinds of awareness discussions are useful but may merely skim the surface of potential issues that have presented to host families. The suggestion is made that host family literature, developed from research, that specifically addresses the range of issues that could surface in a hosting event in a similar format to the general culture assimilator (with realistic scenarios to observe) would provide purposeful reference guidance. Such an adaptation of the general culture assimilator from the
exchangee situation to that of the host family would provide assistance for those who are casually interested to those seeking self-help, better understanding or specialist support.

Cushner (1987) found that the application of a culture general assimilator for American Field Service (AFS) students to New Zealand had positive outcomes for adjusting to the immediate environment and in solving interpersonal problems. There was significant and positive indication of cognitive change due to the use of this orientation material. Abelson (1981) noted that often adolescents do not have an experience base that is sufficient for them to immediately adapt to new situations. The use of a culture general assimilator was effective, however, when participants were able to "play" out scripted events rather than memorising a list of do's and don'ts. The lack of an experience base has been previously recognised (Noesjirwan, 1985) and so the suggestion is made that for host families and particularly novice host families, the use of a general culture assimilator strategy prior to, or during the cross-cultural exposure, could be an effective alternative to memorising a list of do's and don'ts. Many brochures that are intended to provide the host family with some kind of preparation for their exchange student are in the form of lists of do's and don'ts and are not sufficiently nor responsibly adequate for the range of possible encounters.

There has been debate as to whether specific or general cross-cultural training is the most useful based upon the notion of cultural relativism (Stewart, Danielian & Foster, 1969) which suggests that general culture training is feasible. Specific culture training however, matches the audience with the particular culture in question and could be purposeful in reducing much of the unpredictability about specific culture variables (Triandis, 1977; Batchelder, 1993; Gochenour & Janeway, 1993). Accordingly, the potential difficulties that may be encountered in cross-cultural contact can be identified and addressed for future reference. In the area of social support for favourable behaviour toward host nationals, aspects of the concepts of rewards and recognition were considered significant for those who
had participated in exemplary cross-cultural interactions. This recalls the findings of Vroom (1964) and others for incentive/achievement models of motivation that may be significant for the host family in an exchange event and their perceptions of appreciation. McCaffery (1993) has argued that very often cross-cultural preparation programs do not succeed in accomplishing their intended outcomes. Consequently, the identification of concepts such as rewards and recognition that have been shown to be significant indicators of successful intercultural interactions may have a critical place in the design of training objectives and particular application to preparation for hosting.

The Hosting Event and the School Curriculum

In order to understand where involvement and participation in a hosting event, as part of organised student exchange programs, fits into the school curriculum, it is necessary to overview aspects of the core or mandatory curriculum and current trends in education. Further to the nature of the core curriculum, an examination of the role of parents as primary educators in the home will identify their role of providing and ensuring extra curricular learning for their children.

In NSW (the location of the current research) the curriculum requirements for schools have been set out by the Education Reform Act 1990 and by the NSW Board of Studies. In Years 7–10, the compulsory years of secondary schooling leading to the School Certificate, eight Key Learning Areas are provided of which five must be studied in each year 7–10.
These are: English, Mathematics, Science, Human Society and its Environment, Personal Development/Health/Physical Education. The Key Learning Areas of Technological and Applied Studies (Food Technology, Industrial Arts) and Creative Arts (Music and Fine Arts) must be studied at some time. For the award of the Higher School Certificate in the final year of schooling, students must complete ten units of study including two units of English and at least four subjects. Board developed courses must comprise six units at least, and Science subjects can contribute six units at most. There are around 31 different foreign language board courses in addition to seven Vocation Education and Training curriculum frameworks and under 20 content endorsed subjects.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 5: The school curriculum and learning experiences.

The Australian government input to school curricula is significant and directly related to social and economic forces while, conversely, societal change has led to greater demands being placed on education (Brandt, 1994; Goodson, 1994; Ellyard, 1997; Shores, 1998). The external factors that influence Australian education mandates are factors such as wealth,
revenue, industrial development and employment. The complex dynamic situation involving a variety of influences on school curricula will change education requirements over time as will the interaction and degree of influence of government institutions and other agencies. In recent times there has been considerable input from government sources into curriculum in New South Wales and an overview will highlight trends in the foci of curriculum design. The Australian governance of education affirms curriculum design that is in support of Western thought and values. In particular, equity and vocational training trends as well as breadth of study rather than the specialisation of courses have been apparent developments. For example, the Karmel Report (1973) confronted disadvantage with its focus on equality, diversity, community and involvement while the Kangan Report (1975), led to the establishment of colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The report entitled Girls School and Society (1975) targeted gender equality and the Galbally Report (1978) was concerned with racial and cultural equality. At a time historically concerned with oil shortages and recession, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission was formed and the Williams Report (1977) decreed on employment and education. Continued interest and Federal involvement in education was a theme of the 1980s and 1990s and in 1987 the Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) was created in an attempt to combine education and employment. With a vested interest in vocationalism further reports were tabled. Other reports such as Skills for Australia (1987) and the Finn Report (1991) aimed at a convergence of general and vocational education; the formation of Key Competencies (Mayer Report, 1992) and Pathways education (Higher School Certificate over five years; Carmichael Report, 1992).

It would be reasonable to observe that hosting opportunities for high school students and families were less common in the 1970s and 1980s since most exchange organisations targeted high school leavers. Real interest and growth in popularity of exchanges and hosting
opportunities has gained momentum since the nineteen nineties and this has coincided with a swing in curriculum design and in view of styles of learning. In such a post industrial society as New South Wales the need for new skills, attitudes and values has turned to the education system in anticipation of large scale supply. The context in New South Wales has necessitated major changes to the education system along with structural, organisational, procedural and prioritital overhaul. In the late 1980s Education in New South Wales was restructured. The Carrick Report (1989) was a review of NSW schools that recommended parents’ role in education, provisions for schooling and the institution of the Board of Studies. The controversial Metherell Report (1989) followed and the potential for the administration of educational change to have a destabilising effect on curriculum reform was noted. McGaw (1997) explained that changes of Government could make education the subject of sub swings due to disparate expectations of the education product.

The themes of the 1990s have involved the consolidation of educational markets locally. Significant to the current research has been the overseas marketing of courses and increased transience of students. Schools have increasing promoted Higher School Certificate results and best University Admissions Indexes (UAI scores) as part of marketing strategies, together with appeals to status, selectivity and specialisation (Vining, 1999). In the 1990s government reports have again targeted vocational aspects and curriculum structure (McGaw Report, 1997) and an outcomes approach (Elitis Review, 1995). Inherent to these recommendations was the categorisation of curriculum areas into broad groupings known as Key Learning Areas (KLAs) so that a reasonable breadth of study rather than specialisation was mandatory. Griffin (1986) predicted that in curriculum reform over the next decade the types of jobs available would continue to influence student choices just as student placement would continue to be used to judge the effectiveness of the education system.
In New South Wales there is major curriculum reform at present with changes and the introduction of the new Higher School Certificate 2000-2001 (White Paper: Securing Their Future, 1997). The changes are the product of the HSC reform process that started with the McGaw review in 1997. Changes have been designed to provide greater career choices and increased opportunities to study at university or TAFE. Intrinsic to the changes is a full range of study areas matching individual abilities, interests and goals (Board Of Studies, 1999:2). Included in the range of subjects are Vocational Education and Training Vocational Education Training (VET) courses as well as Life Skills Courses as part of a special program of study. The framework is for a pattern of study involving board courses and content endorsed courses.

The overview of recent educational trends in NSW provides insight into government objectives that serve to mould Australian children in targeted areas. Forster (1996:88-100) explained that in Australia educational goals have been defined in relation to developing more productive, literate, intelligent, technologically competent workers. These goals are not universally held by other nations. For example, in the USA policy makers aspire to the more personal goals of personal responsibility, caring and civic minded citizenry and social cohesion. A move towards curricula emphasis on social cohesion is evident however, in the current History syllabus and Geography syllabus issued to schools by the NSW Board of Studies (1999). The areas of civics, citizenship education and global citizenship are featured. Key objectives are commitment to informed and active citizenship, commitment to a just society, empathetic understanding and commitment to lifelong learning (BOS, History Stages 4-5, 1998:34). Global citizenship is concerned with developing an understanding of how individuals and groups affect the quality of global environments and the wellbeing of people (BOS, Geography Stages 4-5, 1998:27). The suggestion is made that the similarity between these objectives and the reported potential outcomes from intercultural exposure, be it through
an exchange or a hosting event, is striking. These gains from intercultural exposure are recognised by educators, parents and organisations and are in accord with recent educational directions.

Modern educational theorists such as Spady and Marshall (1991) have looked at outcomes approaches. These were outlined by Forster (1996:90-92):

♦ Traditional outcomes specify the subject content, knowledge and skills which learners will acquire
♦ Transitional outcomes set out the practical and cognitive competencies and attitudinal qualities which students will display as they exit from school
♦ Transformational outcomes relate to the student’s ability to perform effectively in a variety of life roles, requiring students to transfer their learning to new situations, integrate their learning and create new applications of it.

The notion of transformational learning is not new (Levine, 1997; James, 1997; Hobson & Welbourne, 1998) and a report by Kuh, George and others (1994) examined how out of class experiences contributed to the desired outcomes of college courses. Out of class experiences enhanced cognitive complexity (critical thinking, intellectual flexibility, reflective judgement) knowledge acquisition and application, humanitarianism (interest in the welfare of others), intrapersonal and interpersonal competence (self-confidence, identity, ability to relate to others), practical competence (decision making and vocational preparation) as well as persistence and education attainment. Educational institutions could enhance student learning by using resources more effectively and by creating situations where students could examine the connections between their learning outside of the classroom with their studies. It was stated that institutions should explicitly address the importance of out of class experiences in their mission through the development of a common understanding of desired
outcomes. It was suggested that schools could support designated experiences beyond the classroom in an understanding of the value of these life experiences.

This has implications for experiential learning and suggests that learning opportunities should be based on authentic tasks and environments which include opportunities for reflection and application (Campbell, 1999). Experiential learning addresses the needs and wants of the learner since learning occurs in order to solve a problem or engaging in a meaningful task. There is personal involvement and interaction, learner initiation and control, learner self-assessment in a low risk environment. There is an overlay here with constructivism, the theory of learning expounded by Bruner (1986). In constructivism, instruction is concerned with the experiences, convictions and constructs that the learner already possesses. The instruction or experience is structured so that it is accessible and can be easily understood and modified by the learner. The learning experience is designed to facilitate exploration, extrapolation and elaboration or reflective evaluation.

Mullins (1999:19-20) has suggested that in today’s schools there is a basic failure to present young people with any understanding of how to make a success in life. In a climate where schools are restricting themselves to academic matters there is a case for values education in which the lessons learned may have significantly more impact on success in life than high test scores. Since ‘parents are the first educators’ there is a need to support parents in the greater educational task of character building than the diversion of parents into classrooms. The type of support he recommends is based upon curriculum development that makes use of structures to reinforce the work of character building and the impact that parents have on children's learning.

Ideally, any curriculum needs to address that students are growing intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically in a lifeworld that involves experiences both inside and outside the classroom. This lifeworld is steadily diminishing in scale and the world is no
longer such a vast place in terms of communication. Indeed, media reporting on international affairs refers to the world as the 'global village'. Since communication systems such as the World Wide Web are now more readily available in the home, it could be argued that it is not the school's task to provide a general cover of the entire curriculum but rather to deliver high quality education in each curriculum area. It is the learning in the lifeworld outside the classroom that forms the extra curricular syllabus.

Through these extra curricular activities the student can be supported in their growth and development of understanding within the context of an all embracing curricula structure that takes over where daily teaching practice ends. Participation in an intercultural event such as a student exchange or a family hosting event, is now a viable and affordable option for many families in the interests of their children's education. Mullins (1999:25) stated that "when adolescents are supported in their life and their learning, their chances of improved student learning outcomes (and therefore chances in life) are enhanced". Extra curricular activities have the potential to support the individual needs of students in the context of their home environment or other than school situation.

_The extra curricular choice of a cross-cultural encounter._

_The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.[George Elliot: Daniel Deronda VI. 42]._

In Australian schools today there are many curricula options available that operate in conjunction and support of the core curriculum. Many parents have certain expectations of the education system and take great pains to select the right school for their children. Individual and community expectations have led to an increase in the level of competitive marketing of schools through print and electronic media (Vining, 1999). Along with a range of courses to offset the core curriculum, an active exchange program within a certain school
maybe the deciding factor that confirms a family decision to seek enrolment at one school over another. Previously, the majority of cross-cultural contacts involved moving to a country, other than where one holds citizenship, for a significant length of time. Although there has been developing interest in the possibilities of increased intercultural learning together with understanding the personal effectiveness of the participants in cross-cultural contacts (Grove, 1989) it is the hosting option that is perceived as providing attractive and affordable intercultural activity. In the hosting situation the intercultural contact occurs when a student from another country is brought into a new home to stay for the duration of the exchange. The exchange period will vary typically from a matter of days to weeks and months and it is initially expected that the exchange student will stay with the same family throughout their stay.

It is the assumption of this research that a host family constitutes a cross-cultural unit made up of the host nationals and the exchange student. The assumption is supported in part, by the literature of intercultural activity that claims that a cross-cultural encounter involves intercultural interaction and some degree of adjustment regardless of the cultural groups involved (Brislin, 1993). Thus, the host nationals become the new host family system or unit with the addition of the exchange student and, for the duration of the hosting event, there will be some degree of cognition of cultural interchange and intercultural interaction for all participants. Brislin (1993) classified over 14 different types of cross-cultural participants ranging from overseas students, businessmen, diplomats, language interpreters, technical assistance personnel, military personnel, emigrants, researchers, tourists, refugees, missionaries and students who as part of their education, live and attend school while staying with a host family or have a nominated host family to contact. In this classification, the host family perspective has been omitted and yet they are the core providers of cross-cultural
interaction in the home environment for students in an exchange program and consequently, players in intercultural relations.

**Language skill development through cross-cultural events.**

A potential outcome from an intercultural experience is an increase in language skill proficiency due to interaction between participants with dissimilar language speaking backgrounds. Many students and families enter into an exchange or a hosting event expressly with the intention of creating their own language learning environment.

Expectancy theory and the role of expectations therefore, need to be understood because of the relationship between participant motivation and a satisfactory outcome in a hosting experience. Parisella (1983) examined the second language learning programs in Canada which were designed to result in a society based on social harmony and a mutual respect between its two largest linguistic communities. Further development of second language experiences could only be enhanced by a program of exchanges. The program was seen as an essential element in activities beyond the classroom and it was intended to improve relations between the two linguistic communities. Language exchange programs here could fulfil the role of increasing the flow of information, developing learning experiences and establishing channels of communication while aiding mutual respect and understanding between all peoples in the two language country. In another survey of American parents involved in Rotary exchange situations, their responses focused upon the good quality of English spoken by the exchange students, their eagerness to learn and their interest and enthusiasm (Parent, 1983). This study was undertaken to give strength to the value of language exchange programs and concluded that the host families realised how important it was for the visitors to speak another language through interaction with the host families. Parent (1983) also addressed questions in the context of school administrators, teachers who
must adjust to exchange students in their classes, parents who face additional expenses and
tax payers, to determine what gains there are from exchange programs other than the
enjoyment of the trip itself. It was recognised however, that participation can positively bring
about changes in attitudes and motivation that learning a second language can effect.

*Global understanding through the curricula of cross-cultural events.*

Participation in an intercultural event has the potential to lead to increased global
understanding and is widely advertised in the literature of student exchanges and hosting
programs (EF, 2000; Southern Cross, 2000; STS, 2000). There is the possibility of creating a
lifelong network of friendship and contacts worldwide and Parisella (1983) had a
philosophical justification for exchange programs in theory that was required to operate from
the grassroots level in practice. Parisella suggested that national harmony could be enhanced
through classroom language instruction in Canada. Other exchange programs have been
defined in terms of their potential to foster global understanding, world relations and the quest
for peaceful alliances through the education of today's youth, tomorrow's leaders (Rotary,
2000). For example, Wood (1982:3) identified a major thrust of exchanges was to enable
participants to understand the world as a global system and to see themselves as part of the
system in which they should be able to recognise the benefits, costs, rights and responsibilities
inherent in that participation.

Similarly, the Young Diplomats Program of exchanges (Mei, 1990:5) has aims for
participants to foster their interest in international matters and encourages historical
sightseeing and participation in official receptions. Noesjirwan (1985:40) however,
interviewed students from various exchange situations and found that developing an
understanding of other cultures, although a higher order goal, was not very salient to those
surveyed taking a ninth place out of ten in priority. In this instance, the role of support
networking, friendships and experiences were valued over cultural understanding. The purpose of the exchange experience seemed from the participants' point of view to be stemming from a different agenda to that of the organisers. The suggestion is made that initial expectations for social networking on behalf of participants may parallel outcomes of intercultural understanding after the exchange or hosting event and in this way constitute unexpected gains from intercultural exposure.

*Expectations and the intercultural encounter.*

*For now sits Expectation in the air. [Shakespeare: Henry VI (Chorus)].*

The participation of families in a hosting event is the culmination of expectations from a range of desires, motivating forces and backgrounds that have opened the pathway for a particular type of cross-cultural learning experience.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 6: Expectations for intercultural participation.*
Participants already exist in some type of family system and there are already in place particular views about the nature of the children's education and the degree to which the school curriculum has met those needs. The suggestion is made therefore, that the family background together with perceptions of the potential of a learning experience through cross-cultural activity, construct the expectations of host family participation.

Lobdell (1990) conducted a study in which families and friends of sojourners were interviewed about predicted re-entry behaviour. When given imaginary situations to consider in which expectations were violated, unexpected results occurred. It was suggested that the participants did not report negative consequences in scenarios where negative violations occurred since only imaginary behaviour, rather than actual behaviour was presented. This seems to have implications for phenomenographic interview strategies wherein hypothetical situations could be presented to interview participants in order to elicit lateral responses in a given situation (Griggs, 1996). Lobdell addressed the formation of expectations in terms of gender, previous travel and prior experience with transitions as well as location of the sojourn but interestingly, the issue of preparation through orientation or expectations through contractual agreements or the type of intercultural exchange format was not addressed. For Lobdell (1990) the whole area of expectations due to exchange type and educational opportunities was not in focus. This study had participants 18 to 30 years old with both males and females. The variables under consideration related to gender and location. An adaptation of the above mentioned variables when applied to the host family situation could reasonably be: age of exchangee, previous away from home experience and adaptability, country of origin, language proficiency as well as constructs of family systems theory.

Martin, Bradford and Rohrlich (1995) investigated exchanges but were centred within communication research. In particular, the expectations that individuals held were linked to evaluation involving relational, interpersonal and intercultural communication processes. It
was suggested that the role of sojourner expectations in overseas adaptation may be critical for successful cross-cultural adaptation. The study explored the degree to which sojourners' predeparture expectations were fulfilled or violated and whether the fulfilment or violation of expectations could influence the overall satisfaction and evaluation of an intercultural experience. Positive, confident predeparture expectations of sojourners were linked to high levels of cross-cultural understanding with ambivalent or unconfident predeparture expectations resulting in greater difficulties of adaptation, including poor health. In the current research, it is the host family who has to contend with issues of sojourner adaptation difficulties.

A perceived shortcoming of expectancy theory was that it held that unmet expectations would always result in negative consequences and in this study it was proposed that expectations could be violated negatively or positively (that is, things may turn out better than expected) and so produce positive evaluation outcomes. In the literature of expectancy research a number of related variables were defined and these concerned the formation of expectations: previous travel, prior experience with transitions, location of impending sojourn and gender. In this study however, a number of related aspects were considered in view of gender and location variables. For example: using a foreign language, meeting people and making friends, adjusting to foreign customs, dealing with homesickness, extracurricular travel, housing and host family, adapting to local climate, adapting to local food, maintaining health, using local transportation, using local currency, having sufficient money and coursework were examined. Martin, Bradford and Rohrlich (1995) concluded that, overall, the respondents' expectations were nearly met or positively violated and a weak relationship was found to exist between the degree of expectancy violation and satisfaction with the sojourn. This conclusion was made through the analyses of pre and post departure questionnaires. Two hundred and forty-eight people were respondents and they ranged in age
from 18 to 30 years old. Since the expectations of most sojourners in this study were upheld, it was suggested that future qualitative methodologies could be useful for discovering how sojourners reframe their experiences to bring them into line with their expectations. Implications were identified for cross-cultural training, weak expectations and the self-fulfilling prophecy in poor adaptation, as well as perceptions during and after intercultural experiences and subsequent evaluation.

It should be noted that relatively sophisticated orientation programs are in operation (Grove, 1989) and aspects of orientation aims should be ongoing and not only for the exchangee but the host family also (Brislin, 1981). A review of the related literature concerning orientation has identified that there are conflicting priorities reported by organisers and exchange students as to what should be included in any orientation preparatory program (Noesjirwan, 1985). An alarming concern is the suggestion that students may be unable to benefit from cross-cultural preparatory programs for intercultural understanding, pre-departure, since they have no experience base from which to understand or operate. Perhaps the novice host family, likewise, is also unable to benefit from preparatory programs for intercultural understanding since they too may have no prior experience base upon which to build. It could be suggested that expectancy theory and its reliance on met or violated expectations for sojourners' evaluations of their experience may be applied to host families and their expectations for the hosting experience given that this is, generally, voluntary involvement resulting from motivational factors. For the current study, the question is raised for hosts: what were your expectations of a hosting experience? Were they violated or met?
Descriptions of the intercultural exchange in a hosting event

There is no faith, and no stoicism, and no philosophy, that a man can possibly evoke, which will stand the final test in a real impassioned onset of Life and Passion upon him. Faith and philosophy are air; but events are brass. [Herman Melville: Pierre].

According to statistics provided by the American Field Service Australia (2000), there are many tens of thousands of young people involved in intercultural exchanges or homestays throughout the world each year. The American Field Service organisation has a rich history of involvement in intercultural programs and student exchanges having its origins with expatriate United States soldiers after World War II. From the beginnings of involvement in cross-cultural enterprise, the AFS organisation has sponsored numerous investigative ventures into the nature of intercultural experience and has pioneered much interest into what is now an established area of research. For those wishing to participate in an intercultural exchange program, there is now a plethora of exchange organisations. In contemporary exchange programs, student participants mostly range in age from twelve to twenty years of age although the most common age is between fifteen and nineteen. Students may be sent from a range of countries that are developing or developed, socialist or capitalist to many host countries throughout the world. The main characteristic of a homestay is that the individual should aim personally to be integrated into the daily life of the host family and the host community for a significant amount of time such as one month to a year.

The main characteristic of the homestay from the perspective of the host family is portrayed in the literature of exchange brochures variously. The experience may be likened to a geography lesson right there in your own home, in the oldest classroom in the world and is suited to any type of family so long as they are warm, open, enthusiastic and flexible.
(Southern Cross, 2000). Once the exchange student and the host family are matched, the exchange event will consist of a variety of experiences that are aspects of learning. Adaptation (change) and maintenance (continuity) are identified as key components in the intercultural experience of hosting since these have emerged from a review of the related literature. Aspects of fit or match between participants, the type of hosting event and the nature of communication will also be detailed as together, these concepts make up the spectrum of the experience of hosting.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 7:** The intercultural event of hosting.

*Adaptation and fit in the hosting event.*

How well an exchange student integrates with the host family together with economic match, similar expectations of responsibilities and reciprocity are aspects of the hosting experience that are described as 'fit'. A good fit is the aim of student/host family selection criteria (Southern Cross, 2000; EF Foundation, 2000; STS, 2000; Rotary, 2000). The role of the host family has been described as that of providing the security necessary for successful
acclimation of the exchange student to the new cultural environment. This integration into the family unit of the exchange student is "generally accomplished quite rapidly since the hosts and guests enjoy leisure time together, share other activities with members of the family, take their meals together, have many discussions, learn the American way of life by living it" (Dragonas, 1983:17).

Parent figure involvement in cross-cultural exposure has been considered a vital link to cultural appreciation particularly in host family situations where host parents had had several exchange students over a period of years and were therefore in a position to become sensitive to their needs, likes and dislikes. Close contact of the host family kind could lead to an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences and an appreciation of similarities. It has also been documented that prolonged interaction and contact with foreigners could result in stereotyped thinking being replaced with more realistic and positive impressions (Dragonas, 1983; Grove, 1989; Paige, 1993).

The importance placed upon the role of the host family is interesting given that in some exchange programs the exchange visitors are placed in a boarding school and have greatly reduced contact with the nominated host family. In a situation of this kind there could be said to be two host families, that is, the boarding school adults, matrons, teachers and residents as well as the nominated host parents. In either situation the role of some 'significant adult' will necessarily be operational as identified by family systems theory.

Assuming that student exchanges have undoubted positive educational value, a number of issues relating to the problems of student exchanges have been identified. A basic lack of research and evaluation of student exchanges and the need for a data base of existing research are deficient areas (Fleck, 1983; Grisbacher, 1991; Rivers, 1998; Xu, 1998). An awareness of problems occurring in exchange experiences is not new. Many researchers have acknowledged that problems do exist in exchange programs, participants do go through
identifiable and substantial adjustment periods and the lack of 'fit' between host families and visitors can have devastating consequences (Adler, 1975; Brislin & Pedersen, 1976; Hopkins, 1982; Crano, 1986; Grove, 1989; Grisbacher, 1991). What is different about the current research is the focus upon the experience of host family, rather than the exchange student and attention given to a rigorous and analytical understanding of what it is like to be a host family and to experience an exchange event.

There are numerous types of exchange programs that have different characteristics and priorities. Some types of exchanges are more costly to administer than other types and participants ought to be aware of the reality of cost effectiveness considerations. The notion of agencies and host families being "in loco parentis" has also been examined. There is the responsibility of moving groups of young people across international boundaries with the need for meticulous planning for 'every' and even the 'impossible' contingency related to the exchange situation, wherein parents have entrusted their children's lives to the exchange organisation as well as the host participants, being recognised. Miller (1996) described aspects of "in loco parentis" and noted that the costs to host parents involved in an exchange situation apart from those expenses covered by the natural parents can be significant. This issue of poor economic 'fit' between participants has been described elsewhere (Parent, 1983; Delphi Research Associates, 1984; Grisbacher, 1991) and the importance and burden of the fiscal aspect should not be underplayed. Indeed, Fleck (1983) concluded that the success of student exchange programs lay less with government funds for education and more with broad-based support of students, parents and other private sector agencies to bear the costs involved for extra curricular learning experiences.

Another aspect of fit concerns student selection criteria and the role of adaptation and assimilation due to pre-existing intercultural attitudes and differences. The selection of 'who' should be sent on an exchange and who should receive the intercultural guest may be made in
view of who has the greatest likelihood of having a successful and positive experience. Some research has considered the potential of intercultural exposure for achieving measures of world peace through an understanding of stereotyping and other negative intergroup issues. For example, Rich, Peri and Shelsinger (1995) designed a study to reduce intercultural conflict between religious and secular Jewish Israeli children in a laboratory model, in an attempt to draw analogies with real life situations of intercultural tension, bias and conflict. It was explained that in Israel there can be found distinct cultural groups according to religious practice; Orthodox Jews and Secular Jews and the associated differences in attitudes and behaviours are related to family life, sexual norms, dress codes, leisure time, dietary practices and political ideologies. Social institutions, such as public schools and judicial systems, help also to intensify the divisions of cultural distinctiveness. In such a context of cultural differences, the relations between the religious and secular groups has been characterised by negative intergroup attitudes resulting in mutual stereotyping, tension and suspicion as well as acts of violence. This study investigated the attitudes of adults, students and teenagers but little was known about the attitudes of children.

In the current study, student selection criteria were matched to host family details to form the 'new' host family. It is reasonable to suggest that there will be some degree of similarity as well as differences between the cultural norms of the exchange student and the host family they join. Some of these differences may be due to religious and secular beliefs. Aspects of intergroup attitudes may be present in the experience of hosting or may surface as part of selection criteria considerations.

Various conceptualisations of contact theory had been used to demonstrate principles for improving intergroup relations. In particular, the Miller-Brewer Model (1988) held that when interventions in group relations emphasised the prominence of group membership, individuals would most likely not improve their interpersonal or intergroup relations. If,
however, conditions favoured decategorisation and outgroup persons were related to as individuals, then group boundaries would be minimised. In this way, persons are treated more as individuals than as stereotyped members of a particular social category. Around 143 children, classified as secular or Orthodox according to the school they attended, participated in small group interactions in which they were exclusively task-oriented and exposed to the unique, individual characteristics of the group members. The instructor encouraged the children to share their feelings and observations with each other. The conclusions of the study were that the type of task led to a greater change in acceptance of outreligious persons than the interpersonal discussions. Conditions that heightened anxiety produced more formal and stereotyped relations and the children were able to reveal unique aspects of their selves to the outgroup members. In this research engaging in unfamiliar activities did present as a variable related to self-perceptions of competence. Implications were noted for facilitating satisfactory interactions between ingroup and outgroup persons and members of different cultural groups. It was suggested that additional research should focus on those particular attributes that signal an ingroup or outgroup categorization label for an individual or perceiver. Also, an area that has implications for the breakdown of host family relations in the current research was that anticipated unsatisfactory interactions with outgroup persons was a critical feature in the failure of some efforts to improve interpersonal contact in cross-cultural situations.

In the current study, the exchange program is an educational opportunity offered at an Australian Anglican girls' school where there are families who are religious and active church goers and many families who are not. In one exchange situation in 1996, the host family regularly attended church but the exchange student declined to go. This had the potential to affect the host siblings since other attitudes and emotions regarding religious observance were being expressed within the family system and they did not coincide with the family norm.
Similarly, the issue of religious observance may be a relevant aspect of student selection criteria and in terms of an Anglican school, there would be the sense of 'degrees' of religiosity. Category labelling was another interesting aspect of this study; what triggers the category label for the ingroup or outgroup; the individual or the perceiver? In an intercultural exchange there is the potential for much category labelling and some labels would be related to religious orientation, gender, self-concept, personal and interpersonal skills and other attributes.

Aspects of attribution theory and fundamental or ultimate attribution 'error' have been examined already. Brislin (1981) stated that a desirable goal of intercultural programs was to encourage participants to make increasing numbers of situational attributions (between hosts and exchangees). There are critical implications here for exchanges of very short duration (as in the current study) since participants would be more likely to make negative trait attributions than positive ones and yet it is apparent that exchange types more commonly involve those in the very short category. There are further implications here for orientation programs and preparation for cross-cultural contact. A lack of knowledge and familiarity with the ways of thinking or behaving in a particular group (mutual stereotyping) may be addressed through orientation programs but participants will only benefit from these if they are receptive or have the ability / experience base, to benefit.

The nature of short exchange programs is significant since it is arguable whether this type of exchange is any more than a holiday. The benefits contrast with the observations of Grove (1983:3) who felt that very short exchanges "hold little promise of accomplishing those high goals that most of us in the business of intercultural exchange hold dear". According to Grove, the important positive outcomes are not attainable in a short exchange and indeed, undesirable outcomes are likely to result. For example, prejudicial attitudes may be strengthened and according to attribution theory, a "fundamental attribution error" is likely
due to the under-estimation of situational variables on the part of the exchange participants who do not have enough time to develop any understanding of the other's trait-based dispositions. In the current study, the nature of very short exchange programs and the issues raised by Grove are of particular interest since all of the hosting events occurred in what would be termed as short (three months) to very short (less than one week) duration. If the main purpose for participation in exchange events is to accomplish higher order goals through long term involvement, then many participants and certainly the majority of host families in school based participation would be adversely compromised. In the current research, the way in which host families perceived their participation and their expectation of an intercultural experience was examined together with perceptions of the credibility of the intercultural experience irrespective of the duration of the event.

*Adaptation, fit and participant selection in the hosting event.*

There is a developing body of research that has identified particular skills and personal characteristics of individuals who are likely to contribute to a successful cross-cultural contact (Batchelder, 1993; J. M. Bennett, 1993; Fantini, 1993; Grove & Torbiörn, 1993; Paige, 1993; Weaver, 1993). Much of the literature has focused upon student selection criteria even though a basic tenet of most exchange programs is to extend the possibility of an exchange experience to all interested and motivated applicants. In the current research, the focus is upon the members of the host family who desire participation in an exchange event. Very often, the experience of hosting is considered by families as a fairly safe option and a preliminary exercise for later participation abroad that may involve more risk. What is known and desirable for student selection criteria may signal qualities and attributes for participant host families also.
In the Young Diplomats' Program, Mei (1990) stressed the responsibility of the selection committee to choose suitable student participants who would be mature enough to cope with being away from their homes, as well as host family participants who would responsibly care for the exchange students who visit. Host families were to be committed to facilitating intergroup relations. The rationale for the selection criteria was that of higher order ideals for creating world peace through the fostering of friendly intergroup relations. This is not typical of the traditional selection qualifiers such as being able to benefit academically from an exchange. Recommendations suggested that a data base of selected applicants should nominate families and students who represented all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The students should have coursework in relevant fields, demonstrated ability level to benefit from academic and social factors and be able to articulate ideas effectively. They should be contributing members of the school community, have a good academic standing that can withstand absence from school and have home atmospheres that are conducive to a positive hosting experience.

In the Israeli program (Mei, 1990) a surrogate host family might take the responsibility for the partner student of the exchange country rather than a direct reciprocal swap. Potential host families were inspected to assess relationships between family members, parent-child interactions and the physical layout of the home. From this list of selection criteria, the main point that relates to the selection of the host family is the final phrase that describes a positive home atmosphere. The positive home atmosphere at the time of inspection does not take account of the future changes to the family due to the impact of systems theory and the intercultural environment that will be newly created. Again, the focus for selection is upon the exchange student and the lack of clear definition about the host family role and host family attributes is evident.
The investigation into the literature of exchange events has revealed little focus upon the selection criteria of host family participants, although in general, an effort is made to ensure desirable host accommodation and host willingness for participation. The following review will discuss some of the relevant issues to do with the selection of participants and the responsibilities of those who are engaged in a cross-cultural experience.

King (1981:4) stated that a major problem for any international organisation was the successful selection of individuals who will do well in an intercultural experience. Selection concerns those who are sent to live and work overseas as well as students who apply to be sent to live and attend school with a host family. Problems do occur and there is often, a 'blame the victim' strategy. Rather than focusing upon the conjoint problems of the exchangee and the hosts, there is the notion of fault on behalf of the exchange organisation. It was suggested that there is a 'blame the victim' strategy in which the most powerful voice is that of the host family who may accuse the exchange agency of selecting the wrong individual for the exchange experience. Sometimes when problems arise a change of host family may result or else participants continue in unsatisfactory relations until the end of the exchange period. It is interesting to note that the literature of exchange programs acknowledges the host family opinion at the point of breakdown in terms of them blaming the student in their care as well as the exchange agency, for the lack of suitable selection and fit. Given that participation in an exchange/hosting event is voluntary, then the responsibility of the organising body must embrace enhanced participation rather than exclusion of individuals. In the context of developing an increased understanding about the related issues of cross-cultural experience, the suggestion is made the current research is able to show aspects of the experience of hosting that have not been clearly understood previously.

Hawes and Kealey (1979) conducted a study to define and predict overseas effectiveness and they attempted to create a profile of critical factors. It was noted that the
role of the host family and the exchange organisation were quite different since it is the family who will have to live with and will come to know the student. Guidelines concerning host families usually mention the need for a personal interview and host family home visit by the exchange agency, or at least, the filling out of a questionnaire. In addition, there may be the requirement of one host family member at home during non-school hours, placement arrangements made well in advance to permit ample correspondence with the exchangee and contact with the exchange organisers throughout the duration (King, 1981:5; Southern Cross, 2000). Many of these criteria are desirable but not the reality of some hosting events. For example, having one host family member at home during non school hours is not always practicable and in some instances, when an exchangee is hurriedly placed with a host family due to a change of arrangements, there will be no time or provision for personal interviews or family inspections (Dragonas, 1983; Grove, 1989). As distinct from host family requirements, Trujillo (1984) noted that in school organised exchange programs, students applying for selection must satisfactorily complete all pre-travel activities including orientation meetings, homework and academic requirements.

According to Zaremba (1984) a normal hosting experience will involve difficulties and misunderstandings as well as fruitful and satisfying times and all the participants should be committed to the challenge of building a relationship with the exchangee. Problems may be that host siblings perceive they are being neglected, they may feel the responsibility of looking after a newcomer at their school as a burden and each participant may be reluctant to confide their real feelings since the admission of difficulties is viewed as an admission of failure.

The issue concerning a lack of significant communication between hosts and exchangee, in the face of problems has been documented mainly from the exchange student's perspective. For example, Hartung (1983:16) described how Japanese students found it
extremely difficult to discuss distressing matters with the host family as they were worried about hurting the host's feelings and often tried to resolve matters themselves or through the help of friends. The explanation was related to cultural perspectives since in Japan, third party involvement in problems is not frowned upon. Sometimes exchangees did change families when there was a breakdown between members and the situation became intolerable. The cause of breakdown was described, in part, as being due to unrealistic expectations on the part of the host. Zaremba (1984) listed unrealistic expectations that host family members expressed. Some expectations that were less likely to be realised included wanting the host children to learn the native language of the exchangee and expecting the exchangee to be a good influence upon the host children.

Another expectation that was not considered satisfactory was the hosts viewing the opportunity as a chance to experience what it would be like to have an older teenager in the house. Other issues for the Japanese students included problems associated with establishing a dependency relationship with someone in the host family. A sense of dependency or 'amae' was explained by Hartung (1983) as a presumption of dependence upon another's benevolence. For the host family of a Japanese student with a sense of amae, there may need to be a development of understanding that the dependency on the part of the person who extends the amae creates a sense of obligation on the part of the person who receives the amae.

Crano (1986) suggested that the selection of students with host families was critical for those students with low self-concept. It was not implied that such students should be deterred from participating in exchange programs, but it was strongly recommended that careful placement be made so that the monitoring of the students could occur during their stay and the appropriate support services could be of assistance. Occasionally the exchangee does not turn out to be as mature as the host family had anticipated or is often not fully prepared to
cope with the intercultural exchange experience. This is called the "unfinished product" syndrome (Grove, 1989) and if there are major difficulties then it is common for the receiving country personnel (organisers and hosts) to complain about the sending country personnel (organisers and natural family) for not doing their job of selection well.

The possibility of an immature student or one who is unable to cope with separation from home being selected for an exchange is real and may even form part of the agenda of the sending family in their desire to step up their teenager's maturation. The host family in an exchange of this type will be implicated in the new home environment for a problematic teenager. The current research is able to demonstrate in a very real way, the range of human experience in a hosting event and to illuminate aspects of the reality of hosting which are not portrayed in exchange literature and advertising promotions. The offer of an exchange experience made to any kind of interested party is found in the literature of student exchange brochures as is mention of potential individual growth and independence. It is necessarily in the environment of the host family, however, that this growth will occur thus given added profundity to the nature of family participation in a hosting event.

Adaptation, fit and responsibilities in the hosting event.

Adaptation, fit and responsibilities in a hosting event are concepts that relate to all participants be they the host family parents, host siblings or the exchange student. In a sense, all the participants need to work at the job of intercultural relations as it is the premise of the current research that the host family and exchange student, together form an intercultural context. The notion of a student maximising the potential of their exchange by engaging in opportunities for self-growth, relationship building and the expansion of intercultural understanding is embedded in the term 'student responsibilities'. According to Grove (1989:10) the exchangee must gradually realise that:
The values, behaviours, and frames of reference shared by host nationals are entirely workable and sensible for them (the host nationals). There are ideas and values in their host's frame of reference that will never have occurred to them (the exchangees) before; these ideas and values deserve to be evaluated empathetically (that is, from the host's point of view). Likewise, there are ideas and values in their own frame of reference that were formerly outside of their conscious awareness; these ideas and values deserve to be evaluated objectively. The values and behaviours if the host nationals are culturally determined, as are their own values and behaviours.

Grove (1989) found that pre exchange students did not give weight to the chapter in their orientation program that focused on responsibilities. The issue of responsibilities, however, was given high priority by host families and exchange organisers. In consideration of the host family and their school and community it was stated that they should also have a worthwhile experience and part of this was dependent upon the exchangee filling "their part of the bargain" (Noesjirwan, 1985:13). The understanding here is that the student is expected to adapt to the new culture while at the same time being a culture "carrier" from their homeland (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976:18). If this did not occur then the host family may feel used. Noesjirwan (1985:21) concluded that the reactions of the host family to the exchange would be an area for future research. The current study clearly addresses the experience of hosting from the host family perspective.

Rohrlich (1993) found in a study of international exchange students that almost half were not committed to the challenge of the language learning experience that lay ahead of them. It was concluded that in these instances, very often the commitment to the program was from the educators and parents of those affected students rather than from the participant students themselves. Rohrlich also noted the impact that homesickness can have for many students and how it can permeate many aspects of the exchange experience. It was interesting to note that Grove (1989) did not include the issue of homesickness in the orientation handbook for student exchanges. The impact of homesickness was explored to some extent in the current study particularly since the age group of exchange students was considerably
younger than that of senior college and GAP (year of work or gap between secondary and tertiary study) exchange types. In the current investigation host families found themselves confronted with homesick teenagers.

Occasionally there are problems with too little or too much study and application to academic work. Although application to academic work has been considered previously as an aspect responsibility of the individual exchange student, in the current research, some host families had unmet expectations about the exchange student's commitment to learning. Other problems Grove (1989) identified were to do with parental restrictions and host brother/sister jealousy. Sometimes too much or too little money is a problem that results in a difficult "fit" between host and exchangee. Families may expect students to pay their own way while or in other situations the host family may undertake to care for the student as if they were their own child. The concept of reciprocity is applicable here. Reciprocity has been described by Delphi Research Associates (1984) as an arrangement in which the sending side pays for the visitor's international travel to and from the country to be visited while the receiving side assumes responsibility for all domestic travel and living expenses. It was stressed that in an exchange it is necessary to settle all the funding and facility arrangements in writing and in advance as part of the agreement of the exchange so that misunderstandings do not occur too late to correct them. Aspects of problems and misunderstandings identified relating specifically to financial issues were of significance to the current study and the host family experience.

*Type of exchange and adaptation in the hosting event.*

A hosting event may occur at any time of the year for a period of time varying from a few days to several months. In some cases the exchange student will have excellent English speaking skills while in other situations there will be communication problems at a basic
level. In some hosting situations, families 'swap' a family member in direct exchange or take in an additional member to the family unit.

Types of exchanges include mutual short-term exchanges and reciprocal long term exchanges that cater for students from primary ages up to senior high school, for two weeks up to three year's duration. Very short exchanges may have similar duration to a holiday and yet they are useful for stimulating students' interest in learning a second language, acquiring a better understanding of another culture and motivating the students' desire to participate in a longer exchange (Parisella, 1983). In the longer exchanges, students reported a noticeable improvement in second language proficiency, greater understanding, respect and tolerance of a different culture and a "harmonious and accelerated development of their entire personality" given the freedom from home in their new environment (Parent, 1983:18). Parents of the exchange students reported feelings of confidence in their children being able to survive the prolonged absence from home while host families have reported greater open-mindedness due to the visitor teenager from another culture and another family living in their home.

Another important issue concerning exchangee adaptation in the hosting experience was that of the location of sojourn, since Lobdell (1990) suggested that the more similar the host and native culture, the less difficulty would be experienced by the sojourner. This is pertinent to the current research since exchangees in 1996 came from New Zealand, Argentina, Japan, Germany and Singapore; a range of countries that could individually be considered similar or very different to Australia, the host country. In the current research there was also a range of exchange student backgrounds and in one situation the hosted student was actually an ex-patriate Australian. Some of the hosted students had excellent English speaking facility while others had little or no English and were staying with Australian families who spoke English exclusively. Dragonas (1983) outlined many aspects of exchange programs between America and Germany in the 1980s. The nature of a homestay
was explained and living with a family in a foreign country was rated as possibly the most important aspect of an exchange because of the tremendous emotional and attitudinal impact of the homestay experience. Dragonas (1983:13) believed that it was through the association with host families and partners of the same age, that students can really discover for themselves how people think, what they mean and how they convey their feelings through behaviour, actions, gestures and speech in a particular culture. Similarly, the suggestion is made from the current research, that the host family could be challenged to do the same so that together with the exchange student, there is a period of growth involving experiential learning through intercultural exposure.

The role of communication skills in the hosting event.

In a hosting event, patterns of communication will be networked between all participants and in particular, between members of the host family. In recent times there has been a paradigm shift in communication systems due to the use of computer technology and the permeation of the World Wide Web of Internet discourse. Prior to this use of information technology, it may have been reasonable as well as practicable to suggest to participants in an exchange that they isolate themselves from communication with their native country in order to become immersed in the host culture. Indeed, only a decade ago, it was reported that once in the host country the exchangee usually has little or no opportunity to relate to others of their home country. In the AFS Manual (Grove, 1989:2) it explicitly states:

a genuine intercultural homestay is an experience for youthful exchangees that involves their complete immersion in the host culture. Properly used, "immersion" means no less than that the participant is completely, constantly, and more or less exclusively in contact with the people and culture of the host community.
Today, the use of email and satellite communication systems means that exchange students can easily and affordably be in communication with not only their family members but also their friends and associates in the native country. The desired "immersion" and "exclusive" contact with the host community only that Grove described is less likely for contemporary exchanges. When there are problems, the exchange participants have a range of communication channels and homesick students may readily choose to contact their parents for comfort thus bringing another set of participants into the intercultural exchange and another set of participants into the host family system and the host family experience.

Chen (1995) was concerned with communication patterns in intercultural and intra-cultural settings. Fundamental competence in situations requiring communication interactions has been the focus of previous research in which different task requirements, different interaction with partners, as well as the function of communicator's perceptions and intentions were investigated. Interaction involvement in interpersonal communication was shown to be a measure of the extent that a speaker participates in a conversation, is sensitive to the flow of topics and integrates thoughts, feelings and behaviours throughout the interaction. Interaction involvement is also to do with success with the immediate social environment and a link has been identified with aspects of an individual's self-esteem. Low level involvement described participants who were inattentive, less perceptive and unresponsive in their conversation while higher involvement was associated with active information processing and affinity seeking behaviour. It was suggested that intercultural interaction presented a situation in which interaction involvement level could make a difference in competent conversation behaviour and the aim was to discover if highly involved participants, who are said to be more adaptive, would be more competent in the intercultural communication situation. Highly involved communicators were more sensitive to and better able to adapt to the dynamics of conversation as a whole than the lower involved participants. Chen (1995) found also, that
high involvement participants accommodated in different ways to offset the situational variables of talking in intercultural and intracultural settings to strangers. When placed into the context of interaction in intercultural settings, different demands and challenges are presented for communication interaction. Asking questions about the other, showing interest, listening carefully and avoiding new topics that may be initially incomprehensible are aspects of communication that also relate to the host family situation. Chen (1995) concluded that interaction involvement was cognitive and as such was possibly an important factor for understanding levels of communication competence in intercultural interaction.

Readiness and competence in communication skills are identifiable desirable characteristics for participants in exchange programs (Mei, 1990; Brislin & Yoshido, 1995). Lobdell (1990) noted aspects of successful adaptation in intercultural settings that are significant for researching student/host family selection criteria. In an ideal situation, family characteristics and personal attributes are profiled in an attempt to facilitate a good match between host and exchangee. Many exchange organisations do take great care in the processes of selection. The reality also is, however, that in some exchange programs, a lack of organisation and running out of time before onset, a convenient match, the availability of an extra bed in the house or even superficial observations ("she is the same height as your daughter" or "she likes dancing and your family likes music - that's a match") are the deciding factors for host/exchangee grouping selections (Whatterson, 1996). Chen (1995) suggested also that personal attributes and adaptability skills are to be found in interview situations since often, it is strangers who are talking to each other in a goal directed conversation. The notion of high or low level interaction involvement communicator types may have implications for phenomenographic interviewing technique, as used in the current research, since topic extension for understanding perceptions is involved. Similarly, variations
in the interaction setting (such as home, school or office) were shown to have different effects on different individuals depending on their interaction involvement level.

Another aspect of intercultural communication is the need for dealing with uncertainties. Since the hosts and the exchange student are initially strangers to each other, there are uncertainties at two levels: uncertainty about each other as individuals and uncertainty about the partner as a member of another unfamiliar cultural group. According to Chen (1995) there is potential for high uncertainty, due to lack of knowledge about each other, and for intercultural dyads to find it difficult to share topics to the extent that they could find it easier to share less. Uncertainties may be a feature of communication breakdowns between host families and exchange students that result in the need to change hosts. A total breakdown in communication patterns to the extent that hosts and exchange student merely coexist in the same home is not unknown in the experience of hosting. The situation may be reported and a change in host family is made or if left unreported, the situation will endure until the duration of the hosting expires. Chen noted however, that partner's English (as a second language) proficiency, was not found to contribute to lower interaction involvement. It was identified that individuals actually changed their pattern of communication behaviour and did things differently than in the intra cultural situations when engaged in friendship building conversations.

*Maintenance and cross-cultural adjustment in the hosting event.*

During the hosting experience there will be degrees of cultural adjustment for the exchange student as well as the host nationals due to the impact of another culture in the home. Maintenance of the host family system within the context of cross-cultural adjustment will be discussed in view of the related literature. The focus of attention in the literature of
exchanges is again upon the exchange student and is largely oblivious to the experience of the host family.

In 1955, Lysgaard proposed a U curve hypothesis to describe the emotional ups and downs experienced by students and others in intercultural experiences. According to the author:

Adjustment as a process over time seems to follow a U-shaped curve: adjustment is felt to be easy and successful to begin with; then follows a "crisis" in which one feels less well adjusted, somewhat lonely and unhappy; finally one begins to feel better adjusted again, becoming more integrated into the foreign community. Or, to put it differently, we suggested that adjustment as a process over time operates at increasingly more intimate levels of contact with the community visited. The need for more intimate contact, however, makes itself felt before one is able to achieve such contact and for some time, therefore, one may feel "lonely" and maladjusted.

An extension of this hypothesis was proposed by Conway (1969) and later, Ward et al. (1998). It was termed the W Curve Hypothesis. This extended model more closely described the ups and downs of satisfaction that a sojourner could experience during an intercultural exchange. The W curve was defined sequentially in terms of high satisfaction and initial novelty effect, culture shock, process of adjustment to previous level of satisfaction, novelty associated with returning home to family and friends and readjustment and acceptance of new roles. The final upswing of the W represented either re-establishing permanent rewards of acceptance resulting in satisfaction or feelings of dissatisfaction that may result in the phenomenon of brain drain back to the host (or other) culture (Brislin & Van Buren, 1974:21). The application of the U or W shaped curves for adjustment has traditionally been used to understand the dynamics of longer exchange types. In particular, exchanges involving college students or members of the US Peace Corps were monitored.

The levels of maturity, dependency and age range for that group of participants were significantly different from the characteristics of participants in this research since the students at Loxleigh College were all younger being in their middle teen years. Nevertheless,
the reported findings in previous exchange types may signal influences and indicators for host families since they are concerned with adaptation and intercultural exposure.

Henry (1994) reported the experiences of twelve American families who hosted exchange students in order to understand more fully the dynamics of normal, reasonably satisfactory hosting experiences. In each case study, background information was presented on the family together with a narration of the significant events of the homestay. A normal adjustment was said to involve the student's integration into the household followed by disillusionment or moodiness on the part of the student followed by an upswing after problems had been sorted out. A graph was presented for each family experience that plotted the adjustment cycle according to the labels of: selection, arrival, culture shock, superficial accommodation, frustration, genuine adjustment, return jitters, reverse culture shock and resolution. The graph known as the U curve hypothesis developed by Lysgaard in 1955, was revised by Gullahorn and Gullahorn in 1963. More recent interest in u-curve or w-curve theories has led to increased understanding about the nature of adjustment experienced by participants in intercultural events (Kenyon & Amrapala, 1993; Zapf, 1993; Anderson, 1994; Schnell, 1996; Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima, 1998). There has been contention about the debilitating effects of cultural adjustment involving culture shock and anxiety versus the potential of experiential learning through participant adjustment to new situations. Not all families however, experienced negative integration periods. The operative dynamics for smooth integration were described as the personality of the exchange student, the suitability of the exchange student for the experience, having a large host family with a variety of interests as well as the nature of acceptance between the student and the host family.

Those families that experienced significant problems isolated the offending dynamics. The lack of enthusiasm of host siblings, the hypercritical stance taken out by the exchange student, the absence of a host sibling in the home, a difficult personality of the exchange
student, an unwillingness on behalf of the exchange student to enter into family activities as well as a clash of student goals and family expectations were reported as significant problems. An adjustment cycle for the host family is an unresearched area and it may be suggested that a family's emotional swings due to the exchange situation would possibly reveal its own phases undoubtedly linked, pro or reactively, to those of the exchangee. Henry (1994) noted the dearth of research that focused on the host family experience and the lack of understanding about the intercultural experience from the point of view of families who act as hosts for intercultural sojourners.

Brislin (1981) explained that people are not necessarily victims of a situation but are active processors of information for which they modify their behaviour constantly to adapt and cope with new problems as they arise. There are however, a number of critical variables in this process: a person's tolerance to stress, changes in values and attitudes according to time and space factors, a person's adjustment over time and the relative acceptance or rejection of the multi-faceted differences between the known and the host culture. Harrison, Chadwick and Scales (1996) investigated how certain personality variables might operate in the adjustment process of exchange participants. In particular, the roles of self-efficacy and self-monitoring in the adjustment process were to be considered in an attempt to isolate some personality characteristics that could augur well for successful overseas assignments. The need for empirical research in this area was highlighted since poorly adjusted employees often return home early from their cross-cultural assignment and the associated costs to employers could therefore be curtailed. Similarly, performance results could be affected by poor adjustment.

Previous research had identified certain personality variables of exchange participants such as open-mindedness, cultural empathy, creativity, a sense of humour, integrity, sincerity, stress tolerance that were multifacets of cultural adjustment. Other specific areas of cross-
cultural adjustment such as adjustment to the general environment, adjustment to interaction with host nationals and adjustment to work were found to be important in determining the degree to which expatriates were able to adjust to their assignment in the new culture. More factors associated with cross-cultural adjustment were anticipatory factors and expectations, socialisation factors, role clarity, discretion, novelty and conflict, toughness, spouse adjustment, self-efficacy, relation skills and perception skills. Self-efficacy was defined as the level of confidence that individuals have in the ability to accomplish tasks and self-monitoring was defined as an individual's ability to adjust behaviour to external situational factors (Harrison, Chadwick & Scales, 1996).

It was explained that individuals can actively adjust to a situation by changing the new environment to more readily correspond to needs and abilities or they can reactively adjust by changing themselves. In this context, active adjustment is inappropriate in a cross-cultural situation and reactive adjustment was considered imperative for expatriate success. A questionnaire that surveyed military personnel from America on assignment in Germany was utilised and as predicted, self-efficacy was found to have significant and positive correlation with adjustment. Also, high self-monitoring expatriates perceived that they were significantly adjusted to the general environment when compared with the low self-monitors. No significant difference was found in the work environment and it was concluded that this was due to the uniformity and similarity of American military assignments world wide for the given task.

Personality variables of self-efficacy and self-monitoring were found to be operational in cross-cultural adjustment and should be considered vital in the selection process of expatriates. Self-monitoring was found to have genetic and environmental precursors which would make it difficult to alter in adults but self-efficacy could be enhanced through specialised training. It was noted that these results would need to be replicated with broader
research using participants from other cultures in order to generalise beyond the sample of American participants in Europe.

Personality variables of self-efficacy and self-monitoring for successful cross-cultural adjustment therefore, are significant concepts and the related literature seems to cover certain aspects similarly but uses different terminology. For example, self-efficacy (Harrison, Chadwick & Scales, 1996) related to an individual's level of confidence in the ability to accomplish tasks and the ability to persist in exhibiting new behaviours in such a way that was related to greater opportunity for positive feedback. Elsewhere, this has been reported as an aspect of self-concept (Rogers, 1951; Rosenberg, 1965; LaBenne & Green, 1969; Crano, 1986; Mirowsky & Ross, 1990; Burnett, 1994). Active versus reactive self-monitoring behaviour in the cross-cultural context has otherwise been reported as a tolerance for ambiguity (Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Cusner, 1987; Grove, 1989), or as persistence (Dweck, 1975; Weiner, 1979; Cooley, Beaird & Ayres, 1994) and also as category width tolerance (Detweiler, 1980).

Another issue is raised in relation to research about personality variables, cross-cultural adjustment and the onus of responsibility in enacting selection criteria in an intercultural event. In a hypothetical, worst case scenario, there are certain issues to be considered. For example, if as research would tell, there are certain identifiable personality variables that are precursors of exchange participant success, then how should agencies and schools use this information? If some personality variables are genetically and environmentally produced while others can be enhanced through training, should exchange agencies refuse entry to less likely to succeed applicants? Similarly, if exchange organisations give positive claim to the necessity, design and quality of their particular orientation programs for cross-cultural adjustment, and they fail in this regard, what is the
stance on parental litigation for failure of a successful student exchange? From the alternate perspective, do participant host families have any recompense?

Surviving the exchange experience clearly incorporates a number of advantages and the development of many skills including increased self-reliance, empathy and realistic expectations of workable notions. Possible causes of problems relating to maintenance of the hosting period can be explained in part in terms of unrealistic expectations and culture shock, personal and interpersonal skills, tolerance for ambiguity and persistence. These areas will be considered in the following section.

*Maintenance and culture shock in the hosting event.*

All participants in the hosting experience, be they the host family, host siblings or the exchange student, are involved for the duration of the hosting event, in a process of adaptation and adjustment to one another and the common culture. The notion of working together for the common good or learning to live together by maintaining the status quo will be discussed in terms of maintenance and the particular aspects of intercultural activity that will affect the host family unit. Culture shock has been identified as an aspect of intercultural adaptation especially related to the exchange individual. In the current research however, the effect of culture shock is shown to extend not only to the exchangee but to the experience of the host family also. Previous research has not treated culture shock from the perspective of the host family participants and yet they are likely to be confronted by degrees of culture shock experienced by their exchange student. The host family will in turn, be necessarily required to respond to and address, the issue of culture shock.

Culture shock as a summary term, refers to the accumulated stresses and strains which occur with the pressure on an individual to face and meet everyday needs (food, cleanliness, companionship) in constantly unfamiliar ways (Oberg, 1958; Brislin, 1981:13; Grove &
Torbjörn, 1993; Weaver, 1993; Ward & Chang, 1997). Grove (1989) explained that "culture shock" was a term derived from the field of psychology since it could be viewed as a state of mental confusion. Physiologically, an individual can cope with a degree of novelty in the environment as evinced by the notion of fight/flight adaptation but once placed in the situation of a foreign culture the amount of stress may overtax the neurological system and a form of exhaustion results.

This exhaustion was termed culture fatigue (Szanton, 1966; Brislin & Pedersen, 1976:13). It was explained that symptoms of culture shock include debilitation, susceptibility to disease, excessive preoccupation with water and cleanliness, pains, irritability, reluctance to learn the host language and a strong desire to associate with members of one's own nationality. Zaremba (1984) warned that individuals who are suffering from culture shock are experiencing real symptoms that are not imaginary or psychosomatic disorders.

From another perspective, a positive view of culture shock could sometimes be afforded recovering individuals are motivated to seek out a supportive network and to learn more about themselves and the new culture (Adler, 1975; Brislin & Pedersen; 1976; Juffer, 1993; Weaver, 1993). Adler (1975) identified that the experience of culture shock could positively influence learning since in effect the individual concerned will undergo a highly introspective personal experience causing changes to be faced in the cultural landscape, an investigation of personal relationships and a forced adoption of new attitudes and behaviours. Culture shock could be viewed as the experience of having to confront one's own culture, that is, a comparison of the familiar with the unfamiliar. Symptoms of culture shock may be ongoing during an exchange experience and further complications upon re-entry to the primary culture are well documented. Reverse or re-entry crisis was described as the experience of Peace Corps returnees (Harris, 1973; Brislin & Van Buren, 1974). Such a crisis is related to expectations of both the sojourner and the back home culture since many changes
will have occurred during the period. Other explanations for the phenomenon of reverse culture shock have been identified and reported (Lewin, 1945; Rhinesmith, 1970; Lerstrom, 1995; Gaw, 1995; Dodd, 1998).

Brislin and Pedersen (1976:17) described how some symptoms of culture shock would be experienced by a majority of sojourners at some time as a rather normal human response to a number of situations. Heiss and Nash (1976, in Brislin & Pedersen, 1976:13) noted that victims of culture shock will also experience a decline in motivation, spontaneity and flexibility to the extent that culture shock could interfere with the flow of normal daily life. Oberg (1958) summed up culture shock and its various phases as the anxiety resulting from no longer knowing "when to do what and how".

Views of culture shock range from investigations indicating that it can be overcome if steps are taken in orientation programs to reduce the level of unpredictability to be encountered to taking a learning approach. In the learning approach to culture shock the participant is encouraged to learn how to learn from the experience (Grove, 1989; Taylor, 1994). The suggestion is made that in orientation programs and general culture assimilators that make use of learning how to learn for preventing or overcoming culture shock, greater significance and application may be assumed for the exchangee as well as the host family. According to Grove the expectations of the exchangee, need to be lowered to reduce the pressure of being a totally competent and successful sojourner so that if and when things do go awry, there is not an overwhelming sense of disappointment and failure. It is suggested in the current research that for the host family, a lowering of expectations or the development of realistic expectations together with a refined understanding of the implications and treatment of culture shock would only be advantageous. Supportive measures and counselling are of critical usefulness for all participants particularly in the early stages when difficulties are starting to surface or even before problems are encountered.
In the host family lifeworld, for the duration of the hosting event, there will be a range of actions and reactions involving personal and interpersonal skills between all members. How the family members and exchange student relate to one another is of interest beyond the family system relations but into the arena of intercultural perspectives in what is essentially a cross-cultural context. Gudykunst, Hammer and Wiseman (1977) identified three broad areas of interpersonal skills that needed to be addressed in cross-cultural adaptation: the ability to deal with psychological stress, the ability to communicate effectively and the ability to develop interpersonal relationships such as is found in family and hosting situations. More recent interest in cross-cultural adjustment has also observed the role of cultural literacy for sociological and as well as psychological wellbeing (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Searle, 1991; Gudykunst, 1998). Personal and interpersonal skills for intercultural adaptation appear to be related to sociological and psychological factors that concern prior knowledge about the new culture as well as an ability to learn and process new encounters.

Another researcher, Zaremba (1984), presented four interpersonal skills that contributed positively to intercultural adaptation and success: flexibility or openness to the ideas and beliefs of others, empathy which involves accurately perceiving the needs and feelings of others, relationship building and networking for social support and respect for others. Of special interest to this study are the skills of persistence and tolerance for ambiguity. These will be discussed below.
Maintenance and tolerance for ambiguity in the hosting event.

Cushner (1987) found that certain individuals were well adjusted in their intercultural experiences and one characteristic that was identified was a "tolerance for ambiguity" or the ability to successfully undertake actions or to make decisions in novel situations even when all the social cues or various stimuli were previously unknown. These individuals demonstrated greater perceived control of their environment together with initiative in problem solving situations that led the researchers to observe that this quality was one that would facilitate the adjustment of sojourners and participants in ambiguous situations.

Grove (1989:6) noted that one of the characteristics of intercultural contact was that since an individual must respond to multiple stressors, not only at the start of contact but throughout its duration, value choices must be constantly made between competing variables. Therefore, it could be suggested that a participant who is successful, will have or will have developed, a tolerance for ambiguity that may not otherwise be developed or triggered. Brislin (1981:55) identified several factors that were found to contribute to successful cross-cultural encounters and a tolerant personality trait embraced "multidimensionality, or the ability to use several factors in thinking about an issue".

Without this capacity, as Ruben and Kealey (1979:19) observed:

The ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with minimal discomfort has long been thought to be an important asset when adjusting to a new culture. Excessive discomfort resulting from being placed in a new or different environment - or from finding the familiar environment altered in some critical ways - can lead to confusion, frustration, and interpersonal hostility. Some people seem better able than others to adapt well in new environments and adjust quickly to the demand of a changing milieu.
Maintenance and persistence in the hosting event.

The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upwards in the night. [Longfellow: The Ladder of Saint Augustine].

Most advertising brochures that promote student exchanges give passing mention to the scenario of host family and student not working out. In the event of problems, a change of host family is arranged (Southern Cross, 2000). The statement belies the profundity of human misery and turmoil that may actually go into the events leading up to the change of host family. An aspect of problems between hosts and exchange student gives consideration to the experiential learning that potentially may occur in the face of difficulties and the creative solutions that could result. One area of experiential learning that specifically relates to curriculum issues is that of persistence. Persistence relates to continued effort in the face of failure or continued application to a difficult task or problem-solving situation.

In the current research, a difficult task or problem-solving situation is readily found in the family system in an intercultural context. Problems concerning basic communication, misunderstandings, losing face, promoting friendship and understanding, keeping a balance between the old family system and the new one that embraces the exchange student are all everyday realities in the experience of hosting. Within the host family, the many scenarios of persisting in the face of failure are enacted by the various family members, in what becomes, the family classroom. Lessons learned in this context have ready application to the school classroom wherein personal persistence on tasks has positive implications. For example, Cooley, Beaird and Ayres (1994) described persistence as a behavioural correlate of motivation and found that students who did not persist with perceived difficult tasks were hampered in their achievement. Weiner (1979) and Dweck (1975) and others observed this characteristic in individuals in their study of attribution theory. Persistence, they noted, had a
particular relationship to debilitating attributional style and learned helplessness. Some children were described as mastery oriented and were more likely to persist in the face of failure.

Another interpersonal skill called 'category width' is of interest to this study. Detweiler (1980) described how some individuals have wider categories than others—a trait that could be crucial for intercultural success. Other traits of personality similarly applied are "open-closedness" of stereotypes and "strength of personality" (Harvey, Hunt & Schroder, 1961; Harris, 1973; Brislin, 1981). Rohrlich (1993) reported that some students when surveyed about their hopes and aspirations prior to intercultural contact intended to work hard at their adjustment, knew it would be difficult but also believed that they could handle it. Other students reported negative or neutral aspirations that led to researchers to question the mental and emotional commitment that these students had made toward the forthcoming experience. Having an explicit desire to work hard at adjusting to a new culture together with the ability or capacity to meet the challenges of a foreign environment have been described in terms of cultural capital or cultural literacy (Bourdieu, 1977; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Searle, 1991).

Outcomes of Successful Cross-cultural Encounters

Learning is acquired by reading books; but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them.[Lord Chesterfield: Letters to His Son, March 16, 1752].

The successful student participant is one who is satisfied with the new environment, participates in enjoyable activities, interacts with the host nationals and has few complaints.
about conditions, host nationals or the host culture (Crano, 1986:7). Noesjirwan (1985) stated that a successful homestay experience could be described as one in which the student stuck it out for the duration, the family enjoyed the experience, the student enjoyed the experience, problems were faced and overcome, the student experienced considerable personal growth and significant cultural learning took place. She judged that about 50% of students enjoyed a productive experience, about 40% encountered some significant difficulties and about 10% continuously experienced significant difficulties.

An alternate view of success in a cross-cultural experience is related to personal learning and growth through experiential learning in an intercultural context; the realisation of expectations for the intercultural exposure as well as basic personal achievement satisfaction.

Figure 8: Outcomes of cross-cultural participation.

These views of success in intercultural experiences are explored in the current research. Other measures of success in cross-cultural activities have been described in terms of cultural pluralism, cultural empathy, successful multicultural integration and clarity of the
mental frame of reference in intercultural settings (Adler, 1975; Lum, 1977, in M. J. Bennett, 1993; Grove & Torbiörn, 1993). A review of the literature into cross-cultural encounters has shown a developing interest in this area and in recent times effort has been made to apply this to a theoretical framework rather than relying solely on descriptive accounts. Although theories of satisfaction cannot be directly used there is a growing body of thought that equates success in cross-cultural encounters and positive outcomes with personal characteristics, attitudes and attributes.

Brislin (1993) suggested that when people from within or outside a culture deviate in some way then their behaviour is attributed as unacceptable and they may be regarded with intolerance. There are implications here for any individual who engages in cross-cultural contact. This ingroup/outgroup theme has central importance since it serves as the means by which individuals can assess their own identity in terms of the group.

Hansel (1984) noted some of the many positive outcomes that an intercultural exchange could afford in participants. For example, the American Field Service impact study (Hansel, 1984) found that students returned from their sojourn more knowledgeable about the new culture, more self-confident and better able to generate new options for themselves in terms of problem solving having had the stimulus of experiencing new solutions to familiar problems. Hansel observed that the students could take on new challenges once they returned home because they could remember their successes in the host country and their ability to cope and meet those situations. Experiential learning produced obvious benefits that Hansel termed motivation, memory and mastery. Rapid maturation was evident in most exchange students and Martin (1985) noted that there were re-entry adjustment problems because of this factor. Exchangees matured and increased their knowledge to an extent that surpassed their natural family expectations. This resulted in problems of communication upon return. Martin concluded that an intercultural homestay did have significant impact on the quality of young
peoples' relationships with parents, siblings and friends. There are many implications for learning for the exchange student in an intercultural event that coincide, and are necessarily intertwined with the experience of the host family thus emphasising the critical nature of this research project.

Wood (1982) examined students in Rotary International exchange programs and noted that students believed that the experience brought about changes that were desirable and essential to their lives. In a series of unstructured interviews, respondents reported long lasting changes to their lives in terms of developing world understanding, the impact on their life and personality development, developing an appreciation for their home country and the long lasting impact of the host country relationships. Similarly, the Young Diplomats Program respondents identified to Mei (1990:5) that their knowledge of the world community had increased and there were positive personal effects in terms of college and career decisions and choices as well as self-growth. The positive aspects of personal growth included responsibility, adaptability, independence, self-reliance, patience and confidence. Adler (1975:47) also described culture contact as a transitional experience that leads to personal growth. In the Israeli exchange experience there were distinct personal gains both from having to "look after themselves during the travel and to look out for another during the hosting".

The aim of an intercultural homestay experience is for the exchangee to be personally integrated into the daily life of the host family and the host community for a significant amount of time. Principles of orientation have been developed to assist the processes of adjustment and adaptation and to promote intercultural learning and personal growth of participants. Experiencing some problems or difficulties is normal in an intercultural exchange and these can have positive outcomes. Self-concept, persistence, tolerance for ambiguity together with realistic expectations are important criteria of participant selection.
and have application the curricula perspectives. Positive outcomes include personal growth and significant cultural and experiential learning.

**Learning and intercultural experiences.**

The bodies of literature related in the search for the phenomenon of hosting include knowledge of intercultural exchanges, theories of motivation and attribution and research on cross-cultural contact. These areas constitute the major variables that are considered to be inter-related and operating in the host family context of student exchange programs. In order to relate link these areas to experiential learning and curriculum design, the work of Marton (1982) is useful. He described a model of learning and experience in which the various categories were considered to have cause-effect relations to each other. By widening our understanding of a phenomenon there is a change in terms of the possible ways of viewing that object. Things may be seen in a new way and so a new meaning has evolved. Consequently a richer or more powerful way of viewing phenomena in the surrounding world is built into a spectrum of understanding. The particular components of the learning model are motivation, approach, style and outcome. The model has been adapted previously (Laurillard, 1979; Entwistle, 1980; Marton, 1982) and is now used for the purpose of the framework of learning for the current study. The application will be presented in the following section since learning is understood as being related to conceptual change. Prosser (1993:21) said that phenomenography incorporates a view of learning and since what we learn is linked with how we learn, then the experience of learning and understanding learning is relational.

**Learning and motivation in a relational model.**

Fransson (1978) in a phenomenographic study, identified the "why" of learning in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation in the learning situation is applied to
individuals for whom the specific content of the learning experience is a goal within itself and the main reason for learning. Extrinsic motivation refers to the learner for whom some other reason such as rewards, incentives or evasion of punishment provides the stimulus for the learning. The two-factor theory of Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) described people as either hygiene seekers, who are predominantly seekers of extrinsic factors (security, physical environmental conditions) and the motivation seekers of intrinsic rewards or incentives (achievement, recognition, responsibility).

For the current study, motivation and satisfaction theory have been suggested as operational components in a cross-cultural encounter. Incentives, goals, needs and rewards are presented in the model with their relationship to the other variables. Participant selection is included here since there is an assumed motivation to be engaged in an intercultural encounter. This term is now applied to family systems and the aims and motivations involved in the decision to participate in a hosting experience.

**Approach to learning in a relational model.**

Marton (1975) described the student's approach to a learning task as either operating on a deep or surface level. A deep approach to learning is characterised by the personalisation, the integration of relationships and the integration of meanings for the whole experience. In contrast, the surface approach displays an unrelatedness of the various aspects of the task, memorisation or rote learning and a lack of reflectiveness or consolidation of the meaning of the experience.

In an exchange experience the variables of self-concept, self-esteem, sense of responsibility and commitment to intercultural learning and integration by immersion into the host community have different experiences related to personal attributions, interpersonal skills and other variables. Orientation programs and the preparatory aspect of an exchange is
applicable to this section since it is assumed that some kind of preparation will be made in approach to the exchange experience. In this study the two sections, motivation and learning and approach to learning are conjoined to form the preparation aspect of the intercultural exchange. This term now becomes the preparation for the hosting situation conducted either formally or informally prior to the hosting event and is influential in the development of expectations.

Learning style in a relational model.

Pask (1976) described different styles of learning that were termed comprehension or operation. Operational learning is characterised by the use of definitions, procedural or operational rules and the use of logical derivations. The comprehensive learning approach distinguishes theory and practical experience, and uses analogies to interpret theory in terms of practice. For the current study, the contention is that in an exchange experience some participants will have personal attributes of empathy, flexibility, wide category width, tolerance for ambiguity and a close alignment between aspirations and achievements. Some participants may reflect a different adaptation approach to the exchange experience. The approach may be identified by aspects of adjustment in which reflection, persistence, tolerance for ambiguity, personalism and dissonance are identified as areas for special consideration and remediation. These aspects are equated with the actual period of intercultural contact with the exchangee in the hosting culture. This is the actual event of the intercultural exchange and involves the host family experience and maintenance of the status quo. Factors include fit, type of exchange, communication effectiveness and support strategies for the problems and situations that arise.
Learning outcomes in a relational model.

Qualitative differences have been repeatedly identified to describe outcomes of learning in various contexts. Often, the qualitative differences have been in relation to conceptions of specific learning content such as mathematics or chemistry. More general outcomes of learning with wider applicability concerning the qualitative differences of those outcomes, were reported by Marton and Säljö (1976). In an intercultural exchange experience, successful outcomes have been shown to be related to aspects of adaptability, attitudes and attributes together with personal growth and real cultural learning. It is the premise of intercultural organisations that essential and desirable changes can result from intercultural exposure together with an increased world understanding and the development of host country relationships. Learning outcomes relates to the summation of what and how the participants perceive or understand their cross-cultural experience in the context of an exchange program. In the summation stage, the participant will reflect upon the learning experience and may consolidate a view of understanding. In a reflexive phenomenography, the recollections of the host participants include the identification of learning outcomes, learning content, gains and constraints, satisfaction, expected and unexpected results.

There is no specific theory therefore, to explain the experience of hosting or participant satisfaction in exchange programs and much of the related research has been descriptive or related to components of cross-cultural contact. The research that has related to satisfaction has been mainly in the area of worker satisfaction with the related theories being derived from general theories of motivational psychology. Achievement motivation and theories concerning attribution have been expanded by educational researchers and behavioural psychologists to understand the nature of adaptation and self-concept in situations concerning students and adolescents in particular.
From an historical viewpoint, developments in theories of motivation and assumptions about human behaviour have seen interest in focus upon cognitive dimensions of expectations, self-concept, achievement and attribution as integral correlates of motivation. Participation in an exchange program as a host family does not ensure success or satisfaction but does involve a difference in experiential learning to participants who have not experienced cross-cultural contact. Participant satisfaction is perceived as the global affective reaction of an individual to the sum of learning experiences that an experience of hosting in a cultural exchange has to offer. The particular nature of the understanding of that experience is the focus of the current research. The major variables that a review of the literature has identified from a behavioural approach about the event of hosting have been placed in a phenomenographical perspective to adopt a framework for this study that will provide an insight into the experience of hosting. The nature of participants in hosting events and the relationship that is assumed to exist between family systems and aims, preparation, expectations, maintenance within the cross-cultural encounter and the overall satisfaction with the hosting experience can be presented in the proposed framework of learning.
Chapter 3

Methodology for Thematising Conceptions of the Experience of Hosting

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies When a new planet swims into his ken; Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes He star'd at the Pacific - and all his men Look'd at each other with a wild surmise - Silent, upon a peak in Darien. [Keats: Sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"].

This study examined the learning experience of host families engaged in intercultural exchange programs using a phenomenographic approach. As a research specialisation, phenomenography can be described in terms of its object as well as the special methods used to discover and investigate that object. Phenomenographic investigation seeks understanding about how people perceive and experience phenomena rather than specifically about how things are (Marton, 1982:5). It has variously been described as a philosophical approach, a research specialisation, a way of posing a problem and seeking a solution or a useful tool in research (Hasselgren, 1996). A phenomenographic investigation has the potential to deliver a composite of all the ways of seeing a particular phenomenon or situation (Resnick, 1987; Chaiklin & Lave, 1993).

Phenomenography therefore, constitutes a view of knowledge, a research method, and qualitative descriptions of peoples’ ways of thinking about something. Generally, the main method for data collection involves the collection of individual interviews, and the different responses are characterised in terms of categories of description that are logically and hierarchically ordered. The resulting set of categories of description is known as the outcome space of the phenomenon. Marton (1982:5) described phenomenography as the second order
approach to understanding in which interest is not directed specifically to how things are in reality, but instead, to how people think things are and experience them.

Phenomenography is the empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which we experience, conceptualize, understand, perceive and apprehend various phenomena in and aspects of the world around us (Marton, 1982:1).

The label of 'phenomenography' was selected to convey the idea of describing specific things as conceptions rather than formulating general principles about how things appear to be (Marton, 1994a:89). Previous schools of thought could not adequately provide explanations for the new questions raised by interest in aspects of student learning relative to the context as well as the individual.

In the current research, the phenomenographic approach is extended and developed. Rather than using collective individual interviews, the interview types comprised host family groupings. Also, the research problem was driven by a need for best practice for participating host families and so the resultant outcome space of the phenomenon of hosting has direct application for policy and program development rather than as pure research interest. Finally, the categories of description are not shown in terms of a logical hierarchical order but rather, a spectrum of experience will be presented.

In order to understand phenomenography contextually, it is useful to review the contributions of educational theorists, psychologists and practitioners whose writings gave influence and direction to phenomenographic thinking. From an historical point of view, an important direction in contemporary philosophy and human sciences is presented by modern phenomenology. This began with the philosophy of Husserl (1948) which was a reflective-descriptive philosophical preoccupation that investigated the surrounding worlds belonging to humans (Bernet, Kern & Marbach, 1993). Viewing subjective knowledge as the object of
interest for the purpose of research was in contrast to the positivist and objectivistic views that dominated educational and psychological research. Svensson (1994) noted the way in which older traditions, such as Gestalt psychology, with their interest in human behaviour and information processing, provided historical roots for understanding knowledge as a complex of objects or phenomena.

The concept of returning matters to themselves through reflection, reduction and eidetic inquiry is a part of the phenomenological philosophy that aims to secure a "methodically pure grasp of consciousness as an object of reflective research" (Bernet et al., 1993:4). This type of philosophy has some equivalent in the Socratic-Platonic idea of absolute knowledge being inter-related with self-knowledge and employs the functions of temporality and intentionality. The phenomenological theory of cognition according to Husserl (1948) is made up of a two-sided orientation that is objective and subjective in its logical investigations. Marton (1994a:89) claimed that the departure of phenomenology lay in the formulating of general principles rather than descriptions of conceptions since Husserl was interested in the relationship between the natural-scientific (naturalistic) view of the world and the spiritual-scientific (personlistic) attitude, that is, between natural sciences and human sciences.

Another aspect of phenomenology is the description of perceptions of the world or the consciousness of being "wedded to the world". These perceptions are said to be physiognomic in nature (McConville, 1978:99; Merleau-Ponty, 1992:100). In this way, things are perceived by seeing, touching or doing in the first phase of a conception while thinking or reflecting upon the seeing, touching, constitutes a second phase. Dahlin (1994:107) noted this contribution and the implications for phenomenographic research in the description of conceptions, since Merleau-Ponty identified how second-order perceptions are necessarily socially constructed as they are imposed upon and assimilated by experience.
Phenomenographical knowledge interest has been used to describe the early work of Piaget since it provided a detailed description and analysis of the qualitatively different ways that children in different stages of their development, that is, within a certain age period, view various aspects of the world (Sherman & Webb, 1990:141). The research had the aim of identifying the development of knowledge in children. Piaget (1952) was able to show the similarities in various aspects of growth. In phenomenographic terms, Marton (1981:177) explained that this type of interest was relational and constituted a second-order approach. It was Piaget's later interest that shifted the thematic focus from the child's world, to the child itself that led to a first-order perspective. Focusing upon general similarities in a formal sense and determining them as psychologically real entities hallmarked this shift.

An example of relational knowledge interest is found in the Piagetian label of concrete-operational behaviour. This category was used to explain a developmental level but when applied in practice it became clear, as Marton (1981:192) explained, that it did not fit for all children in that category. Children might succeed in some tasks but fail in others and so this led to the recognition of what was actually 'variations' between individuals. This type of variation across structurally similar tasks came to be known as horizontal decalage. Resnick (1987) noted that this type of research did not have results that were immediately applicable to instruction since it was more readily located as a means to provide a research design of cognitive objectives.

Other researchers (Hundeide, 1977; Smedslund, 1977; Hughes & Donaldson, 1979) began to question the notion of a temporal order of developmental stages given the weight of evidence demonstrating a dependence upon content as well as contextual factors. The phenomenographic perspective departs at this point from the Piagetian constructivist basis in the developmental search for conceptions of specific aspects of reality. Individual development within a socio-cultural context was the nature of the learning theory put forward
by Vygotsky (1962, 1978:204) at a similar time to the work of Piaget. Vygotsky took a
different perspective to Piaget's universal stages of development for all children of the same
age. Rather, a Vygotskian approach describes the shifting contexts between the environment
of the learner both historically and culturally. In an historical and cultural framework, learning
is viewed as an intrinsic process over which the individual has control. The process of cultural
development leads to higher structures of thought which in turn give meaning to lower order
concepts. It is in the Zone of Proximal Development where internal developmental processes
are ignited in an individual due to the influence of more able others in that environment.

The role of sociocultural activity in planning and intellectual development has been
investigated (Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1985; Rogoff, 1993) while another extended view of
learning that takes note of phenomenographic perspectives and the role of mediation in
learning was reported by Säljö (1988, 1991). Consequently, interest in the types of learning
that can occur more naturally in everyday life has driven research into learning beyond the
formal classroom to include successful learning out of school (Resnick, 1987; Chaiklin &
Lave, 1993:149). In the current research, there is the basic premise that the experience of
hosting is one such extension of learning out of school in the curricula of intercultural
exposure within the home environment.

Phenomenography also draws on the philosophy of John Dewey that is concerned with
bringing experience into focus as a means of uniting the dualism between the individual and
the context, that is, the subject and object. The links are found in the non-dualistic nature of
aspects of phenomenography (Marton, 1992:10). According to Dahlin (1994:90) the
'experience' label used by Dewey referred to the knowledge base of experience, together with
pre-reflective experience, true or otherwise. In this way, thinking is part of experience, pre-
reflective thinking is also part of experience and from this connection, Dewey provides that
experience is pre-structured.
Phenomenology has contributed to phenomenography also since the categorisation and prediction of the relations that exist between human beings and the world around them is understood. Phenomenography, however, is more to do with the content of thinking (Marton, 1994b). Phenomenology with its basis in the philosophy of Husserl (in Bernet, Kern & Marbach, 1993) is centred on the return to the things themselves wherein all knowledge is rooted in our immediate experience of the world while phenomenography has human experience at its focus. This is distinct from human behaviour, mental states or the nervous system. Marton (1988) explained that in a well established field such as science or linguistics, any study pertaining to that subject and foci, irrespective of the methods and theories, could be included into the family tree of that field. In this way, phenomenology is the science that has experience as its object of research (the field) and it is one of the main schools of philosophical thought this century. Alternatively, phenomenographers adopt an empirical orientation and study the experience of others. In phenomenology there is a dividing line drawn between pre-reflective experience and conceptual thought while in phenomenography the structure and meaning of a phenomenon as experienced can be found in pre-reflective experience and conceptual thought.

In this way phenomenography and phenomenology also differ as to purpose. The former approach method will involve defining a logically ordered hierarchy known as the outcome space while the latter approach method will aim to capture the richness of experience, describing in full, the individual's lifeworld. The phenomenographer will bring to light aspects of experience that will enable an individual to be more efficient in their handling of it while the phenomenologist seeks the essence of how an individual experiences their world. In phenomenography however, it is the variation of experience and the terms of the different aspects that define the phenomena. The focus is on ways of experiencing the phenomena together with ways of seeing them, knowing about them and having skills related
to them. The set of qualitatively different ways of experiencing the particular phenomenon is finite but not closed since future discoveries will also introduce new ways of experience. Researchers 'bracket' their preconceived notions and depict their immediate experience of the studied phenomenon through a "reflective turn, bending consciousness back upon itself" (Husserl, 1948; Marton, 1988, in Sherman & Webb, 1990:153). Simply stated, phenomenology is the study of what people perceive in the world; phenomenography is the study of the way people conceive of the world.

In order to understand academic learning better, interest in a phenomenographic type approach was developed from a set of studies by a research team in the Department of Education, University of Göteborg in Sweden in the early 1970s. It was the simple observations of learning and interest in the way students approach a learning task that led to these two significant questions being asked (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994:4424). What does it mean that some people are better at learning than others and why are some people better at learning than others?

In these studies a number of students were asked to read a text after which they would discuss their understanding of it with the experimenter. In the interviews, students were asked what they understood the text to be about, to give as full account of the text as possible and to answer questions about their experience of the situation and in particular, how they had gone about learning the text. The aim of the research was to describe people's conceptions. The phenomenographic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed two different ways of experiencing a learning situation: a deep approach in which the learner is the active agent of learning and a surface approach wherein the learner adopts a passive role in the learning process (Marton, 1975). This was seen as a separate view of learning since styles of learning (such as comprehension and operational) had been identified by Pask (1976) and reasons for learning had been described by Fransson (1978) in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
In this way phenomenography constituted a research orientation that focused upon an object of investigation in order to form a field of research within a field of knowledge (Svensson, 1994).

The formation of phenomenography as a field of research has embraced developmental variations to arrive at each contextual outcome space. The outcome space in the original phenomenographic studies constituted the categories of description of how the text was understood. The understanding of the topics dealt with by the text as well as learners' approaches to the learning task and their preconceived ideas about the phenomena were dealt with in the specific situation of the study. It was the resultant outcome space that became the phenomenographic instrument for characterising in qualitative terms, how well the learners succeeded with their learning task (Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1984).

Many studies have been undertaken under the umbrella term of phenomenography and the common finding has been that "each phenomenon, concept or principle can be understood in a limited number of qualitatively different ways" (Marton, 1986:30). In the current research, the different ways in which the phenomenon of hosting is understood are presented in a spectrum. The suggestion is made that a spectrum of understanding implies a broader range, rather than a limited number, of qualitatively different ways of understanding something.

A common characteristic of phenomenographic research is the analysis and categorisation of statements concerning the phenomenon in focus in this procedure:

```
compilation of statements → analysis → conceptions
```

Various phenomenographic investigations have differed in context and it is interesting to note that Marton (1988) identified three lines of development in phenomenographic investigations
while Hasselgren (1996) almost a decade later identified five strands. From the onset of phenomenography as a research specialisation, there has continued to be the phenomenographic "knowledge interest" that describes the different ways in which people can experience, understand or characterise the world as it appears. This gives rise to a kind of collective mind that embraces all the different ways that people use to make sense of the world in a particular context. Examples of the different strands of phenomenography that each contribute to an understanding of the collective mind are now examined for their characteristics as well as their appropriateness to the current research.

Types of phenomenography have developed from empirical studies of learning in higher education to focus on an investigation into understanding the very act of learning and problem solving. Another type of phenomenographic research has had a major focus on the different ways that a central phenomenon, concept or principle is understood. In this way the development of knowledge within a certain domain is viewed in terms of the different ways of understanding the content learned. Since phenomenography in some ways is still being defined through the many types of research purported to be carried out in that way, Bjersted (cited in Hasselgren, 1996) focused on the nature of more recent studies and described five modes of doing phenomenography. These are operationally defined by the type of research that has been classified as phenomenographic in recent times as in the following examples.

Different kinds of phenomena have been investigated using various guises of phenomenography. For example, phenomena relating to how people conceive of aspects of their reality have been examined using discursive or pure phenomenography. Marton (1988) coined "pure phenomenography" from a philosophical stance since it is not directly related to an educational setting or learning context. It is a simplistic way of doing phenomenography (Hasselgren, 1996) since context-free discourse is recorded and analysed in a non-hermeneutic way. Put simply, conversations were transcribed and the statements then
compiled as in a content analysis. From this set a system of conceptions was developed. Early studies of this kind were not designed to facilitate understanding in a higher educational setting and were not produced to go beyond the knowledge interest of the phenomenographic investigation itself. Consequently, the purpose of pure interest knowledge, aside from intrinsic value, would need rigorous justification in view of the absence of obvious practical application.

More recently, Larsson has investigated teachers' conceptions of their professional world (1987) as opposed to learners' conceptions of learning. An example of pure phenomenography was conducted by Theman (1983, in Marton, 1988) who found four distinct definitions of power in a study of political power during a time of political unrest in Göteborg. Other studies in this mode have explored peoples' concept of inflation, social security and taxes and also teachers' conceptions of their professional world (Larsson, 1987). Mapping the collective mind is of interest in this mode. The current research could be related to a rather more complex form of discursive phenomenography since the phenomenon under investigation is that of hosting. Not all people have an understanding of hosting however, since the family groups who were selected for interview had undergone this particular type of experience. Also, the current research extends far beyond pure knowledge interest since real application of the resultant outcome space has highlighted critical areas for refining best practice for future participant host families.

Another form of phenomenography that resembles pure knowledge interest is found in an adaptation of hermeneutic dialectics and is:

more or less neutral from the point of view of specific research methods... it represents a distinctive perspective in which findings may be re-interpreted in ways that do not accord with their original meaning” (Johansson, Marton & Svensson, 1985:2).
In hermeneutic phenomenography the analytic procedure is directed to interpreting texts and statements that were not originally made for phenomenographic analysis and hence is distinguished from the other types of phenomenographic research. Hasselgren (1996) described this mode as corresponding to criteria of "humanistic" qualities from within a phenomenological perspective. Van Manen (1990) adapted phenomenology and hermeneutics in his studies of the essence of human science and lived experience whereas the hermeneutic element in phenomenographic analysis occurs when sense is made of particular expressions in terms of the collectives as well as the individual context. In support of hermeneutic phenomenography, Säljö (1994:73) noted that "to read a particular text and to interpret it roughly as it was intended, under specific social and communicative constraints", was in itself a worthwhile object of research because this type of study was concerned with "how people as cultural beings decipher and render meaningful messages mediated through writing".

It was the early studies of Marton (1975) and the Göteborg phenomenographers that were rigorously performed and repeated several times in an experimental way, that led to the form of experimental phenomenography. Conventional measures such as quantitative measures of retention and a graphical representation of the hierarchy of levels of outcome, to analyse how students approached the learning task were used. More recently, Bowden (1994:4) has taken an experimental perspective for studies involving students in a formal educational setting. In particular, the purpose of the research has been to facilitate student learning by planning learning experiences in a developmental way so that a much more powerful understanding of the phenomenon is gained. According to Bowden, the outcomes of this research have led to the development of "generalisations about better and worse ways to organise learning experiences" in the selected area of study. In this way, the participants in the study as well as the methodological means for collecting their data, are of particular importance due to their inherent relational character.
Another variety of phenomenography is naturalistic in definition and refers to the collection of material from authentic social settings. In naturalistic phenomenography mode data is not extracted from speech events or interviews but happens in special situations without direct involvement from researchers. Lybeck (1981) conducted a study in which he observed students in a chemistry class who were given instructions about the concept of 'density' and he established the existence of a number of conceptions of this phenomenon. Central to this type of study is the researcher's extensive knowledge in the field under consideration. Lybeck observed and recorded what was happening in physics lessons concerning the concept of density. The data collected consisted of the dialogue held between students and the dialogue between staff and students. From this data a number of conceptions of the phenomenon were identified. Hasselgren (1996) suggested that this mode of phenomenographic research, the naturalistic element, could readily be considered as a way to validate earlier observations. In particular, many aspects of this method are similar to discursive or pure phenomenography since the phenomenon under investigation, in this example density, was a concept of the participant's life world.

Mention has been made that the terms phenomenology and phenomenography have very similar derivatives but are philosophically dissimilar. The phenomenological aim of clarifying experiential foundations with the goal of finding the singular essence of that experience was not the intent of phenomenography. Although Marton (1988) initially stated that phenomenography was not an offshoot of phenomenology, a mix of the research approaches however, has given rise to phenomenological phenomenography (Theman, 1983; Giorgi, 1985; Krosmark, 1987; Neuman, 1987; Uljens, 1992). In some cases the studies are more theoretical and philosophical than typical phenomenographic studies in their method of finding conceptions while others take a "more typically phenomenographic way of responding to phenomenological criteria" (Neuman, 1987, in Hasselgren, 1996:1). An example of
phenomenological phenomenography was a study of the origin of arithmetic skills and "finger numbers". The researcher asked participants for descriptions of what was actually going on in their minds during the interview (Neuman, 1987).

A more recent extension of phenomenography has been developed. In the 'new' phenomenography, ways of experiencing something can be described in terms of simultaneous discernment of the critical aspects of the phenomenon in question (Marton & Booth, 1997; Bowden & Marton, 1998; Pong, 1999; Rovio-Johansson, 1999; Runesson, 1999). The variations between different ways of experiencing something are identified as critical aspects since they are focused upon in awareness. When a critical aspect is discerned then this is described as a function of the variation. From a theoretical perspective, one or more critical aspects may be discerned simultaneously so that a structure of awareness can be identified. The elements of discernment, simultaneity and variation are used not only to reveal ways of understanding something, but have corresponding implications for teaching and curriculum development (Runesson, 1999:6). Traditional phenomenography identifies a first order of variation and the different ways of experiencing the same phenomena using categories of description in an outcome space. In phenomenography, the different ways of experiencing variation are found in the dimensions of particular aspects of a phenomenon. The 'new' phenomenography however, is concerned with a second order perspective that targets how differences and variations evolve (Marton & Pang, 1999). In the 'new' phenomenography, the conceptions can be described and systematically explored by the researcher. Structural and referential aspects are used to constitute the dynamics of awareness (Pong, 1999). The ways of experiencing a particular phenomenon have been further described in terms of discernment, variation, contemporaneousness and simultaneity. There are two planes in this system: discernment-variation-contemporaneousness and simultaneity-d discernment-variation (Marton & Pang, 1999:5). Learning in this system can be understood in
relation to learning over time since "to experience variation implies that the person must have a contemporaneous experience of instances encountered at different points in time" (Marton & Pang, 1999:6).

In the current research, the 'new phenomenography' has been used to extend knowledge and develop praxis about the host family experience in intercultural exchange programs. In the search for the experience of hosting there were instances of "experiencing the contemporaneousness of things over time" (Marton & Pang, 1999:6). In the reported ways of experiencing something, shifts in participant understanding from the hosting event to the interview event emerged. Through the use of the 'new' phenomenography for investigating the experience of hosting, an alternative to the logical hierarchical ordering structure of the outcome space, in the form of a spectrum of experience was identified. The suggestion is made that a spectrum of experience makes an innovative contribution to the application of phenomenographic techniques.

*Why use phenomenography in the current research?*

A phenomenographic approach is one that is relational since it is concerned with individuals in some phenomenon of the world. There is an experiential or second order view since interest is in how things appear to people, rather than describing how things actually are in reality. The phenomenographic approach is content oriented since the phenomenon in question can be described, categorised and understood within the particular context of the host family. This study is not about reflecting the reality of the host family experience in the curricula of student exchange programs but rather about systematically reflecting the host families' experiences of the hosting event. Thus if participants perceive that the experience of hosting involves a dilemma about their role in the hosting event then this is an issue for organisers, whether it matches the reality of the hosting program or not.
It is important that the host family experience is understood by all participants and that the experiential learning facilitated by the event and the kinds of changes that occur are anticipated and enhanced (Prosser, 1993). When the conceptions of the experience are made explicit then this leads to further implications for best practice. Qualitative understanding resulting in an outcome space represents the spectrum of experience rather than a generalised traditional response to a known event. The application of a phenomenographic approach for the current research is affirmed in the context of the phenomenon of hosting for families who have participated in this form of intercultural exchange programs.

The majority of studies into cross-cultural contact and learning have used quantitative test schedules, surveys and questionnaires as the most suitable instruments for measurement. Some studies have focused on various indicators, while others have noted the relative frequencies of critical variables. Likert type scales have been used also (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). Surveys and questionnaires are vulnerable however, since a limited view of participants' perceptions, without reference to the contextual influences of varying environments and settings of individual conceptions, may contort findings. Sergiovanni (1967) noted the difficulties in eliciting realistic or truthful responses from surveys and questionnaires since respondents could tend to prefer to give socially acceptable answers. Also, Gruneberg (1979) explained that questionnaires should be viewed as a means of gaining insights that approximate the truth but not definitive measures of attitudes.

Attinasi (1991) noted that, in the main, studies have been presented from the viewpoint of the researcher and not from the participant. Questionnaires contain pre-selected items and fixed choice response categories for data collection, together with aggregate multivariate statistical techniques that largely impose the researcher's frame of reference upon the data collection and analysis procedures. Attinasi criticised questionnaire type research methodology since the implication is that researchers already understand what meanings
things have for the individuals they are studying or they ignore such meanings since they are not important for understanding outcomes.

*The phenomeno – interview.*

Kvale (1983:174) has explained that in the phenomeno - interview, there is a search for detailed "description and understanding of the meaning of themes in the lifeworld of the interviewee" whom in this study is the host family participant in an intercultural exchange. The method of interviewing was outlined by Kvale (1983). A summary of the key features of the Kvale (1983) type of phenomenographic interviewing procedure identifies certain characteristics. The interview is centred in the interviewee's life-world and the purpose of the interview is to seek an understanding of the meaning that the phenomenon has in the interviewee's lifeworld. The interview is qualitative, descriptive, specific and pre-suppositionless with a focus upon certain themes. The interviews are dynamic in the sense that they are open to ambiguities and change with a dialogue of interpersonal interaction. Bruce (1994) added that the interview process ideally should be a positive experience for all the participants. The descriptions generated are relational, experiential, content-oriented and qualitative.

In the phenomenographic interview the data is collected from open ended questions that permit the subject to reveal aspects of the individual's relevance structure. The purpose of a phenomenographic interview is not only to understand the individual's interpretation of his or her experience, but includes any perceptions of changes in thinking in a developmental perspective. The phenomenographic interview is described as developmental and diagnostic because it is about finding out how people experience some aspect of their world and enabling them or others to change the way their world operates (Bowden, 1994:43; Bowden, 2000:8). This can occur when the meaning becomes accessible once the individual reflects on the
constitutive factors of personal experience (Schutz, 1967). Different interviews will consequently take different courses particularly since most questions follow from what the interviewee says (Bowden et al., 1992; Francis, 1993). In this way, the phenomenographic interview has distinctive aims, design and focus and the role of the researcher as interviewer has a distinctive purpose also. The data that is collected is then treated in a distinctly phenomenographic way.

Methodological problem areas have focused on the perceived lack of randomness, generalisability, confabulation or filling in the gaps on the part of the interviewee, the absence of control groups/hypotheses, together with the issue of interpretation. In the current research phenomenographic group interviews were conducted. A group interview type is an extension of the applicability of phenomenographic interviewing. An operating dynamic within the family group interview was the role of group opinions, recollections and discussion towards a family consensus in the delivery of perceptions. The part of the interviewer was in some cases reduced since families held their own discussions about their recollections of the hosting experience. Gaps in recollections that did occur or dissimilar viewpoints were verified by the family members themselves, with the interviewer restating ambiguities or new discoveries for clarification.

Francis (1993) criticised the lack of discussion addressing the interview as a crucial instrument for data collection. Since possible rules for the guidance and interpretation of dialogue have been identified, it was suggested that appropriate design and reporting of research procedures is critical to the continued and further justification of the phenomenographic approach in research. Consequently, validating the interview process by ensuring that the aims of the research effectively influence the design of the interview can occur through reduction in a pilot study (Bruce, 1994:54). A pilot study was conducted in the current research to validate the design of the phenomenographic interviews. The interviewer
must abide by the rules of phenomenographic technique and put aside personal experience (epoche, bracketing, suspension of judgement); the interviewee must be encouraged to describe the previous experience and the rule of horizontalisation is prescribed wherein all possible pictures are treated as being of equal value. The researcher as interviewer must endeavour to gain access to the meanings that the particular objects, events and situations have for the participants by encouraging them to reconstruct the experience as they perceive it and then reflect upon the meaning that they make of it (Spinelli, 1989; Bowden, 2000:10). The interview itself involves initial spontaneous description of the phenomenon, then the interviewee is led to the discovery of new relations within the phenomenon, researcher clarification follows, next a content analysis, interviewer commonsense interpretations and finally the search for theoretical significance.

The emergence of the conceptions in phenomenography.
The semi-structured interviews are fully transcribed and then the data is analysed in several phases. Säljö (1994:79) identified certain problems with the development of conceptions describing them as referring to an abstract educational reality rather than an experienced one. This presupposes a dualistic view of phenomenography, that is, subject and object, although Marton (1992) claimed that the subject's experience of the object is a relation between the two. These commonsense or taken for granted understandings within phenomenography are considered to be worthwhile in themselves (Marton, 1981).

The second order "what" focus of meanings is considered to be autonomous from the first order "how much" of something since the conceptions that emerge from the second order cannot be derived from those that arrive from the first order perspective. From this stance, a relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways of understanding aspects of the world can be empirically determined. A conception therefore, represents a relation between an
individual and part of the world around them (Svensson & Themman, 1983; Uijens, 1989). Conceptions are often implicit and so it is the task of the researcher to interpret an interview and find the conceptions. The emergence of conceptions in the initial phases of phenomenographic analysis bears some relation to the process of content analysis. In order to investigate the experience of hosting, phenomenographic and content analysis techniques were employed. Phenomenographic strategies were used to locate the phenomenon of hosting while a content analysis provided insight into the perceptions of learning content from participation in a hosting event.

In a content analysis, the interview transcripts are written up verbatim to allow for the possibility of resultant "in vivo" categories. Information is noted in terms of its similarity, meaning or significance. In the content analysis, information is recorded from interviews and tabled in terms of the relative frequency and importance of concepts. Separate concepts are noted and then grouped into categories. The conceptual labels are used to describe discrete happenings, events, or other instances of phenomena. Content analysis techniques are useful since perceptions and individual reports can be translated into data, connections can be made between categories of description and theoretical interpretations of data can be grounded in reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In a phenomenographic approach, the data is collected, described and interpreted to reflect the different individual interpretations of the phenomenon. Phenomenography as a method of research, can filter human communication in a scientific way in order to identify the ways in which the world is seen or understood (Ballantyne et al., 1994:27). Once a phenomenon as experienced is established, it then becomes pertinent to explore it in as many different aspects as possible. In this type of empirical research, the categories of description are the primary outcomes. Marton (1988) explained that it is a goal of phenomenography to discover the structural framework within which various categories of understanding exist.
The different ways of experiencing a particular phenomenon can be interpreted in an hierarchy of capabilities seen in terms of awareness or the person's total experience of the world at any given point in time.

Methodological problems with the identification, construction or discovery of conceptions in phenomenography are the perceived lack of validity, researcher bias and denial of the voice of the individual through categorisation and variation in practice (Bowden, 1994; Walsh, 2000). Consequently, within the process, the recorded interview transcripts are analysed with conceptions selected and marked. Selected quotes and contexts constitute a data pool with a "pool of meanings" being formed. Core meanings are eventually defined, definitions are re-tested against the data. Prosser (1994) described the process of 'cycling' through the data in the attempt to categorise or retest the data of the transcripts. In time the whole network of meanings is stabilised. There is within this analysis an important difference between content analysis in that categories in phenomenographic analysis are contextual abstractions rather than category content labels (Svensson & Theman, 1983:25). The process of categorising is made up of selective, summarising and organising processes. In this way, the resultant categories of description have been differentiated, grouped and interrelated within the data.

Phenomenographic research approaches counter concerns of replicability, reliability and the development of categories *a posteriori* in the demonstration that Marton (1988) used of an analogy of a hypothetical botanist who goes to an unexplored island. The botanist must develop new labels to sort the new flora and fauna discovered in addition to those categories already known. Replicability issues may not be critical since different discoveries could be made (different flora/different interviews). Reliability, however, is relevant since once categories have been developed it must be possible to "reach a high degree of intersubjective agreement concerning their presence or absence if other researchers are to be able to use
them" (Marton, 1988, in Sherman & Webb, 1990:148). A reasonable degree of agreement infers that two researchers agree in at least 2/3 of the cases when comparing their judgements and that they reach agreement in 2/3 of the remaining cases after discussion.

Another problem arises from bracketing preconceptions. It is conceivable that a researcher could work alone (Prosser, 1994:27) but there is an inherent danger of being influenced by personal perceptions and being unable to bracket these successfully in reading the data and developing a description of categories. Transcripts may be read in isolation by a sole researcher without replicating that discovery process but reliability can only be established by providing that somebody else can categorise the transcripts (Prosser, 1994:22; Walsh, 2000:30). Results are provisional in relation to what is true at that time for the researcher. The constructivist view is that categories are constructed through a set of logical relations – a close internal logical relationship. They should be internally consistent and related to each other in a way that is intelligible and satisfactory for subject and educational experts who intend to use the results for some further end. A process of discovery is also claimed to establish the reliability of the results since a conception will emerge when it does not fit with the logical structure currently held from the other conceptions. Miller and Parlett (1974) argued that a powerful check to establish the validity of a study was whether the findings described "recognisable reality" while the conventional means of interjudge agreement could be used to check reliability (Entwistle & Marton, 1984; Burns, 1994:71). Hycner (1985) rebuffed many of the methodological concerns particularly in the field of phenomenology. The depthful understanding of a phenomenon justified investigation since "...this will advance science and human good will to a far greater extent than the dimension of 'predictability' per se" (Hycner, 1985:299).

The current research represents an example of a researcher working alone however throughout the entire analytical process explicit checks of material and open checking, testing
and probing of initial results has been conducted by the academic supervisor and by other experts in the field. During the analysis phase a study tour to Goteborg University was undertaken during which the emergent phenomenographic conceptions were presented to a panel of leading international phenomenographers. Discussion and defence of the analytical data in seminar and interview settings ensured iteration of the phenomenographic process supported by continual cycling through the data for structural and referential aspects.

The phenomenographic way of interpreting conceptions is unique as Holstein and Gubrium (1994) noted that phenomenographic processes actively challenge an ethnocentric view of one's lifeworld while Stalker (1993) explained that phenomenographic conceptions are not characteristics of individuals but rather, descriptions of ways of functioning within an outcome space. The outcome space is an abstract way of delimiting the boundaries that embrace those conceptions within which "individuals move more or less freely back and forth" (Marton, 1984:62). In a sense, therefore, the logically structured complex of the outcome space is made up of different experiences of the same object, that is, the same phenomenon (Marton, 1994a:92).

Phenomenography as a research methodology is valid for the phenomenon under investigation since there is validity established due to the conceptions emerging from a process of discovery and also, the replicability of the categories themselves should be achievable (Young, 1994:436). In this way the resultant outcome space will be a rational basis for the design of student exchange and intercultural learning curricula as well as policy formulation. By analysing the outcomes of learning in terms of the specific content of the everyday tasks and experiences of the hosting family, the research method of phenomenography will have the potential to enable the emergent conceptions to be grounded in the perceived reality experienced in a natural setting.
The application of phenomenographic techniques for educational research.

Phenomenography presents a way of understanding learning that is not offered by other means of inquiry. There have been a number of phenomenographically based studies that have focused on the nature of the act and the outcome of learning in areas such as reading (Marton, 1975), arithmetic (Neuman, 1987), chemistry (Lybeck et al., 1988), social science (Beaty, 1987) and physics (Bowden et al., 1992). In these studies the experience of learning was emphasised and educators were better able to understand the perspectives of students.

In other studies the focus has been on the different ways of understanding the content learned. Finding the critical differences in which central phenomena, concepts, principles in specific domains can be understood is significant for the development of knowledge and skills within these domains. Bowden et al. (1992) noted that students may give an identical answer to a quantitative question but actually understand the phenomena in different ways. There are implications here for assessment and measurement of student learning outcomes.

The investigations into pure phenomenographic concepts have led to descriptions of the different ways in which we can experience, characterise or understand the world around us in a kind of collective mind that enables us to make sense of the world (Marton, 1981). In this way teachers who listen closely to their students will be better able to comprehend the range of variations in meaning for the problem at hand and devise other ways of approaching certain concepts (Bowden, 1994:53). Teaching methods could be therefore designed and refined to address the other ways of approaching certain concepts. The suggestion is made that the organisation and program design of hosting events could be significantly enhanced through the acknowledgement and application of other ways of approaching the range of variations in experience that are likely to occur.

Phenomenographic techniques can encourage learners to become conscious of contradictions in their own reasoning. The phenomenographic interview itself challenges the
interviewee to consider alternate ideas and understandings of their own experience in a way that is an extension beyond the identification of variation by the researcher. The strategy of teachers mapping their students' preconceptions of a phenomenon before commencing a unit of work in order to greatly expand the pedagogical opportunities such knowledge would facilitate has been advocated (Marton, 1988; Runesson, 1999; Bowden, 2000). Teachers who use this method are in a better position to recognise and change students' misconceptions and better able to focus on information that is not a part of a student's stock of knowledge. There are implications here also for the curriculum and related textbooks since these can facilitate one way of reasoning to another. Similarly, phenomenographic techniques would encourage learners to become conscious of contradictions in their own reasoning and to consider alternate ideas and understandings.

Since quality education and outcomes are central themes in contemporary education, it is clear that a phenomenographic approach to instructional learning, curriculum and teaching methodology has direct educational relevance to the experience of the host family in an exchange event. Phenomenography is a useful methodology for obtaining descriptions of participants' lifeworlds and is a powerful tool for gaining the host family perspective of learning that has previously been ignored. A better perception of reality can only be facilitated and the suggestion is that this kind of understanding cannot be obtained in any other way.

The setting up of the study.

This study is concerned with participants' conceptions of learning from a hosting experience in the curricula of student exchange programs. The families who participated in the current research were all involved in hosting events during 1996. Family group interviews occurred during 1997-1998 and participants were required to recall their experiences of hosting through
phenomenographic interviews. Since the host family's experiential knowledge is conceived as their understanding of the concepts of hosting based upon prior experience, a phenomenographic approach was considered the appropriate research methodology. The relational links between the experience and the context in which it has been experienced can be mapped in a non-dualistic way. It was possible for data that reflected different individual and family group conceptions of the experience to be collected, described and interpreted just as Säljö (1988) described how people act on their interpretation of their experience rather than on the objective characteristics of it. The phenomenographic interview was considered well suited to the needs of this study.

**Interview procedure.**

This study examined participants' perceptions of learning with hosting experiences in the context of semi-structured interviews (Gordon, 1987). For the purpose of this study, interviews were conducted in which the views of a small number of individuals (host families) who had particular experience and knowledge about participation in a hosting event were involved. Interviews were conducted in the host family home with family members and interviewer seated in a circular formation. Permission was obtained to record the interviews, as this was fundamental and essential for interviewing in a phenomenographic way. Open-ended questions were used in interviews that were of 1-2 hour's duration. The use of open ended questions was deliberate and gave participants the freedom to discuss aspects of their experience to the degree that they relived snapshots of their experience through descriptions that provided perceptions of associated issues and concerns. The use of group interviews in a phenomenographic approach is unusual. Yet, the different perspectives of individuals within the group that emerged were identified, discussed and verified by family members, generally with minimal questioning by the researcher. The methodology enabled participants to
highlight their experiences and learning. The interviews largely entailed a chronicling of the hosting event with the interviewer using mirroring techniques to qualify meanings and to ensure minimal interference with the data. Leading prompts that were used mainly served to move the account of the hosting experience forward in time or to allow for reflection upon outstanding questions contained in the interview schedule (see Appendix I). It is noted in this study that the use of content analysis, phenomenography and the interview both rest on the assumption that the interviewer/analyst has knowledge about the data and how the environment interacts. Also, the interviewer was expert in the subject under discussion, in this case, participation in a host family event.

**Preliminary study.**

A preliminary study involving two exchange participants was conducted to test the proposed interview schedule and the phenomenographic interview style. These interviews were conducted in the same fashion as the actual research. The subjects were able to comment directly on the interview questions whenever the probes were unclear, misleading or not understandable. Feedback on question directions was a useful measure to ensure research aims were being met (Ary, Jacobs & Asghar, 1990:412; Bruce, 1994). The responses of the preliminary subjects were coded using the technique of content analysis and phenomeno-coding described by Kvale (1983), Marton (1988) and Pramling (1988) to identify the conceptions that lead toward a phenomenography of learning in the host family experience.

**The participants.**

This study examined perceptions of learning through the experience of hosting using phenomenographic semi-structured group interviews (Gordon, 1987). The sample comprised a group of host families from Loxleigh School for Girls (pseudonym) who hosted exchange
students in 1996. Permission to interview was requested from the school principal. The intent of the study was defined and there was acknowledgement of the approval of the Human Ethics Review Committee of the University of Western Sydney. The study population contained eleven host families amounting to thirty-seven participants with similar characteristics, that is, participants in a hosting event. Families were interviewed out of school hours with interviews lasting around 1-2 hours. The nature of families' hosting experiences varied in duration and language proficiency. For example, the duration of the hosting events ranged from one week to twelve weeks and some, not all, exchange students visited from countries with non English-speaking backgrounds. Diversity in the duration of participants' hosting experiences is not a problematic sampling issue in this study since the phenomenon under investigation was the experience of hosting of which varying duration is a component. Irrespective of the duration of the hosting event, the participant families held the perception that they were involved in some form of intercultural exposure. The concern of this investigation was to identify the content of participants' thinking about the phenomenon of hosting. Moreover, in the phenomenography, it is the identification of conceptions rather than who holds them, that is of key interest since essentially, the outcome space should represent a pool of meanings (of the phenomenon of hosting) in which individuals move "freely back and forth" (Marton, 1984:62).

**How the information was analysed.**

The nature of the qualitative research in the current investigation prescribed the use of two established approaches: phenomenography, to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of hosting and content analysis, to identify the content of the learning experience of hosting. Phenomenography and content analysis both make use of recurring themes and the categorisation of concepts and so the initial sorting of data was concurrent for both research
questions. To carry out the analysis, the recorded information from the family group interviews was tabled in terms of the relative frequency and importance of concepts. Separate concepts are noted and then grouped into categories. In this way, perceptions and individual reports can be translated into data.

Table 1: The base data of the participants in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>HOME COUNTRY OF EXCHANGE STUDENT</th>
<th>HOSTING DURATION</th>
<th>PRIOR HOSTING EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALPINE</td>
<td>Mother, father, 2 daughters, son</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEATTY</td>
<td>Mother, father 2 daughters</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Argentina 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COREL</td>
<td>Mother, father, 3 daughters</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVIDS</td>
<td>Mother, Daughter</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN</td>
<td>Mother, father, Daughter, son</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>England 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRTH</td>
<td>Mother, father, daughter, son</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>England 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASS</td>
<td>Mother, Daughter</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Argentina 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOBBS</td>
<td>Step mother, father, 2 daughters</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVES</td>
<td>Mother, Daughter</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>Finland 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHNSON</td>
<td>Mother, father, 2 sons, daughter</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLEIN</td>
<td>Mother, Daughter</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>Scotland 6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In phenomenographical interview analysis, Svensson and Theman (1983:5) explained that the judgement of the significance of a description is dependent upon "a wider theoretical and empirical context". The information required for this study involved the understanding of a particular situation and how people felt about it. Marton (1984:63) explained that when the data is analysed, the particular conceptions are lifted out from the context in which they were discovered, that is, the conceptions are more important than the individuals who have formed them.
The interview transcripts were written up verbatim and entered into the QSR NUD*IST (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd., 1997) computer software program. This program was chosen since it allows the researcher to call up groups or chunks of data instantly as well as stay close to the original interview transcripts. In Phase 1, the interviews were chunked and entered as text units. The interview transcripts were read and reread numerous times so that categories could be generated which described participants' conceptions of their hosting experience. Table 2 shows the initial set of categories of which there were around 155. These were developed in Phase 2 and entered into QSR NUD*IST using the Index System. The categories included base data, family agenda, motivation, communication, fit, expectations, maintenance, outcomes, Synergy and learning, school organisation and exchange student behaviour.

At this stage the analysis was not characteristically phenomenographic except that the interviews had been conducted in that style. The emergence of conceptions according to Kvale (1983) is an interpretation that is founded upon a commonsense extension of the meanings of the experience in what is described as a content analysis type method. In the next stage however, a more theoretical interpretation that identifies any existent match between the themes and socio/behavioural or psychological theory occurs. Some of the data were compared and noted for their similarity or relationship on a continuum which resulted in a second stage conceptual coding process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2:</th>
<th>The initial set of categories.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.8.1.0</td>
<td>(3.2.4) outcomes/bilateral view/student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.3) outcomes/fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.3.1) outcomes/fit/appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.3.2) outcomes/fit/mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.3.3) outcomes/fit/economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4) outcomes/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.1) outcomes/learning/cultural A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.2) outcomes/learning/interculturalOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.2.1) outcomes/learning/interculturalOS/stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.3) outcomes/learning/experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.3.1) outcomes/learning/experience/worthwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.3.2) outcomes/learning/experience/effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.3.3) outcomes/learning/experience/trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.4) outcomes/learning/language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.5) outcomes/learning/repeat hosting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.5.1) outcomes/learning/repeat hosting/criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.5.2) outcomes/learning/repeat hosting/duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6) outcomes/learning/understanding selves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.1) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.2) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.3) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.4) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.5) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/persistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.6) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(3.4.6.7) outcomes/learning/understanding selves/responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4) school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1) school/organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.1) school/organisation/activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.1.1) school/organisation/activities/extracurricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.1.2) school/organisation/activities/Tara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.2) school/organisation/bypassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.3) school/organisation/calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.4) school/organisation/information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.4.1) school/organisation/information/verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.4.2) school/organisation/information/written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.4.3) school/organisation/information/requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.4.4) school/organisation/information/confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.5) school/organisation/monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.5.1) school/organisation/monitoring/homelife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.5.2) school/organisation/monitoring/student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.5.3) school/organisation/monitoring/intercultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6) school/organisation/recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1) school/organisation/recommendations/setup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.1) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/appropriation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.2) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.3) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.4) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/other families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.5) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.6.1.6) school/organisation/recommendations/setup/evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.7) school/organisation/remuneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.8) school/organisation/selection process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.8.1) school/organisation/selection process/active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.8.2) school/organisation/selection process/overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.8.3) school/organisation/selection process/Tara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.9) school/organisation/student details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.9.1) school/organisation/student details/Tara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.9.2) school/organisation/student details/private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.10) school/organisation/timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(4.1.10.1) school/organisation/timetable/units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5) student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1) student/behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.1) student/behaviour/adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.1.1) student/behaviour/adjustment/active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.1.2) student/behaviour/adjustment/reactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.1.3) student/behaviour/adjustment/preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.2) student/behaviour/attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.2.1) student/behaviour/attitude/negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.2.2) student/behaviour/attitude/positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.2.3) student/behaviour/attitude/mature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.3) student/behaviour/isolating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.4) student/behaviour/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.5) student/behaviour/sensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.5.1) student/behaviour/sensing/positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.5.2) student/behaviour/sensing/negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.6) student/behaviour/socialising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.7) student/behaviour/using English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.8) student/behaviour/using native language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.0.1.0</td>
<td>(5.1.9) student/behaviour/overseas contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strauss and Corbin (1990:63) described the method of labelling the phenomena or themes and conceptualising them in order to analyse the meaning in a content analysis context. Sometimes a sentence, a word or an idea would be chosen to conceptualise the raw data in a highly generative way and other incidents that had similar significance could be coded using the same concepts or themes.

Another aspect of the open coding process, as in a content analysis, was to explore the developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions on a continuum. Attinalisi (1991) noted the importance of this phase wherein other properties of the data can be examined until the categories are firmly established and in fact "earn" their way into the theory by systematic generation, distinction and interplay. This is of interest since it defines the broad categories that relate to a general reading of the literature of hosting and intercultural exchanges. It is not until the next Phase 3 that characteristic phenomenographic analysis and iteration becomes evident.

Kvale (1983) described this section of analysis in terms of data reduction and in the phenomenographic model, categories are merged, eliminated, clustered (Stern, 1980) or condensed in a process that results in the increasingly conceptually based categories. In Phase 3 the responses from participants were pooled and variations reduced to a limited set of categories that demonstrated the significantly different ways of understanding the hosting experience. In Table 3 the reduced set of categories is given. This set was categorised in sub sections of origin, selection, school, investment, in the home and reflection.
Table 3: The reduced set of categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>EXPRESSED CONCEPTION</th>
<th>ESSENCE OF CONCEPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MOTIVATION ORIGIN | • Reciprocal link is nice. Doing something for you daughter and you’re assisting someone else’s daughter  
                      • If they form a bond of friendship that’s all you want out of it  
                      • Any new experience is worth going for. The whole reason for living just jumping on a plane and buzzing off and having an experience  
                      • It was one of our hopes that all their German would improve  
                      • We could help out we had the spare room available  
                      • It is so interesting exchanging what happens in their culture as opposed to ours  
                      • We would do a lot of things that we had saved up to do while she was here  
                      • They just wanted to see if she could cope with coming back to Australia | • Reciprocal opportunity  
                      • Friendship  
                      • New experience  
                      • Language improvement  
                      • Space available  
                      • Culture understanding  
                      • Visit places and learn  
                      • Different agenda |
| SELECTION PROCESS | • We had rigorous interviews and then a written submission  
                      • It should not be just the ones selected because they have the finances to come out here  
                      • It comes back to the lottery. We may never have as good a one again / it could only be better next time  
                      • Be clear on you expectations and be comfortable that the child coming is sharing those with you and so does her family and the school  
                      • She had no interest in schoolwork or our culture. Her parents were happy to send her away for a while to grow up  
                      • She had had a lot of travelling experience and was a very independent child. She could look after herself | • Method of selection appropriate  
                      • Method of selection failed  
                      • Lottery of fit  
                      • Similarity of focus  
                      • Different  
                      • Prior experience |
| IN THE HOME                  | • It was a really hectic time; we had so much on ourselves as well as doing as much as possible  
                      • I was really worried when they were out late and I said this is a responsibility we can do without  
                      • All we got out of it was 'all right'. / Actually I felt a lot better that day; it was a turning point and she really enjoyed herself that day.  
                      • She wanted to smoke and I said that she would have to go outside. I insisted that she had breakfast...it is a rule I have and I think it was a bit of culture shock but it only took her a week to adapt./ She went to her room and refused to speak. | • Effect on family routine  
                      • Responsibility of another child  
                      • Emotional investment  
                      • Adaptation and differences |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL'S PART</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- We read about it in the blue newsletter. We had heard about the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We had rigorous interviews and then an application form. We had a spare room so we said we would help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We would have liked more information. We had to contact the people ourselves. There was a bit of confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- She didn't show any interest in school. She sat in the library most of the time. The German girls sat outside chatting; it was a waste of their time. I thought they would be taken care of by the education process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We should have been asked about improving things. I wish we had been told a bit more of what to expect. How else will they improve for next time. I don't know how successful this program is but if not a problem will be the lack of communication to parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL OUTLAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- We didn't ask her to pay it was our pleasure to provide for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We did everything we could so she wouldn't have to spend any of her own money. She was not particularly financially well equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- She would spend so much money at the shops and we would say are you sure your parents would agree to this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It cost us literally thousands of dollars. Financially it was just draining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Negligible cost of another person in the household. We just provided for her as if she were our daughter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFLECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- She was here to practice her English so we said you must not speak German. She would stay in her room for hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We learnt a lot from them about Argentina and it gave us a lot of pleasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I had hoped they would improve their Japanese but that didn't happen. She was so focused on improving her English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I wonder about the capacity of a 16 year old to be able to cope, to integrate or be culturally aware. She was so very shy, she was not a good choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be prepared for a hectic time, be very flexible and don't plan too far ahead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| - Onset |
| - Selection |
| - Preparation |
| - Ongoing monitoring |
| - Evaluation |
| - Families ability and desire to pay |
| - Responsible to provide every opportunity |
| - Lack of economic match |
| - Family finances stretched |
| - No interest in remuneration |
| - Function of time spent in the household |
| - Realisation of expectations |
| - Modification of expectations |
| - Exchange student capacity to cope |
| - Advice to future participants |

In Phase 3, reports were generated using QRS NUD*IST that pooled the participant's responses in these categories of description. From this phase chunks of data were identified,
isolated and examined. Read and reread, in Phase 4, distinct ways of understanding the hosting experience emerged. In Phase 4 'cycling through the data' involving a return to the original transcripts and matching them continually against the emerging conceptions of meaning occurred. From the set of six categories in Phase 3, further abstraction resulted in the emergence of the conception of Synergy. This conception was made up of four distinct components of the hosting experience. From each of the components that emerged from the data, there were several categories that constitute a spectrum of experience.

In order to examine the perceptions of the content learning in the experience of hosting, a content analysis was conducted as a branch off phase 2 of the data analysis. The use of supplementary approaches has been described elsewhere (Dunkin, 2000). In a content analysis for the interpretation of qualitative data, there are several stages employed in the resultant grounding of theory.

A thorough content analysis was applied to the interview data in order to answer the research problem - what is the content of learning in the experience of hosting? As Strauss and Corbin (1990:23-24) have explained:

> a grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents... it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data ... the purpose of grounded theory is... to build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study.

A key aspect of grounded theory technique that is critical to the data analysis is known as theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:41-42). The researcher's theoretical sensitivity, in the current investigation, is in accord with content analysis and is derived from a survey of the literature, professional and personal experience together with the undertaking of the analytical process. Relationships and properties of the data are repeatedly established and tested against dimensions of categories until emergent patterns are identified. According
to Strauss and Corbin (1990:133-134) the theory that is developed is validated against the data and in this way the grounding is completed. In the current research, a content analysis that leads towards a grounded theory for the content of learning in the hosting experience has been developed and a diagrammatic representation of the inter-related concepts is included.

Finally, further analysis was undertaken using the 'new' phenomenography. Consideration was therefore given to 'who' holds particular concepts in the construction of referential and structural aspects so that deeper understanding of the particular phenomenon was possible (Marton & Pang, 1999). Thus, ways of experiencing the phenomenon of hosting that emerged from the host family interviews, were held by the individual family groups. Consequently, the search for the nature of the hosting event and the phenomenon of hosting were examined from three interrelated perspectives - traditional phenomenography, a content analysis and the 'new' phenomenography. Although Wietz (1985:161) believed that "the offerings of each phase have their own worth and can stand and be utilised independently of the others", the methodological approach used in this research has served to highlight the multidimensional complex of the hosting in an intercultural context.
Chapter 4

Results of the Phenomenographic Enquiry

The phenomenon of hosting, identified through phenomenographic investigation of the perceptions of host family participants, is described by the conception of Synergy. The categories of description outlined below represent the outcome space or pool of meanings of the host family experience in the curricula of student exchange programs at Loxleigh School for Girls 1996-9. The categories of description within the conception of Synergy, are the qualitatively different ways that participants understand and give meaning to their experience. The outcome space of the conception of Synergy is made up of four components of the phenomenon of hosting. Each of the four components is subdivided into the categories that map the qualitatively different ways of understanding hosting within the conception of Synergy. The four components of the conception of Synergy that emerged from the phenomenographic interviews capture the phenomenon of hosting in a powerful way.

There is, however, for each component of Synergy, a movement by some participants between the categories. This movement between categories, or qualitatively different ways of understanding the phenomenon of hosting, is related to contextual changes over time. Alexandersson (1985) observed changes over time in phenomenographic data analysis and more recently Claesson (1999) questioned the place of contexts and their influence on phenomena that are logically and hierarchically ordered. In the current investigation, the place of categorical shifts in context and the hierarchical nature of categories in traditional phenomenographic analysis are examined. The impact of time causing change in participants' qualitatively different ways of understanding something has been identified by the current
research. The concept of time was found to be operational in two ways since changes in perception during the course of the phenomenographic interview were identified together with changes that resulted due to the distance in time from the hosting event. The host family interviews occurred around twelve months after the hosting event. From the participant responses in the phenomenographic interviews, there emerged perceptions then (reflections of the hosting event) and perceptions now (rationalisation and understanding in interview, twelve months later). Patrick (2000:133) noted that a temporal view does not sit readily with traditional phenomenography and yet an examination of the nature of change in understanding something over time may well be necessary for phenomenographic investigations that address human rather than science interests.

The traditional layout of phenomenographic categories usually entails a logical hierarchical order that locates learners in a field of understanding that is context related. The reporting of categories of description for the conception of Synergy outlined below is presented in a new adaptation of phenomenographic design. The new adaptation has been termed a 'spectrum'. Within the spectrum of the experience of hosting, there are categories of description that are components of the conception of Synergy. The categories are hierarchical but participants engage within them as a spectrum of experience. Within the spectrum of experience there is learning due to the space of variation (Runesson, 1999). In the presentation of each component of hosting and the conception of Synergy, the nature of the spectrum of experience for participant host families is discussed further below.

The conception of Synergy that emerged from the data and the four components of hosting as categories of description, are outlined below followed by a full explanation of each. A diagrammatical representation of the phenomenon of hosting is presented as an alternate model to the traditional model examined in chapter 2. The diagram is used to represent proximity to optimal effectiveness in the experience of hosting that is known as Synergy.
Figure 9: The spectrum of experience in the phenomenon of hosting. An alternative model to represent the phenomenon of hosting. The experience of hosting for participant host families is located in the curricula of student exchange programs.
The conception of Synergy emerged from the four components of the phenomenon of hosting.

A: Synergy / Fit Between Participants in a Hosting Event

Category A1: There is Synergy throughout the hosting experience between participants.

Category A2: Differences between participants are identified, acknowledged and accommodated.

Category A3: Differences result in a lack of Synergy between participants.

B: Synergy / Ownership of Responsibility in the Hosting Experience

Category B1: The host family provides a home and opportunities for extended family participation.

Category B2: The host family is a provider of safe lodgings to the hosted student.

Category B3: The host family is responsible for the student's well-being, safety and satisfaction.

Category B4: The education process (school as agent) is accountable for the experience.

C: Synergy / Host Family Investment

Category C1: Additional financial outlay is not significant in the hosting experience.

Category C2: The host families' budget is expanded to provide for the additional 'family' member.

Category C3: Money and time are intrinsic to giving the student the maximum experience.

Category C4: Money and time invested warrant appreciation.

D: Synergy / Learning in the Hosting Experience

Category D1: Every experience of life provides a learning opportunity.

Category D2: A new experience is a learning opportunity.

Category D3: Seeing things in a new way is educational.

Category D4: Learning is about acquiring new facts and data.
Table 4: The distribution of participants for each component category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>HOME COUNTRY OF EXCHANGE STUDENT</th>
<th>HOSTING DURATION</th>
<th>COMPONENT CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALPINE</td>
<td>Mother, Father, 2 daughters, son</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 B:1 B:3 B:4 C:2 D:3 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEATTY</td>
<td>Mother, father, 2 daughters</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>A:3 B:3 B:4 C:3 C:4 D:2 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COREL</td>
<td>Mother, father, 3 daughters</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 A:3 B:1 B:2 C:1 D:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVIDS</td>
<td>Mother, daughter</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 B:2 C:1 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN</td>
<td>Mother, father, daughter, son</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>A:1 B:1 C:2 C:3 D:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRTH</td>
<td>Mother, father, daughter, son</td>
<td>Argentina,</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>A:1 B:1 C:2 D:2 D:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASS</td>
<td>Mother, daughter</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 B:2 C:1 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOBBS</td>
<td>Step mother, father, 2 daughters</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>A:3 B:1 B:2 B:4 C:1 D:2 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVES</td>
<td>Mother, daughter</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 B:3 C:3 D:2 D:3 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHNSON</td>
<td>Mother, father, 2 sons, daughter</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 A:3 B:1 B:2 C:1 D:2 D:3 D:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLEIN</td>
<td>Mother, daughter</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>A:2 A:3 B:1 B:2 C:1 D:2 D:3 D:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conception of Synergy and its outcome space have been expressed in terms of the four components of hosting defined by the categories of description. In this section the categories that make up each component of the conception of Synergy will be illustrated by quotations from participating host families. The categories of description within the
conception of Synergy are the qualitatively different ways that participants understand and give meaning to their experience of the phenomenon of hosting. For each category there is movement displayed by some participants that is related to contextual changes over time. Thus, the movement between categories has a temporal aspect. This is demonstrated in the examples where selected quotations from one host family may appear in more than one category of description.

Examination of Categories of Description

A: Synergy / fit between participants in a hosting event.

This component of the conception of Synergy refers to the realistic or unrealistic expectations of participants involved in hosting as well as the emergent adaptation processes operating in the realisation or modification of goals and objectives. In the current research, expectations, modification and adaptation factors of host family participants were understood in qualitatively different ways that were subject to changes in understanding throughout the duration of the hosting event. These factors have previously been identified in terms of exchange student. Now however, the relevance to the host family situation is located. Changes in understanding occurred in the course of the phenomenographic interviews also. The existence of such a process of change necessitates a temporal component in the phenomenographic analysis that is related to an awareness of simultaneous discernment. In this study, movement between the categories of description of the conceptions was a characteristic of participants' understanding. This movement is an indicator of a relationship between the categories that will be described in terms of a spectrum of experience.

Research into family systems theory has shown that a family system has sets of expectations for behaviour, both explicit and implicit and these govern day to day interactions
within the overall family unit (McCubbin & McCubbin 1989; Whitechurch and Constantine, 1993; Henry, 1994; Larson, 1995). In the hosting experience, the family system is modified through the temporary addition of another member, the exchange student. Attribution theory is concerned with the bases of judgements made about the causes of others' behaviours and has implications for family systems, expectations and maintenance in the hosting experience (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Ross, 1977; Fowler & Peterson, 1981; Kopt a-Frye, 1991; Kulas, 1996; Stage, Muller, Kinzie & Simmons, 1998). Some host families reported knowing how to best assimilate their new family member while others did not know how to effectively deal with the new family system. The inference from this study is that a lack of Synergy of fit between participants need not be the perception of the relationships involved. The findings demonstrate that if persistence, as an aspect of attributional style, is directed towards a mutual aim for some degree of Synergy, then optimally effective interpersonal relationships between hosting participants can be attained.

**The conception of Synergy and the categories of the component of fit.**

*Category A1: There is Synergy of fit throughout the hosting experience between participants.*

In this category the exchange students and host families have a mutual focus. The match between their expectations and the realisation of their goals and objectives is optimally effective so that the value of 'Synergy' is known. There is harmony as well as friendship, within a common values system. This good fit was a result in part of the selection process, since careful screening should result in a 'match' that predisposes participants for Synergy. At times, however, the selection process was less than successful in matching participants. In this study, some host families perceived that while the match or fit between themselves and the hosted student resulted in Synergy, it was less in terms of the purpose of the selection criteria and more directly related to chance or luck. There was the perception among host
family participants that their good fit, connection or friendship with the exchange student, was more like the result of a 'lottery' with winners and losers. The perception was that the selection criteria only went so far in matching family with exchange student and that any initial good relationship or Synergy between them was unable to be predicted.

The Eastern family with daughter Sheree and exchange student Gretel, experienced Synergy of fit during their hosting experience. As they explained, the host student was just like a member of the family.

It was the friendship that we hoped would build up and then my feelings were that she would reciprocate and Sheree could go back to Germany which is exactly what happened. Plus they have remained very good friends. They got on so perfectly well that it would be nothing for Gretel to come and stay here for a couple of years. She was a charm so it was understandable. Truly she could have stayed here with us forever. If she said I'm not going home, her parents would have been sad but it would have been no drama to us. We were so lucky that she ended up being like a second daughter.

The Davids family experienced Synergy of fit and they felt very comfortable about hosting a Japanese student. They expected to have a Synergy of fit and felt that this was due to their knowledge of Japanese culture and their previous experiences of hosting:

We had spent a lot of time in Japan and we've also got some friends in Australia who are Japanese so there is a bit of understanding with the culture. When I first came to Sydney I learnt Japanese so we knew what to do. So there was that sort of background. I'm used to talking with people without much English. You approach it positively and hope its going to be a positive experience and that's the way it is. There were no problems to get worried about. We made her feel very comfortable. She fitted in very well, I think we made her feel like that as well.
Category A2: Differences of fit between participants are identified, acknowledged and accommodated.

In this category, differences exist in attitudes, lifestyles, expectations and desires between participants. The differences are examined by the host family and sometimes by the exchange student as well. These differences are mutually modified for the overall good of the hosting experience. Synergy is not automatically present but efforts are made to attain closer proximity. There is the expectation that there may be differences between the host family members and the exchange student but there is a willingness to identify the differences and actively adjust to them.

The Alpine family was characteristic of those who were willing to accommodate differences:

But she made a genuine effort to fit in with the family and I'm sure we did things that she didn't want to do but she still fitted in with the family and she was a very agreeable child. She just fitted in but then she came from a big family and so she was used to getting up and going on her way. **I used to make her a big lunch but then I was used to that because I came from a big family** and we had a big lunch. I used to pack more for her than I did for my son.

The following is from the Davids family. Their daughter Ailsa who was younger than the hosted student Ailiki had had some experience with Japanese culture previously. Ailsa had the perception that a prior experience base gave her family knowledge upon which to proceed with the hosting event. The Davids' family perception of their role was that success lay in being flexible and open to suggestion, not rigidly organised. They were willing to accommodate the exchange student's desire to practice English:

I was getting really tired because Ailsa would go to bed at 8.30 and Ailiki would keep me up talking. She'd sit up 9.30 to 10.30pm so that she could practice her English. She was completely focused on practising her English. I didn’t mind but by the time she left I was quite tired. After she had gone to
bed I had to go do the dishes and get organised for the next day and do all those household things you couldn't do while you were having a conversation. **You've got to be prepared to go with the flow. Take it as it comes. You can't plan too much** beforehand because you don't know who the student is going to be and what their interests and expectations are.

The Alpine family was characteristic of those who were willing to accommodate differences of lifestyle that were not in accord with their own. They were not accustomed to a child spending so much time away from the family group and in her bedroom. Also, the Alpine family were willing to tolerate the girls' conversations, in German rather than in English:

But she would come home and she would write the diary or write the letters. It was nothing for her to spend two hours writing the diary or letters. She liked going into her room and she'd sit down and listen to her music or she'd write a letter or write in her book. She'd write pages but **that was all right**. At Jenolan Caves (tourist spot) she was very pleased to see her friend and they did talk endlessly in German. That didn't concern me. I know that **if she were my child** I would like to think that **she could have that relaxation** where she could sit back and talk English in the same situation.

*Category A3: Differences of fit result in a lack of Synergy between participants.*

In this category, differences of fit between the participants are conversely significant and there is a lack of modification or adaptation for retrieval of the hosting family climate. The proximity to Synergy is further away and the fit between participants is not optimally effective. In some cases there was a non-dualistic breakdown of Synergy. This occurred when the relationship with the exchange student had deteriorated but host family members continued to try and rectify the situation. In other cases, there was a dualistic breakdown and participants subsisted for the duration of the hosting period.

As illustrated below, the Beatty family experienced differences that resulted in a lack of Synergy of fit with their exchange student. The differences noted by the Beatty family were perceived to be interculturally based, although the reasons for the exchange student
isolating herself from the family may have likewise been related to adolescent behaviour. 

Similar differences due to the student isolating herself in her bedroom, as well as the use of spoken German, were also identified by the mother in the Alpine family in category A2. The differences of perceptions of isolation and language usage, represented by this category, have been discerned by the two families in diametrically opposite, and qualitatively different ways:

One of the things that we had difficulty with was Nina would come home from school with my daughters and she might go to her room for 2 or 3 hours and just lock herself away. She didn't seem to want to spend any time with us as a family. Now I was told after speaking to Frau Schultz about it that's quite common for German girls that they go and they read because they have different weather patterns to us or their different lifestyle. It's not uncommon for German girls to take themselves to their rooms and spend hours reading or entertaining themselves. She seemed to be in her room so often. Now whereas I found that I wouldn't say offensive I found it very irritating because she was locked in her room. Nina asked if one of the German lasses could come with us to Canberra. Now we had made these arrangements a long long time before but we still said yes because they were friends. It would be OK but we had to change all sorts of arrangements to do it. We had made these plans a long way in advance but we were prepared to change. We had a real problem in that when there were two of them together they just flatly refused to speak English. We spoke to them and asked them 'would you please speak English' and their response to that was they didn't speak. They refused to converse at all.

In another example, there was a confirmed attitude of not being willing to accommodate differences since the perception of the host family was that the exchange student should be trying to be more like them. This is demonstrated by the Beatty family:

The first thing I said to her when we sat down at the dinner table on the first night was that 'I speak fluent German' and of course I don't speak a word of it...I immediately picked up a German dictionary which I thought was pretty funny. She looked at me as if I were some kind of an idiot... but that's just the way I am and I don't think that if they are coming to live in our house then we should take enormous steps to change. And if that's what they expect then I won't participate.
The change that was referred to was that of modifying the host parent's sense of humour. An attitude of refusing to change showed a lack of Synergy of fit for taking into account the German student's needs or level of English speaking skills in order for her to appreciate the subtleties of Australian humour and to join in the joke.

B: Synergy / ownership of responsibility in the hosting experience.

This component of the conception of Synergy addresses the ownership of the hosting experience, in terms of locus of control, and the degree of emotional investment and responsibility the host family members undertake in order to create or ensure the happiness and well being of the exchange student. These factors have previously been described in the literature of student exchanges but are now found to be key components for families involved in the experience of hosting. For some host families the happiness of the exchange student was perceived as the families' measure of success or failure. In this component there is demonstration of the host family dilemma. In terms of locus of control, such families were responding to external rather than internal forces. Other host families had the perception that their duty was to provide safe lodgings without any emotional commitment or relationship building with the exchange student. For many host families, the experience presented responsibilities that they were not prepared to accept and this ownership was deferred to the school as provider of the exchange program. Miller (1996) described aspects of hosting families as being "loco parentis" for their exchange student. This component describes degrees of this notion.

Category B1: The host family provides a home and opportunities for participation.

In this category, the host family provides a friendly home environment for the exchange student and makes opportunities available for outings and other activities. This
attitude is optimally effective and in proximity to Synergy. The attitude is a fixed understanding and perception of the role, regardless of the exchange student's degree of participation. This category is illustrated by the Johnson family whose exchange student was not interested in cultural assimilation or participation in family activities. Nevertheless, the Johnson family continued to offer the exchange student opportunities for excursions into Australian lifestyle:

This girl was an Australian girl and so coming back to Australia on the exchange was very difficult to entertain her because there was nothing we could do on a weekend. Take her anywhere, show her places. It was 'would you like to do this? - no been there done that'. No I just want to be in my room and that's where she spent most of her time. She was quite prepared to divorce herself from our family life but we never stopped trying. **We always kept trying for her.** We just fitted in the best we could. **We did everything to make as best we could.**

**Category B2: The host family is a provider of safe lodgings.**

In this category, the host family has provided a room and meals or accommodation for the student but did not, or ceased, to provide the student with activities. The modification of proximity to Synergy resulted in the family lifestyle continuing without particular reference to the hosted student. This category includes a temporal component that related to initial role expectations for the hosting event and the subsequent modification of expectations. The one host family could therefore, experience two categories within this aspect.

The Davids family illustrates this category since they did not especially alter their lifestyle during the term of the hosting:

We planned to see the Phantom of the Opera and we had bought tickets. It just so happened that she was someone who was very interested in music. **It just happened that she was here at the time when we were going** and so we bought a ticket for her. That was probably the only special thing we did.
Similarly, the Klein family noted a lack of active participation by their host student but did not consider it their role nor their responsibility to intervene or try to change the prevailing attitude:

She had a few days off school but I think that was because she didn't want to go to school. She was staying up all hours of the day and night and watching television. My daughter continued to go to bed at the usual time, but she was younger anyway. When I did my finger pointing she went to bed so that she wasn't so tired. I felt that that was her problem. Whenever she went out I made sure that I knew who she was going with. Some of the friends that she did get friendly with were families that I knew. I made sure that I picked them up, I didn't mind where they were going. I just made sure I would pick them up and she would be where she was meant to be. She was and I was comfortable with that. We had very few outings together. Mostly just time around the house or shopping. It seemed such a waste to come all this way and sit around the house but that's what she did. We didn't do any of the touristy things she just wasn't interested. We just slotted into the normal family routine.

The Ives family whose natural daughter was being hosted in New Zealand in a reciprocal hosting event were aware of differences between the opportunities they presented to their host student and what was occurring concurrently for their own daughter. The host family in New Zealand provided lodgings only for the exchange daughter and presented no special activities for cultural excursion nor any alteration to family routine:

It was becoming clear that Robbie was not getting that kind of reciprocal sightseeing in New Zealand and my initial energy for doing for Morgan what I thought was being done for Robbie grew very strained. Morgan's people did not seem to understand or acknowledge their obligation to take Robbie home often or take her around except once and so she was getting upset about this and I was feeling powerless to do anything about it. Morgan didn't feel her parents should be taking Robbie out more, they had the farm to look after.
Category B3: The host family is responsible for the student's well-being, safety and satisfaction.

In this category, the host participants feel that their duty extends to ensuring the happiness of the exchange student as well as her physical wellbeing. Many host families were relieved when the student was happy or felt that they were failures when the student was unhappy or not participating in family activities. This perception of the host family role was not optimally effective and caused them a dilemma with associated stress, frustration and anxiety.

For instance, the Beatty family felt dependent upon the wellbeing of the host student. When the student was happy or provided enough feedback for the family to perceive that she seemed to be enjoying herself they felt successful in their objective:

She got a lot of pleasure out of that day, we went down the scenic railway and that sort of thing. Actually I felt a lot better that day.

The Davids family was frustrated at not being able to fulfil the desires of their host student in the matter of an international phone call. Words like "upset", "desperation" indicate the dilemma and the level of anxiety that was experienced:

I felt so frustrated the first night she was here. She obviously wanted to ring her parents and the problem was the international codes and not being able to use the phone. I was getting very upset; I don't think she was. In desperation we rang our Japanese friends who spoke to her in Japanese and then it worked.

The Klein family received little (or no) positive reinforcement from their host student who was ambivalent towards participation throughout the duration of the exchange. This led them to question the worth of the hosting event as a positive educational experience and for
the latter part of the hosting event they were in 'survival' mode ie, merely subsisting until the duration was reached:

I got to a stage where I just wanted my life to go back to my own daughter being home and not having to think why isn't this girl enjoying herself. You just grin and bear it... I was actually counting the days.

*Category B4: The education process is accountable for the experience.*

In this category, the host family encounters responsibilities that they are not prepared for or prepared to accept. Such responsibilities are resented, deferred to the school or ignored. In terms of locus of control, the host family regards the difficulties and responsibilities of the hosting event as external to themselves. Since the exchange organisation did not take up these responsibilities, the host families were confronted with another dilemma.

This statement is from the Firth family for whom responsibility was a worrying concern causing a level of anxiety throughout the hosting:

**The responsibility of looking after someone else’s child is very much a concern.** I'd be devastated if something happened; we would protect her as much as our own two children. If anything happened I'd be absolutely devastated. If they go into the city and are late home I start to worry.

The Alpine family resented the responsibilities thrust upon them and the level of anxiety caused was considered an intrusion into their lifestyle.

You are always worried. I was relieved when she went home not to get rid of her but to get it all over. I was quite relieved when she went home. I think that you worry more than with your own child because you know your own child but you don’t know what someone else's child is thinking or doing. They were late home one day and you get to the stage of thinking 'what do I do' and then you start to say *'this is a responsibility we can do without'.*
The Johnson family took up an organisational role beyond their initial expectations. When particular organisational details were tardy, the family felt pressed to take matters into their own hands.

We were people that needed to know where Nancy was going. You need to stay on top of it all the time. You actually had to organise a lot yourself. I contacted the school in Singapore. I said I was forced into doing that position, it wasn't a choice. **The school should have done this** so that I didn't need to. I mean it was the last thing in the world I wanted to do.

The Hobbs family discovered that their host student did not enter into a full commitment to the school program although they did not consider the situation one that they were obligated to address.

We didn't find out until a few weeks had elapsed before we found out that she wasn't behaving how you'd normally expect at school. **She would sit outside lessons and not go to class.** It seemed like a normal thing for her to do. That's what she expected in New Zealand because it was very easy for her to cut class there. I don't think it was being addressed at school. I just thought I'll treat her as a mature person. She needs to do what she wants to do. And that's what she did. Probably we should have contacted the school but we were weekend people. Just seemed to be this is Sandra, this is how she behaves, she's only going to be here a little while, if this is what she wants to get out of it, that's it.

The Corel family, for example, felt that their responsibilities were excessive since they had to enact much of the organisational details themselves rather than waiting for the school personnel to complete the arrangements.

I found it difficult for myself emotionally and I would not, could not leave the airport until the plane had taken off. **We had to organise a lot ourselves** and I just wonder at what point the school would step in. I'm not sure what role the school has in making things happen. In Josie's case she was well catered for but we just wonder that an assumption is made about what will happen or what we could have done if that was not the case. **It seemed that the option for the**
girls to be involved was irrelevant to the school. We were disappointed as we thought this was the school's role.

The Beatty family felt their responsibilities were excessive since they did not anticipate having to make decisions on the behalf of the exchange student concerning other excursions and activities.

We were put in a position where we had to decide whether or not we allowed her to go into the city. Now I didn't expect to be put into any sorts of those positions because I thought they would be well looked after by the education process. We had to take that on board ourselves and I was a little bit uncomfortable.

C: Synergy / host family investment.

In this component of the conception of Synergy, there are degrees of investment and financial commitment made by host families to the hosting experience. For some host families their perception of the role is the understanding of an obligation to give the student a maximum experience involving money and time. The impact of host family investment is a major departure from the traditional model of student exchange programs that has emerged through phenomenographic enquiry. At times the extent of investment caused tension because the degree of involvement of the host family resources bordered on over commitment and caused hardship. For other families, there was a perception that the hosting experience involved low level outlay and no significant change in family expenditure.

The categories relating to the component of investment are also tied to expressions or perceptions of appreciation of the host family by the exchange student. In the traditional literature of student exchanges, lack of economic fit has been described in terms of disparate lifestyles. The link however, to perceptions of appreciation has been unreported. The continuum of perceptions identified by Synergy and the host family provides a description of the degree of investment. The range of investment was from the perception of the family
'norm' of financial expenditure remaining in tact during the hosting event, through to a judgement of (not) getting 'value for money' for outlay. The perception of not getting value for money resulted in dissatisfaction with the hosting experience. More recent satisfaction theory interest (Wanous & Lawler, 1972; Brief & Aldag, 1978; Benjamin & Hollings, 1995) suggests that higher order needs such as task satisfaction, require effective performance and incentives for continued effort. For the host family whose perception was of significant financial outlay (giving), a return on their investment in the form of gratification was desired or expected from the hosted student (receiving). Leung and Leung (1992) found that for adolescents there were strong correlations between self-concept and life satisfaction that were also dominated by the relationship with parents. This is significant for the host family intra-relationships throughout the duration of the hosting experience since their participation involves adolescent and host parent interactions as well as a commitment to the welfare of all involved.

Fleck (1983) noted that the success of student exchange programs lay less with government funds for education and more with broad-based support of students, parents and other private sector agencies to bear the costs involved for extra curricular learning experiences. The issue of poor economic 'fit' between participants in exchanges was previously described (Parent, 1983; Delphi Research Associates, 1984) in terms of the exchange student's preparedness to accept a possible difference between their accustomed economic situation and that of their host family. Within the investment component of the conception of Synergy, the host family perception of economic fit has been identified. For the host family as the counterpart in a student exchange, the importance and burden of fiscal aspects has emerged in this space of variation.
Category C1: Additional financial outlay is not significant in the hosting experience.

In this category the host families' perception is of being unburdened financially by the additional hosted member of the family. The perception is that hosting a student involves little change in lifestyle or financial impact so that the expenditure aspect of the hosting experience was of no significance. The continuation of family lifestyle was therefore optimally effective and so in this investigation is said to be in proximity to Synergy. In some cases the perception of minimal change or no change to lifestyle expenditure was the reported because financial outlay was minimal. In other instances the perception of minimal financial outlay was related to the financial wellbeing of the host family for whom any expense would be inconsequential.

The Corel family example is used to demonstrate the perception of minimal financial outlay in the hosting event. The Corel family regarded any related expenses for their host daughter Jessica exactly as if she were their own daughter Josie. They were a financially secure family with high income who perceived that any expense in the reciprocal exchange with Jessica, was inconsequential.

We paid for her airfare and that was it apart from what we wanted to give her ourselves. What the family did for Josie in Singapore we did for Jessica. It was just the same. You're providing that hospitality and family setting to live in, the family atmosphere and how we live.

The Hobbs family had the perception that any additional expense was minimal since their lifestyle was hardly altered by the inclusion of the exchange student in their family. Due to the lack of interest shown by the exchange student in special cultural or extra activities, the Hobbs family life style remained relatively in tact throughout the duration of the hosting.

We would just have a normal family weekend with whatever was going on. There were no hassles. We were renovating the bathroom and she was really
good about that. She got right into that helping to smash down the bathroom. That really pleased me because she got involved in a family thing. She wasn't interested in seeing places.

A statement from the Alpine family who regarded the expense in this instance as minimal even though the period of the hosting was for them a time of financial uncertainty.

Our financial situation changed because I was retrenched in February and it took something like eight weeks to get another job to get anything like what we were on and that explains our having to plan our financial budget. The cost of having another person in the house was negligible really.

Another example is a statement from the Eastern family for whom expense was inconsequential. Financial outlay was not questioned, it was more relevant to live out the experience.

I don't think you should enter into it with the idea of what's in it for me. If my kid goes back over there... if they form a bond of friendship... a bond that they've formed that's all you want out of it. It's a lifetime bond that they have formed. They don't need all the grandiose things to impress them.

Category C2: The host families' budget is expanded to provide for the additional 'family' member.

In this category the host family provide for the student as if she were another member of the family. The additional financial cost is considered appropriate, reasonable and entirely expected.

The Alpine family, in this instance, found the expense to be additional, appropriate and in accordance with their expectations.

The cost of doing things would sometimes get a bit expensive like when we went to Jenolan Caves to stay overnight to accommodate seven people in a motel, we had to take two rooms whereas we would have gotten away with our
family in one room. So from that point of view **they make extra costs and I didn’t want her to pay for herself.**

The Davids family perceived that they were in control of the hosting event and assumed responsibility for the financial aspects that the hosting entailed.

**We just assumed that we were responsible for everything while she was here.** One of the difficulties was knowing what sort of food they might eat. I actually bought food that I thought might be interesting food experiences for her. I thought it was more important for her to experience Australian food than for us to cook her Japanese food.

Some participants such as the Eastern family, altered their lifestyle during the hosting. The degree of alteration was entirely acceptable and according to their expectations.

**Basically it did cost money,** by the time Lyn ran around Canberra and night stops. But **that’s nothing, you don’t worry about it.** For Gretel it was great to see what Australia was like. It is expensive but if you feel obliged to have to do something then don’t. I think if they are coming to a culture in Australia they should fit more or less into what the family norm is. Weekends we’d take them somewhere. Be prepared to spend time and show them a little bit but not Adelaide one weekend and Perth the next.

**Category C3: Money and time are intrinsic to giving the student the maximum experience.**

In this category the host family perceive that it is their duty and their obligation to extend their normal lifestyle and to provide the exchange student, as guest, with the maximum experience possible. This outlay is perceived as different and extraordinary to the family norm. The normal family lifestyle and financial outlay are not maintained but extended. In this investigation the perception of this category of host family commitment was not optimally effective, the host family experienced a dilemma, the proximity to Synergy was further removed.
A statement was made by the Alpine family who experienced this category of the component of investment and had planned in advance for their commitment to the hosting.

We had saved up a lot of things we talked about doing for a long time to do during this period. So it was an expensive six weeks for the family. I think it comes down to the family's ability and desire to pay. If my daughter was over in Germany I would like someone to look after her that way. Some of these kids save up for 12 months to come and that's what worried me the most, that she was enjoying herself. I didn't want her to come all this way to have a horrible time. **Financially though it was just draining.**

The Beatty family, for instance, made a large financial outlay during the hosting that they believed ultimately would provide the best opportunity for an educational experience for the exchange student.

We wanted to allow the German girl the maximum opportunity to spend whatever money she had on her holiday and exposure to Australia. So we decided among ourselves that we would basically provide the vast majority of expenses. So when we went to Canberra and provided meals and accommodation she did not contribute. I packed her lunches everyday so that she did not have to spend her own money. We don't know her economic situation and it was possible this would be her only trip to Australia. I felt responsible that we should provide every opportunity as we possibly could. I don't know how much money it cost us and this would be a reason for rejecting another exchange opportunity but it was thousands, probably four or five.

*Category C4: Money and time invested warrant appreciation from the exchange student.*

In this category there is a measure of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in terms of 'value for money' for the investment. The perception of outlay is not optimally effective since there is disparity between host family expectations and the outcomes experienced. This category demonstrates another aspect of host family dilemma.
The Beatty family anticipated value for money and came to resent the financial outlay they had made since their perception was that the exchange student did not appreciate their commitment nor value it.

So I ended up quite frustrated because I wanted to provide so much for her and for her own reasons she chose to reject it. That was irritating because of all the changes we made in our lives. So that was a very frustrating element of it. I suppose we didn't really get out of it what we'd hoped at all. We put a fair investment into it in preparation and financially, reorganisation at home and it was quite disappointing.

So we had a lot of fun with them didn't we? In fact we sat down one night and George made them a dictionary on the computer of Australian slang and the meanings beside it. Well that filled in hours and they just thought that was such good fun. And so they gave us a lot of enjoyment. We had a beautiful day around the city and stayed late to see the lights and things. And I thought that was a great day, she would have seen so much that day. But it was "all right" and I sort of felt rather let down that day. I thought, I took myself back and I thought this particular day cost us hundreds of dollars because you are talking five of you the whole time. We left home at something like half past seven and got in at twenty to nine that night. I work fulltime. The kids have to be at school and all this... and all we got out of it was "all right" and I thought that was rather disappointing.

The Klein family perceived a lack of gratitude from their exchange student who they believed was not only disinterested in cultural exposure but was also unable to appreciate their good intentions.

She was well behaved but not really enthusiastic about things. We didn't feel appreciated. That's how I felt. Sometimes you'd make an extra effort and think we'll make this dinner or do this or whatever, it's sad enough your own kids ignoring these gestures. When you're a guest; she never really thanked us for anything.

Another statement was made from the Beatty family who could not reconcile their expectations with the reality of the hosting event and consequently experienced a dilemma.
I was initially offended because we were offering her this idyllic lifestyle in my eyes and this girl from Germany had no interest in it. I think she could have made a greater effort at it. Increasing her exposure to us and at least if she didn't accept it take away an understanding of it. **But she tended to respond by going to her room.**

D: Synergy / learning in the hosting experience.

In this component of the conception of Synergy, host family members' understanding of learning is found. The variations in Synergy included what participants hoped to learn and what they did perceive as learning from the hosting experience. Säljö (1979) characterised the different ways in which students experienced learning as the increase of knowledge, memorising, acquisition of facts/procedures, abstraction of meaning and an interpretative process that is aimed at understanding reality. Another conception of learning – changing as a person, was added to this list by Beaty, Dall'Alba and Marton (1993). Family participation in a hosting event, just like student exchange involvement, both stem from a desire for a potential educational experience.

*Category D1: Every experience of life provides a learning opportunity.*

In this category, there is the idea that learning is any experience in life taken moment by moment. The perceptions of learning experiences are optimally effective so that Synergy of learning in the experience of hosting is known. Learning is continuous and content is all embracing and actively sought. Learning is perceived both as the increase of knowledge as well as learning that leads to understanding reality. Responsiveness to change; readiness to check out the new, acceptance of diversity, a discovery approach, enhanced social skills, global awareness, enjoyment, love of learning, are all perceived as the experience of learning.

A statement from the Hobbs family indicated that they were seeking new life experiences. They had the perceived that an opportunity in life such as an intercultural visit was potentially educational and growth related:
At the airport I was thinking that this was quite exciting, another interesting element to life. We thought she'd be excited too. She probably wasn't excited as we thought she would have been. I'd always had this idea that I thought it would be good for Caitlin. Just to give her a bit more of being out on her own and perhaps fending a little more for herself, making her more self-reliant. This was a way of giving her overseas experience.

Another statement from the Ives family demonstrated that they came to see their younger son in a new light and recognised degrees of personal growth in interpersonal relationship building during the hosting event.

They both watched television together and had that interest in common plus she and Antony shared a similar sense of humour so I was pleased when I saw them keeping good company and I was happy that Antony was able to relate adequately with a 16 year old girl who found it possible to have a sensible conversation with him.

The Eastern family and their natural daughter Sheree illustrate this conception because they regarded any new experience in life as holding the potential for learning and growth and would therefore be worthwhile. Yet, the perceptions expressed by the Eastern family clearly relate to intercultural understanding.

I didn't expect to learn much about Germany it was just for the experience that was available for them. Even the New Zealand idea was just a change, you don't want your kid coming home speaking Kiwi; it was just an experience for them. I just said "Sheree let's have the experience". Not many people have lived the lifestyle we have. It does make a difference. It makes you a lot more open a lot more aware that the world is not such a big place.

Any opportunity. Sheree came home at Christmas time and said the neighbours wanted her to go to Canada and I said 'go'. You need to just rearrange you life, reschedule. So we didn’t hesitate about hosting as we thought it would be a fabulous experience for the family as a whole and especially Sheree. I think it is good for the kids to have someone of a different culture and there were cultural differences. I think she talked a bit about Germany and life at home and mainly school activities and this sort of thing. It certainly was an educational experience.
The statement made by the Corel family indicated they valued personal change and growth and saw the hosting experience as an opportunity to show hospitality to another through a sharing of their lifestyle.

I think it was good for our family to stretch that little bit further and have someone else come and live with us and have to share our family. I think you can get a little bit comfortable and take each other for granted and I think it was good for us to stretch that little bit.

Category D2: A new experience is an opportunity for learning.

In this category, learning is understood as doing something or being part of a situation without prior experience of it. There is an understanding of Synergy for the host family participants in the relationship between voluntary participation for experiential learning and the perception of a learning opportunity. Recognising a potential learning opportunity is followed by the decision to participate in the activity. Participation is desirable since it leads to an increase of knowledge. The perception of learning in this category is a type of constructivist/discovery approach; ie, to chart one’s own course and to have a sense of responsibility and commitment to learning. The similarity to constructivist approaches is made since the learner constructs linkages between new knowledge and the context of existing knowledge (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995). The knowledge gained could therefore, be said to be interpretive. The examples below demonstrate the perception that learning has occurred in social contexts and in personal interchanges. The perception of learning in this category, like constructivism, promotes the idea that people are learning all the time, adding to the pre-existing knowledge base.

For example, the Klein family took the opportunity of new experiences and entered into the hosting event expecting learning and growth.
I think it is **a good experience** for the girls to experience somebody from another place and it gives you opportunities to some extent to **show your own city taking a tourist around**. I wanted my daughter to do an exchange because I thought it was a good opportunity. Something I hadn’t done myself and thought I might want to have.

The Beatty family sought a new learning opportunity from the hosting event and they expected a time of growth. The desire for exposure to the German language was based upon the Beatty family member's perceptions of an intercultural experience.

The primary function was exposure to other cultures and in the second instance it was an opportunity to expose Linda to much more fluent German language which we saw as a real aid to her German studies at school. **Another culture, another sort of exposure.**

*Category D3: Seeing things in a new way is educational.*

This category is about relations or abstractions of meaning that an individual makes through reflection or analysis of a situation and is located as a qualitatively different way of viewing learning in the experience of hosting. Seeing things in a new way involves some kind of change in an individual whether it is a change in attitudes, beliefs or behaviours. Transformative learning is said to occur when there is critical reflection and a qualitative change in world view that produces a new consciousness about something (Kuh et al., 1994; James, 1997; Levine, 1997; Hobson & Welbourne, 1998). In the current research, the examples in this category about learning demonstrate how a change process, in phenomenographic interviews, provided host family participants with the reconstruction of meaning in new ways. Prior experience and reflection are the bases upon which this learning builds. This type of learning involves abstraction of meaning, critical thinking, future planning, evaluation and life choices within a simultaneous discernment of awareness.
The statements from the Hobbs family indicate that they interpreted their experience in new ways following reflection. They recognised some of the challenges they had faced during the hosting event.

I think it is a positive thing to do anyway if you have the opportunity to do it. I guess it would be handy that through the schools' experience you commit some of these things to memory so that while you are going into it with enthusiasm it's very difficult to think through things that you haven't experienced. Like the sorts of things that can happen and how you approach them. Not that you want to write a sheet to put people off, not at all, but just to let them know.

Interviewer: What sort of things do you mean?

What do you do if there is suddenly a daughter two years older? What do you do if the daughter has not had the same sort of family rules or structure you've had? Can you impose those rules on someone that is only here for three months? You must be clear in your expectations from the start and be clear that the child and her family share those also.

The Firth family came to understand the value of a hosting experience in terms of its reciprocal value.

We see this as an opportunity. We think this country is such a great country and to have someone from overseas and show them around makes us proud. We are happy to work in any time these opportunities arise to take someone. Back in 1992 Christmas we went overseas and unbelievable generosity was shown to us by the people of USA., it established in my mind to open your house to people overseas as a right thing to do.

Category D4: Learning is about acquiring new facts and data.

This category of learning in the experience of hosting is about the absorption of information. A narrower view of learning is perceived that limits the optimal effectiveness or Synergy of learning opportunities available in the experience of hosting. The emphasis is not on how the student learns but on what is learned. This type of learning in the experience of
hosting involves acquiring knowledge, memorising, and gathering facts with familial support in the learning environment of the home. A narrower view of learning, as in this category, has been related to surface learning approaches in phenomenography (Marton and Säljö, 1976; Marton, 1981; Webb, 1997).

The Ives family, for example, interpreted learning in terms of facts and data and the acquisition of knowledge about cultural New Zealand. They had expectations for an intercultural experience.

I think we learnt a little about New Zealand from Morgan. She was quite happy to talk about her country and **we found out about differences in employment, university study, school courses and driving licenses.** As for cultural differences and Maori history and that sort of thing I don't think there was much there except that Morgan did bring us a video about New Zealand which we watched and I remember she was very keen for us to watch it.

The Hobbs family anticipated learning new facts and data and gaining knowledge from exchange experience. They felt that little learning had occurred given that descriptor of learning.

I remember having pen friends from Japan when I was Caitlin's age and it was interesting to get letters from them. Back in 1964 I think it was so **each letter was an insight into Japanese culture, the way things were done. It was a learning experience** and I think if you could do that sort of thing with the school for some length of time that would be great. **It just didn't occur on this occasion.**

Similarly, the Alpine family felt that little learning occurred as it was not in the formal setting of the classroom. For the Alpine family experiencing life was not a definition of learning.

If the German girls didn't want to go to classes they didn't have to and so they spent a lot of time outside together just **chatting, which I suppose is OK**
because they are not over here to learn but just to experience life but I think if they are just sitting out in a playing field chatting it is a waste of their time when they could be doing something else.

The four components and the categories of the conception of Synergy that describe the outcome space for the phenomenon of hosting have been presented in a spectrum of experience that is context related. In the next section, the content of learning that the host family understood from the experience of hosting is presented through a content analysis approach.
Chapter 5

Perceptions of the Content of Learning in the Experience of Hosting

The search for the phenomenon of hosting was extended further and strengthened through an exploration into the content of learning in the hosting experience. The phenomenographic approach has identified the phenomenon of hosting that exists from participation in a hosting event. A content analysis of the interview data was conducted to develop an insight into perceptions of the learning content of the hosting experience of the participant families from Loxleigh School for Girls during 1996. The departure into content analysis took a different perspective of the interview data gathered in phase 2 of the phenomenographic analysis. The categories that have been identified from the content analysis are not the family perceptions of what learning is but rather, the host family perceptions of what they learnt ie, learning content. In the content analysis, the interview data were tabled in terms of the relative frequency and importance of concepts. The purpose of using content analysis for a grounded theory account of participants' perceptions of learning, was to identify the major constructs, their relationships together with the process and context (Becker, 1993). Separate concepts which were discrete happenings, events, and other instances of the phenomenon of learning in a hosting event were noted and then grouped into categories. In a content analysis the categories are a classification of concepts discovered when concepts are compared against one another. From the technique of content analysis, the perceptions and individual reports of participants were translated into data and the content of learning in the hosting experience was identified.
Open coding was used in the next phase of the content analysis and this involved the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data. The interview transcripts were written up verbatim as in phenomenography and reused for the content analysis. Resultant "in vivo" categories were identified and some of the information was noted in terms of its similarity, meaning or significance as in a second stage conceptual coding process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) described the method of labelling the phenomena or themes and conceptualising them in order to analyse the meaning. Sometimes a sentence, a word or an idea would be chosen to conceptualise the raw data in a highly generative way.

*Alpine Family:* We wouldn’t be keen to host again. You would always worry if you would get someone nice or not and I don’t know if we’d be lucky enough to repeat what we had. Also financially it was just draining. Also there was the responsibility of it. You worry about someone else’s child the entire time they are with you. You worry about whether they are enjoying themselves.

*Themes:* attitude to repeat hosting, selection and fit into family, financial impact, responsibility of another’s child, student's wellbeing

In this same way, other incidents that had similar significance could be coded using the same concepts or themes.

*David’s Family:* She was very focused. I would be happy to host again, the fact is they are used to being very independent. I work a long day and so a lot of the time she would be with my daughter looking after themselves. We did a bit of sightseeing, it was good having someone here to do things with.

*Themes:* attitude to repeat hosting, student fit into family, companionship, daughter/student maturity

Another aspect of the open coding process was to explore the developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions on a continuum. The next phase of content analysis involved dimensionalising the data. This was a process of breaking a property down into its
dimensions that are located along a continuum. Strauss (1987:26) noted the importance of this phase wherein other properties of the data can be examined until the categories are firmly established and in fact "earn" their way into the theory by systematic generation and distinction. An example of the properties of a particular category being readily expressed in a dimensional way is shown below. This method is useful for developing the relationships between the categories and subcategories. Two examples of dimensionalising the data are presented now. The chosen categories that have been included are firstly communication and language learning and secondly, learning about selves and responsibility.

**Dimensionalising the data.**

In this phase of the content analysis, relational and variational sampling were used to locate data that confirmed and validated the relations between the categories or limited their applicability. The procedure of researcher asking questions and making comparisons was used as an aid for theorising the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Becker, 1993). The questions asked served the purpose of opening up the data to facilitate the emergence of categories. According to content analysis technique, the basic questions are Who? When? Where? What? How much? and Why? (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:77). The answers from these questions were later conceptualised and grouped into categories.

**Category: Communication.**

**Sub-category: Language Learning.**

**Questions:** Was the exchange student's first language English? What was the second language level of proficiency for the host family? Was this as expected? Were there communication problems? What solutions were used to overcome lack of language proficiency? Did lack of communication due to language barrier
cause frustration? Did the host family increase their language skills? Was there persistence or was it easier to use English? Was it fun to learn new language skills? Was there a desire for language proficiency?

Table 5: Dimensions of the sub-category of language learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensional range (applied to each instance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language usage</td>
<td>proficiency</td>
<td>high------------low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>persistence</td>
<td>strong----------weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>often------------never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>progress</td>
<td>more------------less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category: Learning about selves.

Sub-category: Responsibility.

Questions: Was there a sense of responsibility for the exchange student? Was the level of responsibility appropriate? Were there instances when responsibility should have been deferred to the school? What type of difficult decisions had to be made? Was there confusion in the decision making process? What type of responsibility issues were related to the age of the exchange student? Did responsibility issues conflict with house rules and lifestyle?

Table 6: Dimensions of the sub-category of responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensional range (applied to each instance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>extent</td>
<td>wide------------narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>often------------never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>difficulty</td>
<td>easy------------hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact</td>
<td>more------------less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriateness</td>
<td>near------------far</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some themes involved interpretation of the data, some were simply a summary of words taken directly from the data and others were "in vivo" codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:69) used by the interviewees themselves.

*Hobbs Family:* Be clear on your expectations. If you are clear at the start and if you are comfortable with the child that is coming shares those and her family also, then you should be all right; and the school also. That way everybody agrees with the way things are going to travel.

*Theme:* shared expectations

*Beatty Family:* There was an element of friction towards the end. I don't know why... that didn't aid the situation. It is a personality thing too. If a girl comes and clashes with the host girl's personality it's like a lottery but unfortunately for six weeks you don't live a lottery and it can be awkward, a very difficult time.

*Themes:* element of friction, personality clash, lottery of selection, difficult time

In the next phase categories were developed from the phenomena. A number of categories were named to group the concepts and those selected seemed to most logically describe the data represented. Strauss and Corbin (1990:53) explained how categories could be named from the technical literature, from non-technical literature and also 'in vivo', from the interviewees themselves. Since this study was particularly concerned with the content of learning of the family in a hosting experience through communication, the understanding of the organisational process of a hosting event and personal change, it was logical and appropriate to group one set of the phenomena under the heading of Understanding Selves and another under the heading of Communication Outcomes. One category that arose involved the personal beliefs that families held towards cultural understanding itself. This category, termed "Cultural Appreciation" uses borrowed concepts which can be misleading.
The terms are used to refer to an appreciation of one's cultural heritage. Other people might interpret these terms in a standard way and not according to the desired meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:68). The use of the literature to ensure correct procedures for the methodology was significant also in terms of theoretical sampling. For theoretical sampling conditions, strategies and solutions, consequences, processes, coping skills and variations were matched against a variety of situations in order to further develop and understand a model towards a grounded theory for the content of learning in a hosting event.

Other techniques for enhancing the theoretical sensitivity were applied to the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990:87) noted several methods of comparing and analysing data in order to break away from the normal pattern of thinking and view phenomena in new ways. One strategy was called the "close-in comparison". For this study, the Pressure of Family Activities could be considered in terms of the host family's perspective and say, another family at the same school. Questions asked bring out the similarities and differences between the two families. For example:

What type of activities will be organised for the weekend? How do these fit in with the family lifestyle? What alterations to lifestyle must be made to accommodate the outings? What affect is there on the family finances? Is there a sense of pressure to have outings? Would the family rather rest and relax for the weekend after a hectic week? Will the outing be enjoyable for all or could it be stressful? Will the host student appreciate the effort involved?

The next stage occurs when the close-in comparison is made with the other non-host family as in the example below.

For example: Is there any pressure to organise activities for the weekend? Will there be any change to the family and its own lifestyle norm? Will it be possible to relax and rest up after a busy week? Will there be any unwanted or unnecessary drain on the family finances? Will there be any cause to be on 'best behaviour'? Will there be any obligation to tidy the house? Will there be a need to ensure proper meals are organised?
Another type of strategy is called the "far-out comparison". An application of this method would be to compare hosting a student to going supermarket shopping for another person. Both activities are very dependent on trying to accommodate someone else, anticipating their wants, catering well for their needs, ensuring value for money and putting in good effort to ensure success. Both activities require a degree of time investment, specialised knowledge and both incorporate a sense of reward or success whether it be a memorable hosting or a successful shopping venture. How important is the learning process for understanding others or making correct choices? The host family often need to be flexible, sensitive to others and discerning just as the shopper may observe the available selection and come up with bargains. Using this type of analogy was useful for consolidating the categories and providing further depth and insight to the themes that were originally identified.

The relationship of the categories and how the data were interpreted.

A paradigm model was designed following the procedure of Axial Coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:96) to illustrate the relationship of the categories derived from the coding procedures of the interview transcripts. Axial coding is a procedure of putting data back in a new way after open coding and making connections between categories. A coding paradigm involving conditions context, action/interactional strategies and consequences. From this paradigm it was possible to understand some of the important relational aspects of the hosting event and to move further towards a grounded theory of the perceptions of learning in a hosting experience.

Further strategies were applied to the data. From the paradigm it was possible to further develop and link categories and subcategories, to explicate the story line and identify the core category as in the process of Selective Coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:116). In this phase the concepts were integrated around a core category and a diagram was designed to
show the relationship, depth and complexity of the respondent data from the interview transcripts.

Results of the perceptions of the content of learning in the experience of hosting

The participants.

Of the 11 families (37 participants) interviewed, 8 families or 72% reported that the hosting was a worthwhile educational experience and 6 families or 54% indicated that they would be willing to host again. Intercultural dynamics emerged in several areas. For example, there were problems with communication in 4 families or 36% of families which represented 80% or 4 out of 5 families of those with exchange students from non English speaking backgrounds. The learning about the foreign culture was identified by 5 families or 45% while an appreciation of the home culture was reported as an unexpected outcome by 7 families or 63%. Problems associated with perceptions of excessive responsibility for the hosted student were reported by 4 families or 36%. Degrees of financial strain were expressed by 4 families or 36% while 4 families or 36% also felt there was pressure to organise outings and entertain the student for a maximum cultural experience.
Table 7: Selected sub group data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Country &amp; Duration</th>
<th>Successful Selection</th>
<th>Pressure &amp; Care</th>
<th>Personal Growth</th>
<th>Financial Impact</th>
<th>Repeat Hosting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>Germany 6 weeks</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty</td>
<td>Germany 6 weeks</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corel</td>
<td>Singapore 5 weeks</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davids</td>
<td>Japan 4 weeks</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Germany 8 weeks</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firth</td>
<td>Argentina 4 days</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Japan 2 weeks</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbs</td>
<td>New Zealand 12w</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ives</td>
<td>New Zealand 12w</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Singapore 5 weeks</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>New Zealand 12w</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open coding for concepts and categories.

The interview transcripts were coded for themes and phenomena and over 100 concepts were identified. In the second stage of coding the number of themes was reduced to 30. The phenomena were then conceptualised into four core categories each a posteriori derived, with a set of sub-categories.

Table 8: Category 1: Understanding selves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB CATEGORIES</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>understanding selves</td>
<td>coping</td>
<td>flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>level of maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>financial impact</td>
<td>pressure of outings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unexpected outcomes</td>
<td>desire for travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appreciation</td>
<td>lifestyle changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>emotional investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>duty of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>happiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The category of Understanding Selves provided useful information about what the host family experienced in the home with the exchange student as well as those factors of influence changing the pattern of their normal routine. All families reported a commitment and desire for involvement in a hosting event and their belief in the value and worth of this type of educational activity irrespective of their own particular experience in this instance. The belief in the value of hosting was not purely in terms of the success or lack of their own experience but rather a more general positive acknowledgement of the potential of this kind of involvement and all the associated skills, processes and disciplines of extending the family for an intercultural interchange. The role of an attitude of flexibility was seen as critical to the success of hosting.

Table 9: Category 2: Process of hosting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB CATEGORIES</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>process of hosting</td>
<td>selection process</td>
<td>agenda for selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>preparation</td>
<td>ambassadorial aims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support systems</td>
<td>assimilation training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evaluation</td>
<td>lottery of fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>recommendations</td>
<td>school's role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>timetable of lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>training course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>selection procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>outings roster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>debriefing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this category the nature of the organisational process of hosting itself was highlighted in terms of the many aspects. The hosting event is concerned with not only the process of selection, preparation and training for the family as well as the exchange student, but also the role of the school, other families and the available support systems. The nature of the success of the selection process and its various forms together with preparedness for an intercultural interchange were also noted. The need for debriefing of the host family and
some form of acknowledgement for participants was an omission that was considered critical to the organisational process of hosting. In the traditional view of student exchange participation, many of the characteristics of the organisational process of hosting do not feature. In particular, the school’s role, timetabling of lessons, the lottery of fit and host family evaluation have emerged as significant.

Table 10: Category 3: Communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB CATEGORIES</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>language proficiency</td>
<td>use of second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expectations</td>
<td>communication breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>persistence</td>
<td>word games and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outcomes</td>
<td>use of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solution</td>
<td>isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>desire for language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>discoveries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All host families with students from non English-speaking backgrounds reported incidents of communication breakdown that had a range of positive and negative solutions. Some of the issues related to the student’s proficiency in English which obviated the need for other language skill development. Many communication barriers were overcome in a variety of ways. What is known about communication issues for exchange students did signal factors for families in the experience of hosting. Overcoming communication problems did depend upon personal effort and commitment between participants who desired better understanding and took up the challenge to overcome these barriers. Sometimes creative solutions were used such as charades, or a dictionary or even a language proficient friend would be consulted. A lack of integration into the host family circle sometimes resulted in student isolation and even refusal to try and speak English in a communication breakdown that was complex and difficult to reconcile.
Table 11: Category 4: Cultural Appreciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB CATEGORIES</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cultural appreciation</td>
<td>exchange culture</td>
<td>exchange way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian culture</td>
<td>appreciation of home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stereotyping</td>
<td>pride in own culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>exchange attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>exchange behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>desire for travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reported findings of the categories Cultural Appreciation particularly emphasised the effect of the revisiting one's own native culture and the unexpected pleasure and enjoyment afforded by demonstrating places of interest to the exchange student. The appreciation of one's cultural heritage as an aspect of the experience of hosting is not featured in the literature of student exchange programs presumably due to the reversal of focus. Many families admitted they had saved up a lot of places to visit, or they had not visited certain tourist spots for many years. The nature of intercultural learning is such that host families reported, in the main, that they did not learn specific details of the exchange culture in a constructed way but rather, through daily lifestyle comparisons and experiential learning as situations arose. For example, spontaneous recognition of differences became apparent when contrasting ways of preparing food, or completing simple household tasks were identified and then discussed with a level of fascination and unanticipated knowledge interest.

Cultural Appreciation and Understanding Selves have a central focus relating to learning content in an intercultural exchange since an exposure to a different culture was essentially the purpose or prime motivation for families to participate in a hosting event. Aspects of Cultural Appreciation are clearly related to a continuum and in themselves do not appear to be mutually exclusive. When subjected to a dimensional analysis the following properties emerge:
Table 12: Dimensions of Category 1: Understanding Selves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY RANGE</th>
<th>PROPERTIES</th>
<th>DIMENSIONAL (applied to each instance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>understanding selves</td>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>high---------low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitude</td>
<td>positive-------negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appreciation</td>
<td>often----------never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>more----------less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intensity</td>
<td>strong----------weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Dimensions of Category 4: Cultural Appreciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PROPERTIES</th>
<th>DIMENSIONAL RANGE (applied to each instance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cultural appreciation</td>
<td>interest</td>
<td>high---------low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitude</td>
<td>positive-------negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>often----------never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extent</td>
<td>more----------less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intensity</td>
<td>strong----------weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants' reports of Cultural Appreciation and Understanding Selves appear to be remarkably consistent with the dimensional properties so that, for instance, if the host family and exchange student participated in an activity that was a mutually enjoyable and appreciated experience, then the family felt successful and rewarded.

*Beatty Family:* I got enormous pleasure out of that. Our student got enormous pleasure out of it too. She was learning things and at that point in the trip she was doing things that I suppose she came here to do. It was something different for her... that was a good thing.

Similarly, Cultural Appreciation and Understanding Selves are very positive when there is learning and reward but the lack of gratification is very disappointing, disillusioning.
and the host family is led to question the worth of the participation and resent the lack of appreciation for the expense and time involved.

*Beatty Family*: I don't know, I thought we were failures. We were offering this girl and idyllic lifestyle in my eyes and she had no interest in it. We ended up quite frustrated because we wanted to provide so much for her and for her own reasons she chose to reject it. We didn't get out of it what we'd hoped... at all. We put a fair investment into it in preparation and financially, ...reorganisation at home... and it was quite disappointing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>SELVES</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>CULTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Lottery of fit</td>
<td>English prevailed during 6 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial strain</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty</td>
<td>Financial strain</td>
<td>Lottery of fit</td>
<td>exchange language under utilised during 6 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of gratification</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corel</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Selection process</td>
<td>limited interchange during 5 weeks</td>
<td>limited because of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>needs refinement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davids</td>
<td>control of situation</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>English prevailed during 4 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>control of situation</td>
<td>Lottery of fit</td>
<td>exchange language extended during 4 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firth</td>
<td>control of situation</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>English prevailed during 4 days</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and culture learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>control of situation</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>exchange language extended during 2 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbs</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Selection process</td>
<td>limited interchange during 12 weeks</td>
<td>limited because of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>needs refinement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ives</td>
<td>Financial strain</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>limited interchange during 12 weeks</td>
<td>appreciate Australia and culture learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Keep to norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>Selection process</td>
<td>limited interchange during 5 weeks</td>
<td>limited because of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>needs refinement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>Selection process</td>
<td>limited interchange during 12 weeks</td>
<td>limited because of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>needs refinement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>SELVES</td>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corel</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davids</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firth</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbs</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ives</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>Commitment and</td>
<td>Selection critical</td>
<td>English prevailed</td>
<td>appreciate Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results of Axial Coding.**

In the process of Axial Coding the subcategories were linked to categories in a set of relationships designed to provide for greater complexity in understanding the concepts.

The paradigm model applied was that of Strauss and Corbin (1990:99):

(A) Causal conditions -- (B) Phenomenon -- (C) Context -- (D) Intervening conditions -- (E) Action/interaction strategies -- (F) Consequences.

For the host family, coping with a disinterested exchange student when there were expectations of a mutually rewarding hosting experience, the paradigm would be expressed in the following way.
Table 16: Axial coding for ineffective hosting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>causal condition</th>
<th>phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student disinterest</td>
<td>ineffective hosting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>intervening conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>host family environment</td>
<td>unmotivated student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek support</td>
<td>disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivational tactics</td>
<td>disillusionment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aid communication</td>
<td>frustration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another example is demonstrated by the host family who engages with the exchange student in a mutually rewarding activity.

Table 17: Axial coding for effective hosting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>causal condition</th>
<th>phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>family activity</td>
<td>effective hosting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>intervening conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>host family environment</td>
<td>motivated student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family support</td>
<td>learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivational activities</td>
<td>enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative communication</td>
<td>growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selective coding is done to select the core category in order to relate it to other categories, to validate relationships and to fill in any gaps. The next phase involves explicating the story line and this is a conceptualisation of the story in order to develop the core category.

The main story is about families participating in a hosting event. They are involved in an activity that has centrality and expectations for learning about themselves and others; it is important both for the entire family and the exchange student whom they host. Each host family in their situation can be said to have experienced the exchange program process and to have a critical understanding of its nature. Each host family is trying to do their job of hosting effectively as they have a belief in the value and worth of intercultural appreciation for themselves and their children. There are many opportunities for learning in the hosting experience stemming from exchange student-family communication primarily in the context of daily living and family activities in the context of experiential learning. Disappointment however, is largely due to the attitude of the exchange student and the degree of active participation and appreciation the host family experience. These are seen as critical factors in the realisation of purposeful learning through successful host family participation.

The core category and its dimensions refers to the central phenomenon around which all other categories are integrated. The core category, Selection Process, identified in the story line can be expressed in terms of its dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attitude of student</td>
<td>positive---- negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active participation</td>
<td>more ---- ---less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciation</td>
<td>often-------never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The diagram.

To more fully describe this relationship between the categories the following diagram was designed:

![Diagram showing the relationship between perceptions of learning, understanding selves, communication, cultural appreciation, host family, and selection process.]

Figure 10: Perceptions of the content of learning in the experience of hosting. The components and their relationships for learning content.

The provisional theory for learning in the experience of hosting becomes:

Learning in the experience of hosting involves understanding selves, communication skills and cultural appreciation and is inter-dependent with the selection process.
Chapter 6

Further Analysis Using the 'New' Phenomenography

Dilemmas and Discernment: the Experience of Hosting

From the application of another perspective, the 'new' phenomenography (Marton & Booth, 1997; Bowden & Marton, 1998; Runesson, 1999), further understanding about the phenomenon of hosting has been identified. Variation in learning, according to Marton and Pang (1999), has two facets. One facet of variation describes the different ways of experiencing the same phenomenon using categories of description in an outcome space and the four components of Synergy already outlined (Chapter 4) constitute the outcome space of the host family experience. A second order perspective however, is a facet of variation that is concerned with how differences and variations evolve. By identifying the critical aspects of an experience that are simultaneously discerned through awareness, the dimensions of variation of that experienced can be systematically explored. It was put forward that when the categories or variations of an experience can be discerned and focused upon simultaneously then the conceptions take on an ontological status. Having an ontological status presents a new dimension of phenomenography that takes the approach from specialist methodology for qualitative data, to the possibility of theory development and extension. Aspects of learning in this sense move beyond terms of preparation, the experience and reflective, evaluative processes (Boud, Keogh & Walker; 1985) to an understanding of the nature of awareness of an experience and its construction in terms of structural and referential aspects (Runesson, 1999:2; Marton & Pang, 1999:4).
The first variation in experience for consideration emerged from the component of the conception of Synergy / fit between participants and represented a dilemma or problematic issue within the experience of the host family. As a feature of host family system climate (happiness and wellbeing), 'the language paradox' was identified. Many host families took into their homes students with varying proficiency in English (Japanese, German) with the expressed expectation of developing language skills in their own children as part of an intercultural experience. For many families, the 'paradox' became clear very early in the duration of the exchange that little progress would be made in developing language skills since the exchange students were often very focused on developing their own English skills and not wishing to use their native language much at all.

For example, the Alpine family identified a paradox in their experience of hosting since the expected language skill acquisition did not occur.

I would have made much more effort to learn to speak to her in German. Because we were lucky with her ability to speak in English and I felt that that was a barrier we had created. We couldn't speak to her. Yes we were disappointed that their German didn't improve but that was the whole families' fault because we didn't speak to her in German. She spoke very well in English so why should they speak German.

Another example comes from the Davids family who reflected upon the paradox of their experience of hosting. Expectations for language skill enhancement succumbed to the exchange student's focus upon English speaking skills.

They came over here to learn English so it is sort of reasonable for you to try to get their English up rather than practice your own Japanese because that's what I'm going over there for in a couple of year's time.

There were however, two notable variations on this theme. For example, there was variation in how families regarded the exchange students' use of native language and the
integration within the family. Using the categories of description mapped in chapter 4, this is demonstrated by the experience of the Alpine family who accommodated differences (A2) and the Beatty family who did not (A3).

The Alpine family was characteristic of those who were willing to accommodate differences in their lifestyle and the behaviour in their home demonstrated by the exchange student.

But she would come home and she would write the diary or write the letters. It was nothing for her to spend two hours writing the diary or letters. She liked going into her room and she'd sit down and listen to her music or she'd write a letter or write in her book. She'd write pages but that was all right. At Jenolan Caves (tourist spot) she was very pleased to see her friend and they did talk endlessly in German. That didn't concern me. I know that if she were my child I would like to think that she could have that relaxation where she could sit back and talk English in the same situation.

The Beatty family experienced differences in expectations for behaviour in the home that resulted in a lack of Synergy between themselves and the exchange student.

One of the things that we had difficulty with was Nina would come home from school with my daughters and she might go to her room for 2 or 3 hours and just lock herself away. Now I was told after speaking to Frau Schultz (school teacher) about it that's quite common for German girls to take themselves to their rooms and spend hours reading or entertaining themselves. Now whereas I found that... I wouldn't say offensive... I found it very irritating because she was locked in her room. Nina asked if one of the German lasses could come with us to Canberra. It would be OK but we had to change all sorts of arrangements to do it. We had a real problem in that when there were two of them together they just flatly refused to speak English. We spoke to them and asked them 'would you please speak English' and their response to that was they didn't speak. They refused to converse at all.

The quotations show variation and two different ways of experiencing the same phenomena.

The question then is, how do the differences and variations evolve? Marton and Pang (1999:2) stated that the dimensions of variation should be "scrutinised within the framework
of the anatomy of awareness" in terms of "critical aspects of the phenomenon in question discerned and focused upon simultaneously". According to Marton and Booth (1997) the variation can be shown in terms of structural (relationship) and referential (meaning) aspects which can be viewed diagrammatically. The structural aspect is a relationship between what is discerned and delimited from the whole context; the meaning of the whole context provides the referential aspect. To follow the outline of systems provided by Marton and Pang (1999:5) for the example given, there will be discernment - variation - contemporaneousness (to account for the experiencing of a particular aspect) and simultaneity - discernment - variation (to explain a particular way of experiencing a phenomenon).

The categories for "she liked going in her room" (A2) and "locking herself in her room" (A3) as well as the categories for "talk endlessly in German" (A2) and "flatly refused to speak English" (A3) can be viewed in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>REFERENTIAL ASPECT</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL ASPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Host family system adaptation and adjustment</td>
<td>Focused on accommodation of family interests. Variation brought about different types of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Host family system expectation of active integration</td>
<td>Focused on active family system involvement. Variation brought about by unmatched expectation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In category A2, the family focused on differences that were identified, acknowledged and accommodated while in category A3, the family had unmet expectations and there was a lack of modification or adaptation to salvage the host family climate. The critical aspect of experiencing the host family system was the variation in the conception of Synergy. Synergy refers to harmony and friendship within a common values system. It embraces the realistic or unrealistic expectations of participants and the emergent adaptation processes involved in the
realisation or modification of goals and objectives. In this study, there were instances of inter-contextual shifts in categories that can be related to the dynamics of awareness (Marton & Pang, 1999:9; Pong, 1999). For example, in some cases both the host family and the exchange student discontinued active behaviour to restore the host family climate (dualistic), that is, disregarded the desire for Synergy. In other examples, the host family continued trying to rectify the situation (restore Synergy) but their actions were not met with positive change from the exchange student (non-dualistic). For some such as the Johnson family, there was little hope of Synergy as recognised in reflection - "we would have been prepared to do whatever she wanted to do... I don't think she was here to get everything she could out of the opportunity".

There were instances of participants' awareness of self-attributes and predispositional factors for 'knowing' how to create or maintain Synergy. There was discernment (due to previous experience) - variation - contemporaneousness in their way of experiencing the host family phenomenon. The Eastern family perceived that they "were blessed, but... not insular either. [They] made her feel very comfortable" and similarly the Davids family stated that they "had a Japanese background so we knew what to do".

The use of phenomenography in the current research was able to illumine aspects of the conception that another empirical stance could not observe. For example, the Johnson family wanted to give their hosted student a range of opportunities and exposure to activities while in Australia. In a short time however, it became obvious that the exchange student, for unknown reasons, did not wish to participate in any special activities and in fact, wanted to isolate herself in her bedroom of the family home. The Johnson family continued for the duration of the hosting, to make repeated offers to the student for participation in various activities despite continued refusal on her part. In this way, the Johnson family could not, by omission, list special activities that they did with their student. There were no examples of
special activities that they had engaged in together. The Johnson family had anticipated taking their exchange student on at least some outings and had expressed the desire to take her around the country and in so doing, to show their national pride. By default, they consequently understood their role as being a provider of safe lodgings even though over time "[they] never stopped trying to involve her in family activities". In a categorical analysis, the Johnsons would be sorted as 'not providing activities for their host student' whereas this was not ever their intention. Phenomenography provided more than a 'sorting' of experiences by giving the variation and meaning of the hosting situation. Similarly, another aspect of their dilemma was that despite the lack of positive reaction or engagement from their host student, energy continued to be focused into encouraging her participation.

Critical aspects of the conception of Synergy therefore, can describe qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon as well as account for the particular ways of experiencing the phenomenon. If an ontological status can be applied to a conception that depicts a way of experiencing something in terms of critical aspects of the phenomenon in question, discerned and focused upon simultaneously (Marton & Pang, 1999:2), then rise can be given to a theory of awareness in the host family experience.

Synergy in the hosting experience is inter-dependent of the accommodation of host family system differences.

The second variation in experience for consideration came from the conception of Synergy / Ownership of Responsibility in the Hosting Experience. This component involved degrees of change of the family normal way of life in terms of special activities or alteration to normal pattern of lifestyle. Notable variations on this theme existed that were illustrated by the Davids family.
In category B2, the Davids family illustrates the category wherein they did not especially alter their lifestyle during the term of the hosting and the family norm prevailed.

We planned to see the Phantom of the Opera and we had bought tickets. It just so happened that she was someone who was very interested in music. It just happened that she was here at the time when we were going and so we bought a ticket for her. That was probably the only special thing we did.

In the following example B3 however, the Davids family mother indicated that her lifestyle was significantly affected.

I was getting really tired because Ailsa would go to bed at 8.30 and Aliki would keep me up talking. She'd sit up 9.30. to 10.30pm so that she could practice her English. She was completely focused on practising her English. I didn't mind but by the time she left I was quite tired. After she had gone to bed I had to go do the dishes and get organised for the next day and do all those household things you couldn't do while you were having a conversation.

Interviewer: Would you have considered asking her to help you do the dishes?

I didn't think it was that sort of a situation. She obviously came from a very well off family. I got the impression from what she talked about that they were very wealthy and that she had maids to do everything. So I didn't give her any jobs to do.

The quotations show variation and two different ways of experiencing a change of lifestyle due to the additional family member and responsibility and ownership of the overall experience. The categories for "that was the only special thing we did" (B2) and "I was getting tired... I had to get organised for the next day" (B3) can be viewed in this way:
In category B2, the family focused on differences that were seen to be in alteration to the family pattern of activities of external outings while in category B3, the family identified a significant change to the internal pattern or household routine. The critical aspect of experiencing ownership and responsibility in the hosting experience was the variation in the perception of impact upon personal routine for host family members. In other instances where there was variation within the component of responsibility and ownership, similar reference to effect upon internal and external family routine was noted. For example, the Klein family did not feel responsibility toward their exchange student when she was truanting from school (external). They were however, very concerned when the student was late returning to the home from an outing and they had to spend time making phone calls in following up her whereabouts (internal).

This view of the critical aspects of the component of Synergy / Ownership and Responsibility therefore, has been able to describe qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon and also account for the particular ways of experiencing the phenomenon. An ontological status has been applied to the conception in a way that leads towards a theory of awareness in the host family experience. This has been achieved through simultaneous discernment of critical aspects (Marton & Pang, 1999:2):

Ownership and responsibility in the hosting experience is inter-dependent of the impact upon internal and external host family routine.
The third variation in experience for consideration came from the conception of Synergy / Host Family Investment. What is omitted from the literature that emerged as significant in this study was the variation of financial investment by the host family and the dilemma of this feature in their experience. The degree of financial outlay incurred by host families during their experience of hosting ranged considerably. Some host families had the perception that they were obliged to give the student a maximum experience involving money and time or they made a conscious decision to invest money and time into the experience. The extent of the financial outlay at times caused tension and even hardship since this resulted in an outcome of families unintentionally setting up an environment where there was a perception of continual giving (by the host family) and receiving (by the exchange student). Other families, and especially those with prior experience of hosting who were engaged in similar hosting events, however, had the perception that the hosting experience involved a low level of outlay and no significant change in family expenditure.

The categories of investment and perceptions of appreciation were related for some host families. The continua from the family 'norm' of financial expenditure ranging to not getting 'value for money' and dissatisfaction with the hosting experience is examined again for critical aspects. There were some notable differences on this theme.

The Corel family hosted Jessica in a reciprocal exchange situation. Previously their own daughter Josie, was hosted for a time in Singapore, by Jessica's family. The Corel family regarded any expense as inconsequential and extended to Jessica the same care as their natural daughter.

We paid for her airfare and that was it apart from what we wanted to give her ourselves. What the family did for Josie in Singapore we did for Jessica. It was just the same. You're providing that hospitality and family setting to live in, the family atmosphere and how we live.
The Eastern family had had previous hosting experience. They held the perception that money spent was not excessive and therefore nothing to worry about.

Basically it did cost money, by the time Lyn ran around Canberra and night stops. But that's nothing, you don't worry about it. For Gretel it was great to see what Australia was like. It is expensive but if you feel obliged to have to do something then don't. I think if they are coming to a culture in Australia they should fit more or less into what the family norm is. Weekends we'd take them somewhere. Be prepared to spend time and show them a little bit but not Adelaide one weekend and Perth the next.

The Beatty family was a novice host family. They made a large financial outlay during the hosting event which they later resented.

We wanted to allow the German girl the maximum opportunity to spend whatever money she had on her holiday and exposure to Australia. So we decided among ourselves that we would basically provide the vast majority of expenses. We don't know her economic situation and it was possible this would be her only trip to Australia. I felt responsible that we should provide every opportunity as we possibly could. I don't know how much money it cost us and this would be a reason for rejecting another exchange opportunity but it was thousands, probably four or five. I suppose we didn't really get out of it what we'd hoped at all.

The quotations show variation and three different ways of experiencing the same phenomena. The categories for "family setting to live in" (C1), "They should fit... into the family norm" (C2) and " it cost us thousands...we didn't get what we'd hoped" (C4) can be viewed in this way:
Table 21: Referential and structural aspects of categories of Synergy/Investment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>REFERENTIAL ASPECT</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL ASPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Host family investment is minimal.</td>
<td>Focused on perception of continuation of normal family expenditure. Variation brought about different lifestyle and family interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Host family investment is appropriate.</td>
<td>Focused on anticipated and expected additional expense. Variation brought about type and number of extracurricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Host family investment is excessive and resented.</td>
<td>Focused on financial outlay and gratification. Variation brought about by value for money and appreciation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In category C1, the family focused on the continuation of normal lifestyle. In some cases this was the perception because the financial outlay was minimal or because the financial affluence of the host family made any expense inconsequential. In category C2, there was additional expense but it was considered reasonable while in category C4, the financial loading and a measure of dissatisfaction/satisfaction related to the perceived quality of the experience since their investment was not suitably appreciated. The critical aspect of experiencing financial investment was not the variations in actual dollar outlay, but the variations in the Perceptions (impact) of Host Family Investment.

In this study there were instances of intercontextual shifts in categories. Previously, Marton (1984:62) explained that in phenomenography, it is the identification of conceptions and categories rather than who holds them, that is of key interest since the outcome space should represent a pool of meanings in which individuals move "freely back and forth". As Stalker (1993:65) explained, within an outcome space, one person may hold many and contradictory conceptions about a phenomenon.
Within the dynamics of awareness (Pong, 1999), it is a change in context that accounts for the shift within a conception. For example, the Alpine family regarded the expense as minimal in this instance:

Our financial situation changed because I was retrenched in February and it took something like eight weeks to get another job to get anything like what we were on and that explains our having to plan our financial budget. The cost of having another person in the house was negligible really.

Within the same interview, this statement from the Alpine family provides a variation of awareness of financial impact:

We had saved up a lot of things we talked about doing for a long time to do during this period. So it was an expensive six weeks for the family. I think it comes down to the family's ability and desire to pay. If my daughter was over in Germany I would like someone to look after her that way. Some of these kids save up for 12 months to come and that's what worried me the most... that she was enjoying herself. I didn't want her to come all this way to have a horrible time. Financially though it was just draining.

The categories for "the cost was negligible" (C1) and "financially it was draining" (C3) can be viewed in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>REFERENTIAL ASPECT</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL ASPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Host family investment was minimal.</td>
<td>Focused on basic for survival such as food. Variation brought about different types of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Host family investment is too large.</td>
<td>Focused on extracurricular activities. Variation brought about by number and type of activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were instances of participants' awareness of variation in the experience of host family investment and a resultant phenomenographic illumination. For example, for those novice host families who tried to rationalise and understand the impact of their massive
financial commitment -"we spent thousands of dollars" and "all we got for it was 'all right'", there emerged as an understanding - "I don't know if other parents had been previous hosts or not or whether they just said this is how we live and this is how you fit in". Such is the dilemma and discernment for the host family.

As in the previous example, the critical aspects of the conception have been depicted as a way of experiencing something in terms of critical aspects of the phenomenon in question and discerned and focused upon simultaneously (Marton & Pang, 1999:2). The component of Host Family Investment has been explored to describe qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon as well as to account for the particular ways of experiencing the phenomenon. Using this model to provide an ontological status to Synergy / Host Family Investment, then a theory of awareness in the host family experience can be presented.

*Investment in the hosting experience is inter-dependent of the perceptions of financial impact upon the host family system.*

The fifth variation in experience for consideration came from the component of the conception of Synergy / Learning in the Host family Experience. A number of ways of interpreting learning were identified in terms of the content of learning. For some, learning content constituted any or all aspects of life experience while for other host families, a limited view of learning and learning content was expressed.

For example, the Ives family identified communication skills and social interaction as an aspect of learning.

They both watched television together and had that interest in common plus she and Antony shared a similar sense of humour so I was pleased when I saw them keeping good company and I was happy that Antony was able to relate adequately with a 16 year old girl who found it possible to have a sensible conversation with him.
In this example, the Alpine family felt that little learning occurred as it was not in the formal setting of the classroom. Social interaction, according to the Alpine family, was not defined as an aspect of learning.

If the German girls didn't want to go to classes they didn't have to and so they spent a lot of time outside together just chatting, which I suppose is OK because they are not over here to learn but just to experience life but I think if they are just sitting out in a playing field chatting, it is a waste of their time when they could be doing something else.

These quotations show variation and two different ways of experiencing the same phenomena. The categories for "I was pleased when I saw them keeping good company" (D1) and "Sitting out in a playing field chatting, it is a waste of their time" (D4) can be viewed in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>REFERENTIAL ASPECT</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL ASPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Learning is everywhere.</td>
<td>Focused on opportunities for learning through communication. Variation brought about seeing things in a new way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Learning requires formal instruction.</td>
<td>Focused on context of learning situation. Variation brought about by construction of learning environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In category D1, the family focused on opportunities for learning that included communication skills, social interaction and seeing things in a new way (young son interacting with older exchange student). In category D4, the family did not recognise social interaction outside the classroom as an aspect of learning for personal change. The critical aspect of experiencing learning in the hosting event was the variation in perceptions of learning within structured and unstructured learning environments.
Again, as in previous section, critical aspects of the component of Learning in the Hosting Experience have been identified and shown to describe qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon as well as account for the particular ways of experiencing the phenomenon. Depicting a way of experiencing something in terms of critical aspects of the phenomenon in question, discerned and focused upon simultaneously gives an ontological status to the conception (Marton & Pang, 1999:2). A theory of awareness in the host family experience concerning learning becomes:

*Learning in the experience of hosting is inter-dependent with the host family perceptions of learning content.*
Chapter 7

Discussion and Contribution of Results from a Phenomenographic Perspective

Synergy and the Phenomenon of Hosting

The phenomenon of hosting has been presented in terms of the conception of Synergy and its spectrum of categories. Synergy refers to the notion of something being optimally effective (R. Buckminster Fuller, 1981) and is the principle whereby the behaviour of a whole system is greater than the sum of its parts, a result not predictable from an examination of the individual parts. The analogy of Synergy has been used in the current research to suggest that when the host family is optimally effective, then they are experiencing the value of Synergy.

Figure 11: The hosting phenomenon and the spectrum of the conception of Synergy.
The hosting experience has been described in terms of components of the conception of Synergy. The categories describing Synergy and the host families' conceptions of learning in the hosting experience presented above provide new insights into the phenomenon of learning in the context of extra curricular host family activity.

What has been identified by this study is the host family dilemma about the nature of their role, commitment to and investment in the hosting experience together with the resolve or lessons learned from a reflexive perception of it. Considerations of the conception of Synergy in intercultural exchanges and the matching of participant expectations are addressed by the first component of Synergy of fit between participants. The host family dilemma is in part due to a lack of any prior hosting experience or substantial hosting (longer than the four days type) from which to ascertain their role in the ongoing exchange event. The dilemma is strongly represented by the second and third components: Synergy / Ownership of the Responsibility of the Experience and Synergy / Host Family Investment. In the final category of Synergy / Learning in the Hosting Experience, there are insights into the nature of learning as well as the participants' experiential resolve that feature aspects of phenomenographic illumination. The nature and content of learning in the intercultural experience of a hosting event has also been mapped according to content analysis strategies. Insight has been provided into the particular qualities of learning content that are related to the nature and type of the hosting experience that secondary schools offer.

Reasons for the emergence of the hosting dilemma and resolve within the conception of Synergy, and the congruence of the categories within the related literature already examined, are presented below. One of the strengths of the using a phenomenographic approach has been clearly shown since examples of variations in meaning have been captured that from a purely empirical methodological perspective would remain hidden.
The first component of Synergy / Fit between Participants presented the variation in meaning in an order that is traditionally presented in the phenomenographic context as logical and hierarchical:

Synergy of fit → accommodation → disregard (lack of Synergy)

In the first category (A1), 'Synergy of fit' between participants refers to a match or mutual focus in terms of realisation of objectives for the hosting/exchange event. Harmony and friendship within a same values system were demonstrated. Participants were cognizant of this Synergy and were often grateful even felt blessed by such a good match. Although this match was arranged through varying strains of selection, there was nevertheless a sense of good fortune – luck of the draw or "comes down to a lottery".

When Synergy of fit was not complete or total, the second category (A2), the perception of differences being identified, acknowledged and accommodated, was understood. It was the overall good or success of the hosting experience that was paramount. A feature of this category was the noting of differences the qualification of this with "but I didn’t mind" or "I was used to that". This category of the conception of Synergy was the most commonly understood in this study by the experience of participants.

When Synergy of fit or accommodation was not understood as the experience of participants, a lack of Synergy was known. This is the third category (A3) for the qualitatively different ways of understanding Synergy of fit. Significant differences in this category were not accommodated. In some cases both the host family and the exchange student discontinued active behaviour to restore the host family climate (dualistic) or, the host family continued trying to rectify the situation but their actions were not met with positive change from the exchange student (non-dualistic).
A feature of this outcome space of Synergy of fit between participants, was that in some cases participants moved between the categories over the temporal period of the hosting. For example, the Eastern family understood the Synergy of fit with their host student throughout the exchange "she could have stayed with us forever... she ended up being like a second daughter" while the Johnson family had initial expectations to show hospitality and the Australian culture experience, but had to check that desire in view of their hosted student's reactions "she was quite prepared to divorce herself from the rest of the family and move upstairs into the bedroom". Thus, in this case there was a change in Synergy of fit over time.

As observed, there was a change of understanding for families concerning Synergy of fit over time, or context, and host family perceptions of fit moved to some degree within the outcome space of this conception, even 'freely back and forth'. The implication of the movement between the categories of Synergy of fit for the host family is a confusion of the logical hierarchical order that a traditional phenomenographic analysis provides. An alternative to the logical hierarchical order is therefore suggested and a spectrum of experience of categories of the conception of Synergy of fit is presented. A spectrum of qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon rather than a hierarchy of experience, provides for the apparent degrees of Synergy or the proximity to Synergy that were understood.
Figure 12: The spectrum of Synergy of fit as a component of the phenomenon of hosting.

Developmental phenomenography (Bowden 1994) has been described as an approach that makes use of understanding for change such as in an experiential context. Hasselgren (1996) has described how developmental phenomenography allows people to change the way their world operates. In the host family situation, the use of phenomenographic research methodology has demonstrated the learning potential that participation in phenomenographic interviews affords. While the research has intrinsic value, the research objectives and the knowledge gained about the phenomenon of hosting are not the sole outcomes since, changes do occur in the host family research participants.

The literature on student exchanges describes the duration of the event in terms of periods of adjustment and the U curve hypotheses (Lysgaard, 1955; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Kenyon & Amrapala, 1993; Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima, 1998). Other critical descriptors include persistence and tolerance for ambiguity (Brislin & Pedersen 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Cushman 1987; Cooley, Beaird & Ayres, 1994). These are the operational factors in the exchange event. What is illuminated by phenomenography in the emergent
categories of the conception of Synergy in this study, however, is that from an empirical stance, the initial expectations of host families prior to the hosting were for good fit or Synergy with adjustment factors being assimilated. Beyond an empirical perspective, the learning experience of the hosting event and the host family cognition of their experience has identified a qualitative variation of meaning and different operational structures. Lack of Synergy did not affect participants equally as for some such as the Klein family, it was conceded "I don't think we failed her I think she failed herself". That a lack of Synergy did not affect participants equally provides a link with aspects of attribution theory and self-concept in the context of the experience of hosting since having an awareness of one's self and others occurred. Synergy of fit was absent in the Klein's experience and was not recognised as desirable or appropriate even though there may have been prior expectations of some degree of mutual perception. For others, there was continued effort made actively within the limitations of the situation and efforts to retain the family system within the host family. For some such as the Johnson family, this realisation of futility was recognised in reflection - "we would have been prepared to do whatever she wanted to do... I don't think she was here to get everything she could out of the opportunity".

The conception of Synergy of fit illuminated participants' understanding of self-attributes and predispositional factors and their 'knowing' how to create or maintain Synergy. The Eastern family perceived that they "were blessed, but... not insular either. [They] made her feel very comfortable" and similarly the Davids family stated that they "had a Japanese background so we knew what to do". Grove and Hallowell (1999) listed the personal qualities that are considered highly desirable for cross-cultural success. Included were empathy, tolerance, flexibility, initiative, open mindedness, social ability and positive self-image. Sekaran (1986) also noted self image as an important factor in surmounting negative life experiences and said that those who view themselves in a positive way tended to observe life
events more positively and report higher life satisfaction. In this way, the Eastern and Davids host families both perceived that they had a controlling part in the success of their hosting experiences expressed through confident and positive descriptions. Another factor that was identified in the category of lack of Synergy of fit resulted from the host family desire and expectation that the exchange student would fit in with them and be like them. Blanchard (1993:108) noted that some attitudes to intercultural interaction and the development of knowledge, skills and awareness fail in their objectives since sojourners "consciously or unconsciously demand the new culture adjust to them". In the experience of hosting, there were examples where the lack of Synergy of fit was due in part to the host family demanding the exchange student be like them. Statements relating to the exchange student's habit of retiring to her bedroom in order to write letters and take time out were described as "[her behaviour] wasn't compatible with our lifestyle" and reflected the host family lack of willingness to accommodate the exchange student's way of relaxing in their home. Other examples demonstrated the attitude of not being willing to change or accommodate the exchange student. There was the perception that she "should have been prepared for the Australian way of life".

The second component of the conception of Synergy was ownership of the experience and this represents a part of the host family dilemma. The nature of understanding is labelled a 'dilemma' because the role and commitment of the host family to the hosting event is ambiguous. In this study host family children were relatively young, as were the exchange students. Until recently, most hosting situations, from a global perspective, involved tertiary students 18 years plus. In this study, as with current trends, the range in ages for hosted students was 14 - 17 years of age. A host family may provide a bed and lodgings for their guest but there are questions as to what is required after that. Degrees of action, emotion and responsibility (loco parentis) for someone else's child were questioned as to how much was
deemed to be reasonable or acceptable. Other questions were concerned with whether hosting success or failure equated with the hosted students' response to their new environment. These were the perceptions of some host families.

In the categories of Ownership of the Experience, the role of previous hosting experience was found to be an influencing factor. The categories of description can be viewed in a traditional phenomenographic way that uses a hierarchical perspective for the host families' perception of provision for the hosted student:

\[
\text{home} \rightarrow \text{lodgings} \rightarrow \text{ultra responsibility} \rightarrow \text{deferred responsibility}
\]

In the first category (B1) of this component, a friendly manageable home environment was the experience. There were opportunities presented for outings and activities. The host family felt entirely comfortable in this familial role and had a mature understanding of their place in the hosting regardless of the exchange student's degree of participation. This understanding was found in families who had previous hosting experience and was the understanding throughout the duration of the exchange (six weeks - eight weeks).

In the second category (B2), participants continued with their usual lifestyle and the hosted student was merely accommodated within the household. In this category were the participants who had responded to the hosting opportunity as providers with a spare bedroom, able to 'help' the school as in a billeting situation — "that was really just a visit so it wasn't a problem. We have a really full week with sport and everything... you just can't give them the attention". These families were those for whom the hosting event was of very short duration (four days - two weeks).

In the next category (B3) where the host family understood that they were responsible for more than the student's safety and well being, members of the family joined an emotional
roller coaster ride. There were reports of being swung to and fro due to being dependent on the reactive moods of the exchange student – "And that's what worried me the most... that she was enjoying herself". Other feelings were aroused also in situations where host families were unable to meet the desires of the student regardless of the reaction of the guest – "I was so embarrassed because we couldn't use her video but we couldn't explain that our system was Beta. I'm sure she thought we were peculiar". The participants who experienced this understanding were novice host families in longer exchange events (eight weeks - twelve weeks) with expectations formed without prior experience of hosting overseas students. In this way the host family dilemma was directly related to a lack of previous hosting experience and a subsequent gap in that type of experiential learning base.

In Synergy and ownership of the experience, some host families understood more than one category of experience. For example, the Johnson family had expressed their intentions to provide their exchange student with many opportunities for special outings. The Johnson family considered the provision of opportunities as their responsibility and commitment to the hosting process. They could not however fulfil this purpose since the exchange student did not participate in any special activities. By default, the Johnson family came to understand their role as being a provider of safe lodgings although over the duration of the hosting event they "never stopped trying to involve her in family activities". The Johnsons knew a spectrum of qualitatively different ways of experiencing Synergy of ownership and responsibility in their hosting event. Their perceptions of the experience were not of their intention nor their expectation. The dilemma experienced by the Johnson family was that despite the lack of positive reaction or engagement from their host student, their energy continued to be focused into encouraging her participation.

Further to this conception was the deferral of responsibility to the education process as agent or provider. When situations arose that were regarded by some host families as being
too difficult, there was the perception of responsibilities that they could not and would not accept. Statements such as "this was a responsibility we could do without" and "I thought the education process would make these sorts of decisions not us" were made. In category B4, host families rarely consulted the education agent for intervention. The anomaly of being concerned, overburdened and seeking to shift responsibility elsewhere but failing to act, was understood in terms of obligation and commitment to the hosting event as well as recognition of the short remaining duration of the hosting period. The result of not reporting the situation to the education authority meant that host families would "grin and bear it" while "counting the days" until life returned to normal - "I just wanted my daughter back and not having to worry why this girl was not enjoying herself".

The understanding of the conception of Synergy for the component of ownership and responsibility was found to comprise a spectrum of experience for host families. Movement between categories of understanding and the simultaneous discernment of aspects has been demonstrated to exist in a spectrum rather than an hierarchical design. The suggestion is made for an alternate model for Synergy of ownership and responsibility that identifies a spectrum of experience. A spectrum provides for degrees of Synergy or proximity to Synergy within the outcome space of this component of the conception.

![Diagram of Synergy, Hosting, Ownership, Investment, and Learning]

Figure 13: The spectrum of Synergy of ownership and responsibility.
Phenomenography has been useful in providing insight into the existence of the host family dilemma, not just its existence but also the passion and emotional investment that some host families experienced. The third component of the conception of Synergy represents another dilemma for the host family. It is concerned with host family physical investment and financial commitment to the hosting experience. Again there is a continuum of understanding of financial impact represented by the outcome space of this conception:

negligible impact —► reasonable outlay —► burden —► dissatisfaction

The host family experience in category C1 was of being financially unburdened by the additional hosted member of the family. When the financial impact was negligible or the family did not care about the financial outlay, however, it was found that the category was manifested in a twofold way. For some families the sum total in dollars invested was actually small or else any financial outlay irrespective of total was considered minimal due to the financial status of the host family. In one instance, the Alpine family found their financial situation considerably altered when the father was retrenched during the hosting period and several weeks lapsed before a replacement position was secured. In this instance however, the perception was still of minimal financial outlay since "the cost of one extra mouth to feed these days is negligible really".

For several families, the experience was shown by category C2 where the hosted student was cared for just as another sibling. In this category, the financial outlay was reasonable and expected. For these families a bit of financial 'stretching' was evident but not inappropriate.

In category C3 the financial investment was understood as an obligation to extend their normal lifestyle in order to provide a maximum opportunity. Some families operated
within this understanding having "saved up outings to do with the exchange student" and preparing for the additional financial involvement. In category C4, there was added financial loading plus an evaluated measure of dissatisfaction/satisfaction related to the perceived quality of the experience. For some host families the experience was understood in terms of disappointment and lack of value for money. Within this category there was phenomenographic illumination for those families trying to rationalise and understand the impact and value of their massive financial commitment: "we spent thousands of dollars" and "all we got for it was 'all right'". For the Beatty family the interview continued to revolve around this category until there was an understanding: "I don't know if other parents had been previous hosts or not or whether they just said this is how we live and this is how you fit in". Such is the dilemma for the host family. The extent and appropriateness of financial outlay was an aspect of their desires and objectives for the hosting experience -"we wanted to give her the maximum opportunity to spend her own money on her holiday and exposure to Australia and so we decided to pay the majority of expenses".

In the categories of financial investment there was a range of qualitatively different ways of experiencing the conception of Synergy and participants did move back and forth between categories due to contextual and temporal changes. In this way, a spectrum of experience rather than a hierarchy emerged from the phenomenographic enquiry. In the spectrum of understanding, degrees of Synergy or proximity to Synergy are identified.
The fourth component of the conception of Synergy, Learning in the Hosting Experience, involves host family expectations for learning and categories of learning experiences. It is within the fourth component of the conception of Synergy that the family 'resolve' or evaluative understanding has emerged. The phenomenographic interview was the tool by which host families came to reflect, discuss and reach levels of understanding about their hosting experience as well as the nature of learning and learning content. There is a measure of resolve to the host family dilemma of components B and C. From an experiential perspective, the categories of learning can be viewed in an ordered way using traditional phenomenographic presentation. The order would usually be logical and hierarchical:

life experiences ➡ new experiences ➡ repeat experience ➡ data & information

In category D1 life experiences provide a learning opportunity and participants understood learning as occurring by any number of degrees in any life experience. Learning experiences could be heightened by taking advantage of any available opportunity to learn, as well as acknowledging the learning afforded by the ordinary daily routine. There was an attitude of
actively seeking to learn for all of life, learning to understand reality. In the learning conception responsiveness to change, acceptance of diversity, enhanced social skills and love of learning are just some of the aspects in this multi-faceted perspective of learning. Statements such as - "I was happy that Antony was able to relate adequately with a 16 year old girl who found it possible to have a sensible conversation with him" demonstrate the perception of learning occurring through social interchange. The social interchange was in an intercultural context. Similarly, "she talked about Germany and life at home and that sort of thing. It certainly was an educational experience". Learning in this context is intercultural in nature, is ongoing, lifelong and has constructivist aspects. For some host families there was the identification of a type of reversal of personal interchange situation. Participants reported that they witnessed the adaptation or "blossoming" of their hosted daughter as she became adjusted or comfortably "at home" with the host family - "she was like a chrysalis coming out of her shell, she really blossomed during the time she was with us".

In the D2 and D3 categories, a new experience or a repeat experience provided a learning opportunity and participants understood that learning had occurred experientially and often in unexpected ways. There was the new experience of an additional member in the family and the ways in which the family accommodated the new member sometimes taking advantage of the situation; discovering anomalies and similarities in preconceived cultural stereotypes and also using coping strategies to cross language barriers and difficulties. Other unexpected aspects of learning illuminated by the phenomenographic style interview included the unexpected enjoyment and pride in learning about Australian culture during visits or repeat visits to tourist sites. Similarly, an interesting feature was associated with adult lifelong learning when participants expressed a new desire to learn a foreign language or to visit a particular country.
In the last category of learning (D4), the absorption of new data, facts and figures was pertinent and learning was only perceived to have occurred within that context. Host families expressed the desire to gain that type of understanding throughout the hosting experience and classified the success of the exchange according to the level of new information "that was one of the times she was really learning; that's what she came here to do". It was perceived that learning did not occur when "the German girls spent a lot of time out there chatting which I suppose is OK because they were not out here to learn but just to experience life".

The qualitatively different ways of understanding learning in the experience of hosting can be presented in a spectrum that forms the outcome space for this component of the conception of Synergy. An alternate view of the outcome space of learning resists the hierarchical presentation of traditional phenomenography and provides for the spectrum of experience that was understood by host family participants in the experience of hosting. There is a spectrum of learning in the experience of hosting as presented in the model below.

![Figure 15: A spectrum of learning in the conception of Synergy.](image)

The presentation of a spectrum of experience rather than a hierarchy of qualitatively different ways of understanding phenomena, is an application of phenomenography that is not
only innovative but is able to provide a thorough mapping of the experience of hosting. The provision of a spectrum of experience describes not only the space of variation of the phenomenon of hosting but also incorporates the changes in perceptions of understanding over time. The current investigation has been able to make a contribution to the phenomenographic approach and to demonstrate how it can be usefully applied to understanding in an intercultural setting.

In a phenomenographic analysis interest is focused on understanding the qualitatively different ways of experiencing a particular phenomenon and this statement is well understood in the literature of phenomenography. The resultant outcome space represents a mapping of the qualitatively different ways the phenomenon is understood and within the outcome space, variations in understanding are presented in a logical hierarchical order.

To an extent, the presence of a hierarchy may sort surface and deep approaches to understanding, or simple to advanced reasonings. There are implications and methodological questions here concerning individuals who too are necessarily sorted accordingly as deep or surface respondents. Consequently, concern has been expressed about the hierarchical nature of phenomenographic analysis in terms of value judgements about learners' experiences of learning (Trigwell, 1995; Webb, 1997; Claesson, 1999). Marton and Booth (1997) and others however, have stated that the hierarchical order is not based upon a value judgement or a priori analysis but is empirically grounded (Ekeblad, 1997; Entwistle, 1997). Marton and Booth (1997) however, identify that since hierarchically ordered value judgements cannot be empirically grounded, the presentation of categories in a hierarchical order can be argued. The argument about what constitutes hierarchically better awareness and discernment of objects can claim objectivity when particular ways of understanding something are in closer proximity to "the place we are heading for" (Marton & Booth, 1997:107). It is when particular ways of understanding something reflect greater simultaneity of discernment and
awareness then an objective ordering can be presented. The researcher's understanding of the critically discerned aspects of a way of experiencing something is what constitutes the descriptions of variation.

For the current investigation concerning the phenomenon of hosting, a spectrum of experience rather than a hierarchical order of experience is now examined to more adequately map the phenomenon. Moving from a hierarchy toward a spectrum of variation within the conception of Synergy, it is argued, brings an understanding of the experience of hosting closer to the previously mentioned "place we are heading". The spectrum approach to the outcome space of the phenomenon of hosting can be illustrated by revisiting the interview data snapshots of host family experiences. For example, some participants, such as the Alpine family, experienced "negligible" as well as "financially draining" aspects of Synergy and investment in their hosting event. In another example, the Davids family perceived that they did not alter their lifestyle during the hosting event and did "nothing special for her at all". Yet, the mother also reported that she had to put in longer hours to get the housework done since she could not do "any of the household things while holding a conversation". In the conception of Synergy and fit, the Davids family demonstrated that they perceived an understanding of a range of experience. The existence of a range of experience has already been examined and described in terms of structural and referential aspects that are context related. Within the categories of the conception of Synergy, therefore, the participant host families not only moved 'freely back and forth' but collectively there was within the outcome space a range of critical aspects. Related to the nature of the critical aspects is the number of these that individuals or host family groups discern simultaneously. The nature of learning is therefore related to the number of simultaneously discerned critical aspects. In the examples given, awareness was found to be context bound so that different aspects were discerned variously rather than simultaneously.
The suggestion is made that when something in the phenomenon of hosting was experienced and when the constituent aspects were discerned simultaneously in peoples' awareness then the notion of the "place we are heading" (Marton & Booth, 1997:107) would be directed towards an understanding of Synergy. The experience of hosting as a phenomenon, is understood and experienced in qualitatively different degrees of the conception of Synergy that is categorised according to the components of fit, investment, responsibility and learning. Since different critical aspects may be discerned simultaneously in a person's awareness, more simultaneously discerned aspects of awareness provide an empirically based proximity to Synergy than less simultaneously discerned critical aspects.

For the host family experience of the phenomenon of hosting, different ways of understanding critical aspects were identified that did not necessarily constitute better awareness, but different awareness that had equal parity. An example of different awareness, in which neither example is necessarily higher, is found in the category of Synergy of responsibility using the following Hobb's family snapshot. The Hobbs family was aware that their exchange student had been cutting classes. They did not consider this issue to be their responsibility and they did not contact the school and try to rectify the situation. They understood their role as not extending beyond care for the exchange student in their home.

We found out that she was not behaving how you'd normally expect at school. She would sit outside lessons and not go to class... I just thought I'll treat her as a mature person... this is how she behaves... if this is what she wants to get out of it, that's it.

For the Hobbs family, Synergy of responsibility was deferred to the education process and they understood their role accordingly. For the Beatty family, their understanding of the role towards the exchange student and Synergy of responsibility was different and substantially extended. The Beatty family was active, even zealous, in ensuring a maximum
educational learning experience for the exchange student. As hosts, the Beatty family aimed to make use of every possible opportunity for learning that sometimes was despite the interests and desires of the exchange student. They understood their role as an extended obligation of duty.

We felt responsible that we should provide for her every opportunity as we possibly could. We worked out a program of activities before she came. We wanted to fit in as much that she wanted to really see. We wanted her to speak English because that's what she came here to do.

From these examples that form part of the outcome space of Synergy and the categories of responsibility in the hosting experience, the critical aspects that have been discerned are the deferring or ignoring of responsibility as opposed to assuming a role of zealous responsibility. These critical aspects could be ordered according to a subjective value based judgement that would present them in an hierarchical order. For the hierarchical order to be logically based, as in traditional phenomenography, there are further complications that could not be empirically justified. How would a logical ordering of the critical aspects be justified since the Hobb's host daughter was able to exist according to her desires while the Beatty's host daughter was coerced into activities against her wishes? Alternatively, the Hobb's host daughter wasted her educational opportunity while the Beatty family ensured some educational exposure for their host daughter. The use of a spectrum of critical aspects therefore, is put up as an alternative model. A spectrum provides for variations in discernment and simultaneous awareness by positioning the outcome space of the experience of hosting within proximity of the conception of Synergy. The use of a spectrum of understanding rather than a logically ordered hierarchy of understanding in the current investigation has been demonstrated and discussed and as such, provides a new application of the phenomenographic approach.
Chapter 8

Major Themes General Discussion

Contribution of the Analysis to the Existing Literature

An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people - it takes away the heat and fever; and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery. [Keats: Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818].

In this section the contribution of this investigation will be presented in a discussion of the major themes relating to the experience of hosting. Participation in a hosting event exists as an extra curricular option that is taken up by families as part of their children's education. This research has been concerned with identifying factors for best practice so that ongoing participation by families, organisers and school communities can maximise the educational opportunity of a hosting event. In the current research, previously unidentified or undervalued components of the experience of hosting have been highlighted and specific areas of concern together with critical implications for future directions have been targeted.

The host family system.

A major premise of the current research stated that the family participants in the hosting event were operating in a 'new' family system according to systems theory that was further complicated due to an intercultural context. The current research has been able to demonstrate the application of family systems theory to the host family situation. In a family systems framework, the family is made up of a complex structure of subsystems of interdependent
individuals. In a family and in the host family, there will be a shared sense of history, degrees of emotional bonding and strategies towards goals and objectives for individuals as well as the whole (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Hess & Handel, 1985; Anderson & Sabatelli, 1995; Bartle, 1995). Family systems theory also includes processes that operate in different ways according to environmental input, that will be filtered, processed or transformed into output in a basic systems structure:

![Operation of general systems theory for input and output](image)

*Figure 16: Operation of general systems theory for input and output.*

Families do not retain the same membership over time and so the inclusion of an additional member such as a host student will, according to Hall and Fagan (1956), alter the number of "objects" that make up the family system. What is recognised by family systems theory is the enormous impact that any addition or subtraction to the number of "objects" in a family will have upon the structure of family interaction. For any host family involved in the current research, the alteration to the number of reciprocal relationships due to the addition of the exchange student has been expressed as a formula (Broderick & Smith, 1979) \( R = M (M-1)/2 \) where \( R \) = reciprocal relationships and \( M \) = number of members. According to the formula therefore, in the current research even the smallest host family in the population of this research (\( n = 4 \)) had a significant increase in reciprocal relationships that would be apparent in day to day living for the duration of the hosting event.
Interest in family systems has also targeted the roles of different members of the family such as instrumental leader/follower, expressive leader/follower (Parsons & Bales, 1955). The nature of interaction according to these aspects has not been investigated in this research since the inquiry was about the phenomenon of hosting, but what has emerged is the role of inputs and stressors onto open and closed family systems. The idea of a continua for openness and closedness (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Bartle, 1995) has implications for the host family in the intercultural context since the concepts describe the permeability of a family boundary and the level of exchange with the outside environment. In the host family situation, the outside environment (the exchange student) is brought inside as input, for a period of time that is dependent upon the duration of the hosting event. The input of the additional family member in the current research was resolved in two ways that are related to systems theory. The input could be transformed into the family itself and this was expressed as degrees of the conception of Synergy of fit. The input was seen as beneficial to the pursuit of system goals (Broderick & Smith, 1979) and consequently the exchange student was incorporated. To use family systems terminology, when there was a lack of Synergy of fit, the additional member who was seen as potentially hostile to system goals and policies, was eventually filtered out or expelled at the conclusion of the hosting event. For some host families, the inclusion of an additional family member became a recurrent stressor due to the lack of Synergy of fit experienced between the family and the exchange student. The expression of the stressor was made in statements such as "I just wanted my life back" or "I could not relax until the plane took off". In these examples the stressor was 'expelled' from the family system because the hosting event came to its conclusion and the exchange student was removed from the family system.

Interest in family system rules (Jackson, 1967; Von Bertalanffy, 1975; Anderson & Sabatelli, 1995; Bartle, 1995) has described the nature of family responses to various stressors
and situations in systems adaptability that have been demonstrated in the host family experience. According to systems adaptability, when a stressor is introduced into the family system, stress informs the system whether established family interactional patterns will necessitate alteration. A reorganisation of strategies will occur when some critical stress threshold is exceeded. The reorganisation that follows results in a better fit known as family system adaptability. In the current research, examples of stressors that were inconsistent with family rules were identified in the lack of Synergy of fit. The family response to the stressors or attempts to filter them were seen in the repeated attempts made to interest the exchange student in family outings or make best use of the cross-cultural activity. Statements such as "she should be speaking in English, that's what she came to do" or "we would have done anything she wanted but she didn't want to participate" indicate attempts that were made by the host family whole group to filter stressors. The whole group response was towards situations created by the individual in the family that were not in accord with family goals. A better fit, due to family system adaptability, was demonstrated by Synergy of fit and accommodation of differences. When the stressor situation proceeded to breakdown there was a lack of fit and host family member isolation.

The relationship between Synergy of fit and the family system characteristics of bonding, flexibility and family stability has been identified by the current research. For the first time a link has been demonstrated between the host family and family systems theory. Bonding in family systems theory is the term used to describe the extent to which a family feels emotionally close and spends time together. In the host family situation Synergy of fit was demonstrated by families who regarded the hosted student the same as their own daughter. In Synergy of fit the exchange student was considered as a member of the family system. A lack of fit was also known by some families, in particular, those where the exchange student refused to converse in English or even 'divorced herself' from the interests
of the family group. Flexibility in family systems theory refers to the families’ perception of
being able to adapt during predictable and unpredictable changes. In the host family
experience, degrees of flexibility were a recurrent theme that also demonstrated by Synergy of
fit. Synergy of fit and flexibility was demonstrated through the accommodation of differences
and the willingness to negotiate a mutually acceptable solution when these arose. For some
families however, there was a rigidity that would not accommodate differences or was unable
to reconcile them. Family stability is a concept in systems theory that refers to processes of
adaptation in the daily use of time and the celebration of special events. The rhythmic patterns
of family interaction have been described and these were identifiable in the host families in
the current research (Broderick, 1990; Rigazio-DiGilio, 1993; Henry, 1994; Larson, 1995).
For example, perceptions of family stability were threatened in the hosting experience,
resulting in a lack of Synergy of fit when the exchange student isolated herself, or locked
herself away in the bedroom for hours at a time. Family interactions were stultified whereas
when the student fitted in with everything and expressed interest in whatever the family was
doing, then family stability was confirmed and proximity to Synergy of fit occurred.

Other applications of family systems theory can be made to the host family in an
intercultural context that creates an extension of the application of a family systems
framework. For example, in a general systems approach to the family, stressors may be
responded to as a whole group basis, because family goals are shared or else there may be
conflict and hostility (Broderick & Smith, 1979). In the current investigation, examples of
conflict between the family and the exchange student were known in the breakdown of
communication, the lack of willingness to engage in family activities and the deficit of verbal
appreciation. According to systems theory the family reaction will be in view of the degree of
provocation and the cost of response. A link is made here with knowledge from intercultural
investigation wherein King (1981) identified the 'blame the victim' strategy that occurs when
host families and exchange students do not manage a good match. 'Blame the victim' in intercultural literature refers to the exchange student who is experiencing difficulties during the exchange (King, 1981). Examples in the experience of hosting were found when families questioned the selected choice of exchange student in view of failed expectations for engagement in the hosting experience. There was a 'blame the victim' strategy but also a blame the selection process response.

The use of content analysis in this research was able to show the importance the host family placed upon the selection process that brought the exchange student to them. In the content analysis whole document phase, that described the perceptions of learning in the experience of hosting, the procedural aspects of the selection process were identified as critical to the success of the hosting event. Although particular criteria for selecting exchange students were identified by the host families, among the concepts of that category of hosting, remained the 'lottery of fit' that suggested that regardless of selection, the potential for a good match was still unpredictable. In one instance, a host family reported their reticence about hosting again as they believed it would impossible to have such a good match in a repeat experience. Other host families reported that they would consider another hosting event as the match with a new student could only be an improvement upon that in their current experience.

Added to the findings of selection criteria in this investigation was the acknowledgement by host families that their exchange student had entered into the exchange program with an agenda that did not match their own. For example, one exchange parent reported to the host mother that the reason for participation in the program was for her daughter to engage in a trial of single sexed schooling in the city in which the family intended to relocate sometime in the future. Another exchange student reported the desire to get away from her study pressures in her own country and to have a term off for relaxation. This same
student encouraged a friend to join her in the exchange since a partnership was a school prerequisite. The friend did join the exchange program and during her time in Australia, boasted that her only motivation was to shop. The process by which these students were selected for the exchange program is not known. While this research did not set out to investigate exchange student motivation to enter into an exchange experience, the implications for the unsuspecting host family are highlighted. The reported experiences of the host families indicate that a chasm may exist between some exchange students' motivation for participation and their own. The 'victim' in these examples, therefore, is not the exchange student but rather the host family. What is identified by this research, however, is that once the host family has been enacted, through the matching of exchange student and host nationals, family systems theory can be used to interpret and understand many aspects of the experience of hosting and to predict the mechanisms by which their interactions will follow.

Since knowledge has been extended about the family system in the experience of hosting, the current research has made a contribution to the nature of family systems. The advantages for using a general systems approach to highlight the host family experience in an intercultural context, not previously identified, has been demonstrated by this investigation.

**Expectations for a hosting event and the outcomes.**

The investigation into the experience of hosting has shown that there are many lessons to be learned and matters of advice to present to potential participants if they are to make informed choices and positive ongoing decisions throughout their cross-cultural experience. As a consequence of the current research, a reevaluation of expectancy theory and participant selection criteria is necessary. Implications of expectancy theory and selection criteria together with recommendations for future participation in hosting events will then be explained.
Each year there are many expectant participants desiring intercultural experiences through a variety of systems. The nature and type of participation for every event produces countless scenarios, many of which remain entirely undocumented. An evaluation however, of any experience will necessarily produce results of accompanying satisfaction and success or dissatisfaction and possible distress that bear relation to expectations. This research has used phenomenographic techniques and grounded theory to open the way for gaining realistic and critical insight into the many factors, predispositional triggers and influences that will affect host family participation and learning in an intercultural exchange event.

**Expectations: Success (met expectations) or Distress (unmet expectations)?**

Expectancy theory holds that what an individual anticipates has a direct bearing on what he or she experiences since an individual who holds positive expectations regarding a venture has ample reason to believe that their expectations will be fulfilled (Rohrlich, 1993). Families who desire participation in a hosting event have a range of expectations. The current research has shown that some host family expectations stem from their initial motivation for participation. There are expectations about the way that life will be during the hosting, and there are expectations for growth, gain and learning from the summation of the experience. Certainly there is the potential for positive growth although this is not a 'given'. Neither is there any guarantee for the host family, of hosting another individual with like aims or similar aspirations for a mutually satisfying intercultural experience. Why is this so and what can be done about it?

**Mutual motivation of all participants in a hosting event.**

Initial motivation for participation in an intercultural hosting event does not necessarily mimic the same motivation of the exchange student and yet the problems faced by the intercultural
sojourner do signal many previously undocumented, major problems faced by the participant host families in this research. Rather than looking for a new lifestyle in a foreign country, independence and a break from home, as maybe the objectives of the exchange student, the host family is looking for a reasonable degree of continuity of lifestyle and often a trial run of the exchange ideal as a prelude to a future exchange. In common, the host family and the exchange student share the aspects of potential language skill enhancement, a period of growth, some insight into a foreign culture and possible global networking through a broader friendship base. In secondary school exchange systems, the exchange student will leave her own family for a time to merge in with another in the host culture. The receiving host family, as the counterpart of the exchange program, is voluntarily entering into a period of alteration to the family norm while at the same time, anticipating a reasonable degree of continuation of lifestyle. Family systems theory has been applied to the new host family situation in which the individuals share a range of motivations and expectations for the duration of the hosting event. This research has shown that the altered family system, which temporarily includes the exchange student, undergoes an adaptation process that encompasses degrees of fit, responsibility, financial investment and learning. The adaptation process occurs in an environment of degrees of mutual motivation for communication, understanding selves and appreciation of intercultural activity. These aspects represent areas of expectation that will steer the course of interactions for each member of the family, to some degree, throughout the duration of the hosting event.

**Stereotyping and unmet expectations in a hosting event.**

With a disparate expectations base between the host family and the exchange student there is the certainty of a degree of match in expectations that will depend upon the suitability of those expectations for actual realisation. The possibility of "disconfirmed expectancies"
(Brislin et al., 1986) has been described in the case of exchange students (sojourners) and this study shows the very real associated let down experienced by host families also. McCaffery (1993:221) explained that for sojourners, positive or negative, unchecked or unexamined expectations are not only very damaging but will lead to the production of unhelpful stereotyping. The identification and formation of stereotypes has been a documented feature of intercultural exchanges of very short duration (Brislin, 1981; Grove, 1983). There is therefore, an area for concern since many of the secondary school hosting programs are of the very short exchange type and cover several days, weeks or months unlike the typical college study exchange that normally extends for one year. The message here however, is that although the stereotypical statements may indeed be right or wrong, stereotyping encourages a group or herd imaging and labelling rather than an acknowledgement of individual differences. Similarly, the stereotype has the potential to deliver undesirable or mixed messages about the nature of intercultural characteristics.

Stereotypes were expressed and identified in this study. Some of the stereotypical statements that were recorded were manifestations of broad categories that have been labelled 'benign stereotypes' (M. J. Bennett, 1993:31) since they are neither derogatory or virulent. The reported inferences to German people and 'the war' related to a misconception of attitudes and a preconception of a blanket approach to the dissemination of information. What participants recognised, however, was that their notion of 'not talking about the war' to German students was a misconception and that the students actually demonstrated much interest in learning about their history. One family was encouraged to reflect upon the misconception and to endeavour to reconcile their preconception with their experience. As provided for in phenomenographic interview technique, the participants reflected upon the statements and rationalised the viewpoint noting that there was a generation gap between the host parents and the adolescent exchange student. The generation gap plausibly leant a degree
of distance between the historic events. In this way, the exchange student felt removed from
the proximity of the war time events, felt no emotional role in them and instead had a
demonstrated curiosity and interest in learning about the events.

Other benign stereotypes were expressed concerning the immaturity of Japanese girls
when compared with Australian girls, German people being monosyllabic in their responses,
sixteen year old girls from New Zealand being incapable of cultural understanding and
Japanese girls liking paper stickers. How stereotypes are categorised will depend upon the
view of the perceiver and may be susceptible to context relationships. The suggestion is made
therefore, that the perceptions of host family participants were not virulent stereotypes but
rather rationalisations for observed behaviour. Stereotypes are generalisations of group
behaviours that are not helpful in raising cultural awareness and predispose people not to see
others as individuals (McCaffery, 1993). In the current research however, a paradox
concerning this definition of stereotyping is noted since the particular behaviours that were
observed and treated as stereotypes were actually describing the behaviours of individual
exchange students. LaBrack (1993) has noted how most stereotypes, such as those noted in
the current research, are actually simplistic and reductionistic, benign rather than virulent.

*Prior experience of hosting and the nature of expectations.*

Just as the production of stereotypes is a barrier to intercultural effectiveness for exchange
students, it is also a limiting factor to the effective learning of the participant host family.
There are implications here for host families who have participated in an earlier hosting
experience and those families who have not hosted previously. Novice host families do not
have a realistic expectations base upon which to form their desires or to make their
preparations. The current research demonstrated that novice host families have a particular set
of expectations for their participation that are different from families with previous hosting
experience. This study has shown through an examination of the conception of Synergy and the categories of the components of fit, responsibility, financial investment and learning, just where the differences in expectations lie. One of the strongest lessons of experiential learning, demonstrated by this research, comes from the host family being at the centre in decision making and then having to live with the natural outcomes of the consequences of their choices. Examples of choices made and the efficacy of outcomes were found in categories of the conception of Synergy and the qualitatively different ways in which the phenomenon of hosting was understood. The choice of making a large financial outlay, organising holiday plans in advance and assuming responsibility for the exchange student's happiness and wellbeing are examples of experiential learning elements with dilemmas of practice.

The implications of experiential learning for host family participation and the differences in expectations of host families, highlighted from a phenomenographic perspective, have not been addressed in previous research. In particular, the identification of qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon of hosting has highlighted the reflexive perceptions of host families for realistic expectations or those that are more likely to set up families for worthwhile participation. Within the categories of Synergy / fit between participants, the expectation for differences being identified, acknowledged and accommodated were expressed by families who were engaged in a repeat hosting. A prior experience of hosting led them to expect differences in their next experience but also gave them an experience base upon which to deal with those differences. Similarly, in the categories of Synergy / ownership of responsibility, host families with prior experience took up the role of providing a home and opportunities for extended family participation. There were loose plans of what might be available or offered to the exchange student rather than detailed programs of activities arranged well in advance of the hosting event. From the prior
experience of hosting, participants had avoided programs and schedules and instead had adopted a flexible perspective for activities and financial outlay that was more acceptable to their lifestyle. A clear difference between families without prior experience was shown between this category and the category of Synergy / host family investment. Those families without prior experience of hosting not only perceived they were responsible for the exchange student's well-being and safety that were emotionally controlled by perceptions of the student's satisfaction as well. Added to the concern for the satisfaction of the exchange student, was the notion that financial investment and time were intrinsic to giving the student the maximum intercultural experience. It was in this category of money and time, that host families expressed their great disappointment that their perceptions were of not receiving value for money for the investment of a hosting experience. "It literally cost us thousands" and "all we got for it was OK" were statements showing host family distress, frustration and disillusionment with their expectations for the hosting event.

Upon reflection and through phenomenographic interview technique, a statement from a novice host family participant presented a new base for which their future hosting involvement would operate: "I don't know if those other parents who didn't do as much as we did had been previous hosts or not or whether they just said this is how we live and this is how you fit in". From the experience of hosting these participants had noted a difference between their involvement with the exchange student and other families. Future participation in a hosting event for the host family in that example would suggest an adherence to usual lifestyle with a changed perception of financial and time commitment.

Trying to overcome the likelihood of problems due to failed expectations is not easily solved and has been considered the weak link in preparation for cross-cultural experiences. When pre-training is successful, however, the way is open for the realisation of participants' expectations and aspirations (LaBrack, 1993:243; McCaffery, 1993:219). J. M. Bennett
(1977) examined a solution to negative or disconfirmed expectations for the sojourner which could be viewed in terms of a fully anticipated difficult transition period that would in time lead to growth and intercultural effectiveness. Seen in this way, the host family also could view a problematic phase in their relationship with the exchange student from this standpoint and deal with the concurrent situation positively and effectively knowing that its deliverance guided the way to enrichment for all. Just as Paige and Martin (1983) warned that intercultural transitions are usually painful or difficult and training programs rather ineffective, for the host family who are not trained professionals and for whom prior experience is the greatest credential, the message is that "good intentions are not enough" (McCaffery, 1993:224) to ensure a worthwhile or successful hosting event.

The current research has made a contribution to host family participation in student exchange programs by identifying key expectations for involvement. Particular expectations for responsibility and financial commitment have been demonstrated to result in perceptions of satisfactory outcomes that are moderations of expectations expressed by novice hosting participants.

**Mismatched expectations and the host family dilemma.**

A mismatch of expectations or disconfirmed expectations is a frequent observation of those host families whose experience was significantly different from what they had hoped. A basic way of rationalising this dilemma is to consider the role and relevance of pre hosting expectations together with the impact and degree of match for success that the selection criteria has in the choice of exchange student for the hosting event. The potential exchange student will come under the inspection of the selection criteria system and it is problematic that students are selected by means of rigorous through to ad hoc approaches. The host family may be matched with a student who is mature and displays many creditable characteristics not
The least being ambassadorial qualities for promoting an intercultural interchange. The unmotivated, disinterested, immature student who has been entered into an exchange to give them time off school to 'find themselves' or even give their natural family a 'break' also may be accommodated by unknowing selection criteria and be matched with the well intentioned, motivated host family.

Other instances of mismatched expectations can be anticipated or seen by the host family as a transitional phase due to culture shock on the part of the adaptive exchange student. A failure to match expectations has also otherwise been called cognitive dissonance (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; J. M. Bennett, 1977; Grove & Torbiörn, 1993) but again in relation to the experience of sojourners in intercultural experiences. A model of expectancy-value was developed to consider sojourner expectations and adjustment (Weissman & Furnham, 1987; Martin & Rohrlich, 1991a). In its most basic form, this model has immediate application to the host family experience as outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preexperience</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Good Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Unfulfilled</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Poor Adjustment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the host family situation, the cultural adaptation of the exchange student is concurrent with their experience of hosting. The model of Expectancy-Value for the host family is a description of the summation of their hosting experience. This model has not previously been applied to the experience of hosting. It thus becomes:
Table 25: Expectancy-value model in the host family context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-experience</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Positive (Good Hosting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Unfulfilled</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Negative (Poor Hosting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The model has been used also to demonstrate expectancy-violations systems in reflexive evaluation of adaptation behaviour (Burgoon & Jones, 1976; Burgoon, 1983; Burgoon & Hale, 1988) and also the nature of expectancy-violations-positively met (Black & Gregersen, 1990; Burgoon & Walther, 1990; Lobdell, 1990; Martin & Rohrlich, 1991b). The model for intercultural re-entry is presented below:

Table 26: Expectancy-violations model for the sojourner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Experience</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expectations fulfilled</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>positive (good adjustment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations violated positively</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>positive (good adjustment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations violated negatively</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>negative (poor adjustment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model does have application to the host family experience and their expectancy-violations both positively and negatively met. The model is not identifying reentry expectations but rather a method to show the reported outcomes of the host family experience that were given an evaluation after the hosting event. This is a new application of the expectancy-violations model to show the experience of the host family. The model becomes:
Table 27: Expectancy-violations model in the host family context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Experience</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expectations fulfilled</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>satisfaction (good hosting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations violated</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>satisfaction (good hosting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations violated</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>dissatisfaction (poor hosting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negatively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instances in which expectations were violated positively occurred in reports of unexpected outcomes such as wanting to travel or desiring to learn a foreign language. These were unanticipated outcomes of the hosting event. There was an interesting cultural 'twist' experienced by a revisit to one's own cultural heritage through sharing with the hosted student. This aspect of appreciation of one's cultural heritage has also been identified for Australian teachers on study tours to Asia (Halse, 1999).

The cultural appreciation 'twist' is expressed by the Beatty family.

I only realised after they were here was the fact that we could to some degree show off our culture to them and also the city and various other parts of the state that we were able to take the girls and I think that a retrospective view was that this was as much for me and Sally to show the way we live as to expose Linda to the way they live. Which, I thought this was an interesting twist at the end of the exercise.

Other reports were of the satisfaction and pride in revisiting the home culture through the tourist type trips that were provided for the exchange student. The visits to the tourist spots resulted in a reaffirmation of nationalistic feeling for the host family itself.

Instances in which expectations were unfulfilled or negatively violated were apparent in several key areas. Many families expressed an expectation of friendship between their
children, themselves and the exchange student. This was not often the situation and the mutual desire for a lasting friendship rarely occurred. A match of selection criteria was rarely possible and in most families, personality variables were tolerated for the duration of the hosting. Families reported not being prepared "to take her moods into account as well" or that the hoped for bond or Synergy of fit did not eventuate. Negatively violated expectations were also apparent in terms of the initial desire for language skill development.

Several participants had expressed their hope that the hosting experience would have an increase in language acquisition component. Some families reported additional language understanding through the learning of new vocabulary. In one reverse case, the exchange student was scolded for speaking German since English was the intent of her visit. For others, the exchange student's English was so advanced that there was no need either for translated interchange. A violated expectation was in the form of the language paradox and lay in the "function of time spent in the household" in that the exchange student came to practice English while the host family hoped to learn German or Japanese.

The statements from the Alpine family indicate violated expectations.

I would have made much more effort to learn to speak to her in German. Because we were lucky with her ability to speak in English and I felt that that was a barrier we had created. We couldn't speak to her. Yes we were disappointed that their German didn't improve but that was the whole families' fault because we didn't speak to her in German. She spoke very well in English so why should they speak German.

The Davids family had modified expectations also.

They came over here to learn English so its sort of reasonable for you to try to get their English up rather than practice your own Japanese because that's what I'm going over there for in a couple of year's time.
for the Beatty family the paradox was not identified since they continued in their expectation for language skill improvement.

It was the opportunity to expose Linda to much more fluent German language which we saw as being a real aid to her German studies at school. When the two German lasses were together they just flatly refused to speak English. They just did not want to speak English and we said would you speak English and their response to that was that they just didn't speak. They refused to converse at all.

The importance of good communication in resolving aspects of expectancy violations was identified by Kim (1988) who used the model of stress-adaptation-growth cycle within a general systems theory approach. The adaptation of the model was expressly used in terms of sojourner adjustment and wellbeing as an aspect of culture shock (Oberg, 1958) or culture fatigue (Guthrie, 1966). In the example above with the Beatty family, their expectation was for their daughter to improve her German and the hosted student to improve her English. There were three situations of communication expectations that were violated in this example: the German student failed to speak English and spoke in German that was "too fast for their daughter to comprehend", the German student desired to speak in German to her German friend, the German girls refused to speak to their hosts at all. The host family possibly felt sincere in their attempts to have the German girl "do what she came here for" and the result was a lack of verbal response and a total communication breakdown. The lack of interaction was a source of confusion and frustration for the host family and most likely a stress response by the exchange student.

This investigation has shown that there is no guarantee that any of the motivation goals will be achieved by the host family. The nature of the host family expectations actually suggest that negative outcomes can result. The research has also shown that the potential for positive outcomes for some aspects such as language skill enhancement, are weighed heavily against the host family. There is a paradox in place since very often, the exchange student was focused on improving her own English speaking skills and purposefully avoided the use
of Japanese or English. In other examples where the students did speak in their own language, it was more often to the exclusion of the host family and for the purpose of avoiding communication with them.

The need for verbal interaction with the host culture as well as with members of one's own cultural group has been well documented (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987; Adelman, 1988; Kim, 1988) and reciprocal communication skills have been shown to be critical to better adaptation (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Klineberg & Hull, 1979). Permitting the exchange students to speak German would allow them to reconfirm their cultural identity, relax and regain a sense of central equilibrium and experience the ease of communicating as in their own culture (Paige, 1993:9). A relaxation of expectations on the part of the host family in this example may have provided a means of de-intensifying the situation and would thus require a flexible attitude and tolerance of the predicament of the exchange students. The centrality of the host family to the exchange event and its success cannot be underestimated.

When expectations are different or violated, members of the host family recognised that their hosting experience had in some way fallen short of their expectations. In order to understand this situation, explanations surfaced during the course of the phenomenographic interviews. The effect of expectancy-violation and a negative outcome instigated not only reflexive description and evaluation but also questioning and discussion for illumination and participant understanding. The following quotations are examples of this.

The Beatty family tried to understand reasons and causes for their disappointment in their experience of hosting. Their efforts and concerns represent issues in intercultural understanding. The spectrum of experience presented other ways of participating in the hosting event. Expectancy-violation led them to reach some tentative conclusions about their own situation.
We wanted to know what she wanted to do and so it begs the question. Did she misinterpret our correspondence to her? Our desire is to show you the time you are looking for and unless you are open and frank we can't provide you with that. Again, the culture clash may be that she would still respond in terms of what she wants us to know. I guess the Australian way of life is to be up front and brash. Maybe our perceptions weren't... maybe we had our perceptions not quite as they should have been as well. Is it a matter of the type of girls who come here being the ones who have the finance... is there some sort of process such as a selection process that goes on? But you can't select the girls in Germany who come to Australia to suit Australians... that's not the way it's supposed to work.

On those aspects I think that we were perhaps naive when we went into the German experience. Probably as a result of having such a good experience from the Argentine girls we wanted to give the German girl the maximum opportunity. We spent literally thousands. Mind you we did to the best of my knowledge, significantly more with our girl than we think some of the other parents did with their girls. I don't know if those other parents had been previous hosts or not or whether they just said this is how we live and this is how you fit in.

The Hobbs family saw their experience of hosting as a missed opportunity on the behalf of the exchange student. Their expectations were negatively violated.

I thought she would have taken every opportunity she could. I think we would have been prepared to do whatever it was she wanted to do. I think it comes back to the selection process but I don't think she was here to get everything she could out of the opportunity. That's it in a nutshell. She came over here expecting one thing and we picked her up expecting something else.

The Ives family experienced a violation of expectations when they anticipated like treatment for their natural daughter who was experiencing an exchange at the same time as they hosted an exchange student in a supposedly reciprocal arrangement.

Later in the trip when our music group performed in Morgan's home town, Robbie's host parents did not come to the concert and we were stunned. I think they just got on with their lives and didn't think beyond that in terms of reciprocating with us. Robbie's host parents said to me what a lovely host daughter she was, no trouble at all and how lucky they were to have her. Just as Morgan told them how lucky she felt to have us as her host family. So I
have put all that episode down to **mismatched expectations and ignorance of responsibilities**.

The Johnson family described their violated expectations in terms of differing agendas between themselves as hosts and the exchange student.

So what the mother wanted and what we expected to deliver Elisa were poles apart. They were honestly poles apart. **So her agenda was not our agenda.** For Nancy to have a cultural exchange, experience a different climate, food, people, school life in a different country; I believe their agenda was more, we know that we could be coming back to Sydney. We could offer her everything in a cultural exchange, she did not wish to participate. We couldn't return the experience. It was probably a downside that we couldn't provide that hospitality.

The current research has therefore made a contribution to expectancy theory and expectancy-violations theory by showing its application to the experience of hosting for families engaged in this type of intercultural activity. This investigation has served to highlight the host family position in order to develop best practice for future participation.

**Implications of expectancy theory for the host family.**

Participation in an intercultural experience is meant to be a rewarding period of personal growth and learning. Yet research has demonstrated that this is not always the case. The major contribution of this research to produce knowledge about the experience of hosting and host family involvement in intercultural activity is affirmed in the following implications for best practice and future participation. This knowledge interest is pertinent to parents, children, school organisations and exchange agencies, all of whom are stakeholders in ongoing learning and lifelong enquiry.

The first implication of expectancy theory in the current research, is therefore, that host family expectations will have a certain impact before, during and after the hosting event.
Understanding the nature of expectations and the suitability of them is an area of critical investigation. This study has shown the predisposition of host families to have a successful hosting event when their expectations are met or positively violated, but a negative and difficult experience when the expectations are unrealistic and their hopes not founded in potential outcomes. The host family with unrealistic expectations prior to their hosting event is, according to this research, ill-prepared and not suitably equipped to enter into the hosting experience. Rather than an exchange agency making that recommendation to the host family, a better outcome might result from a preliminary period of consciousness or awareness raising. Awareness raising should be directed so that the host family itself realises a lack of preparation or understanding about the nature of the hosting experience. Then purposeful rethinking and modification of the particular motives and expectations for preferred participation could occur. The conception of Synergy has emerged from this phenomenographic investigation and this research identified critical aspects for preferred hosting expectations concerning fit, responsibility, investment and learning.

The second implication of expectancy theory concerns the likelihood of the host family having a positive experience. LaBrack (1993:249) explained that in many instances the success of an exchange has been measured by the numbers of participants and the success of students based upon their "enjoyment quotient". There has been significant positive growth throughout the intercultural exchange business in recent times and the many participants do report areas of enjoyment or satisfaction. What seems to be left unsaid however, is the experience of the growing minority for whom the intercultural exposure was troublesome. Noesjirwan (1985) reported that in intercultural exchange experiences, 50% had a productive time, 40% had periods of significant difficulties and 10% had continuous significant difficulties. In the present study, the suggested findings of Noesjirwan are confirmed, so that
host families in turn, should be advised that statistically, they have a 1 in 2 chance of good fit and a match in expectations.

The third implication of expectancy theory for the host family who research the characteristics of hosting prior to their involvement may have consequences that result in the decision not to participate. Training that targets emotive issues such as culture shock, language fatigue, U curve adjustment patterns with very down turns before any upswing, together with the 'lottery of fit' reported by participants in this study, may prove to be a disincentive to participation. The choice of terms used to describe aspects of cross-cultural participation may set up perceptions of a 'no win situation' for the host family rather than preparation for effective involvement. Mention has been made of the linguistic harshness of the jargon of intercultural study and the suggestion was made that these problems should be viewed as a type of growth or transition phase. Other researchers have suggested that an attitude of "learning to learn" or the idea of participating in a foreign culture rather than assimilating into it may be preferable techniques for effective participation (J. M. Bennett, 1977; McCaffery, 1993:223-226). In order to bypass the negative insinuations of the intercultural jargon, emphasis could be placed upon the potential of "learning moments" (Batchelder, 1993:70). The notion of learning moments has previously been used in reference to the exchange student who is experiencing difficulties. In the current research, learning moments are now applied to the host family situation. A better use of the intercultural jargon is made through the terminology of learning moments. The host family is encouraged in the realisation that possible conflicts, confrontations and challenges that will be faced during the hosting event actually contribute to learning and growth in an intercultural context.

The fourth implication of expectancy theory concerns culture shock and family systems theory. This study has shown that for host families, the duration of the hosting event is a period of adaptation to the 'new' family system brought about by the additional member,
the exchange student. For those host families who do not experience a relatively problem free time, there will be degrees of stress, anxiety, worry over responsibility, concern over financial strain, a hectic schedule and a lack of positive reinforcement for their input. Together with this, there is the possibility of some family members exhibiting affected behaviour and breaches of house rules due to the presence of the exchange student. In this study there were instances where normal family behaviour was ignored and others did not correct the flouting of family rules. When the breach of rules went uncorrected it was because of a desire to maintain a positive family climate within the 'new' family system. For some participants, there was the perception that they were not able to 'be themselves' in front of the exchange student having made a value judgement about how the new family system should operate. The existence of a new family system that is in contrast with the former system, prior to the addition of the exchange student, was in itself a form of stress for some host family members. This is not culture shock as traditionally viewed, but may occur in response to or concurrent with, the culture shock being experienced by the exchange student and in this study has been described as the host family system dilemma. The association with culture shock is intended by this research as another manifestation of it. Many of the symptoms describing culture shock in the literature of intercultural exposure have application to the host family situation. The symptoms of culture shock that relate to the host family have been described. The solutions for lessening the effects of culture shock for intercultural sojourners can be applied to the host family situation. Solutions include preparatory discussion of the adjustment process, acceptance of the normality of reactions and symptoms, and the provision of coping strategies. Aspects of host family participation and the extent to which associated difficulties mimic aspects of sojourner adaptation issues have not been recognised previously in the literature of intercultural student exchanges. The current investigation, therefore, has contributed further insight into the complexity of participation in the experience of hosting.
Future directions for participation in a hosting event.

The primary concern for the ongoing success of host family participation generally, is that exchange organisers and cross-cultural trainers must reevaluate, recognise and appreciate the role of the host family as being critical and central to the success of the exchange experience. This research has shown the centrality of the host family in an exchange event, the pivotal nature that their participation has for the success of the experience and has identified the profundity of widespread problematic issues that exist.

The second concern relates to the nature of prior experience and cross-cultural preparation for the day to day living out of the hosting event. Mention has been made of the predicament of cross-cultural trainers and that the most effective way of being prepared for a successful experience is through the benefit of years of personal prior intercultural experiences that adequately prepare the individual who is now an 'old hand' (Paige, 1993). The novice host family does not have the benefit of prior experience to maximise the level of satisfactory outcomes for their cross-cultural participation. A better process would enable the novice host family the opportunity to tap into the prior experiences of other host families. A novice pre-host family that was attached to a participating host family, could observe the workings of the hosting event and engage in discussions about observed activities. Preliminary training could involve taking a turn of weekend outings or borrowing the exchange student with the purpose of taking benefit from an in-training orientation perspective. Having some insight into observable hosting activity has the potential to bring the host family face to face with many of the day to day realities of the hosting job providing participants can transfer from one context to the other. This suggestion is made in the light of the current research. It has been demonstrated that host families with previous hosting experience did not suffer the dilemmas of novice hosts. Even when there was a lack of Synergy of fit with their selected exchange student, host families with prior experience of
hosting used that experience base to their advantage. Experienced host families with an exchange student who was hard to interest or motivate, were able to be accepting of this situation, view the disparity of expectations pragmatically and pursue the remainder of the hosting without confrontation or consternation. Novice host families did not understand the same situation without associated stress, frustration and confusion.

The third area for consideration follows on from the notion of preparatory hosting training for the novice host family. What is needed by the host family for the development of realistic expectations about the future hosting experience, is not exactly the same as that required by an exchange student. Information about orientation and adaptation to the host culture is relevant for the exchange student while the host family has other needs. Information and preparation for an upheaval of the family system resulting in a kind of culture shock is relevant. Host family information literature has been attempted previously aimed particularly at the American host family/college or senior exchange student market (U.S. Department of Education, 1984; King & Huff, 1985). What has been omitted however, is a model based on the same objectives and format as the Culture-General Assimilator. The identification and resolution of problematic situations that are likely to be encountered is provided by assimilator literature. Through exposure to a culture-general assimilator, participants in cross-cultural activity are engaged in material that sets up thinking about intercultural issues.

The application of a culture-general assimilator for host family participants offers an innovative strategy for addressing the host family dilemma. The Culture-General Assimilator (Fiedler et al, 1971; Brislin, 1993:283) is one instrument that has been used effectively for sojourner preparation. The omission of host family participation in the traditional literature of intercultural activity has led to the development of an instrument that is specific in design and attention to its audience. The Host Family Companion (Griggs, in press) expressly focuses
upon the issues of host family preparation, adaptation and coping strategies that have been identified by this research. The intention of the instrument is the maximisation of the hosting experience for all participants. Exposure to a culture-general assimilator has been shown to be effective for preparing individuals to identify underlying intercultural difficulties, to analyse personal incidents and to solve new intercultural problems to which they had not previously been exposed (Broaddus, 1986; Ilola, 1989). The suggestion is made that host families who are undergoing aspects of the host family dilemma, may be motivated to seek support from appropriate self-help literature such as the Host Family Companion, short circuiting the need for making their difficulties official or requesting external aid. Using such a strategy of self-help has been demonstrated as preferable to seeking official intervention, where reasonable, in terms of responsibility, independence and personal growth (McCaffery, 1993:222).

**Learning in and about the intercultural experience of hosting**

Participation by host families in the intercultural experience of a hosting event has been shown by this research to affirm traditional motivators and result from a desire for an educational or learning experience, and a learning experience it is for the host family. Just what the learning experience is and what is gained in terms of learning content, has been identified by this research for the participating host families at Loxleigh School for Girls. Expectancy theory has been used to show that expectations may be confirmed, disconfirmed or even positively/negatively violated. In the same way, expectations of learning and reported reflections of the host participants have identified types of learning that are qualitatively different views of learning as well as a definitive aspects of learning content.
The nature of learning from participation in a hosting experience, has been shown to embrace three distinct components. The first two sections are concerned with learning in the hosting experience while the third section is where learning about the experience of hosting is presented. First, the investigation into learning in the experience of hosting has produced knowledge concerning the role of participant views of learning associated with preparation and expectations for the hosting experience. The second aspect of learning in the hosting experience is the living out of the hosting event within the structure of family systems, cross-cultural learning and adaptation for the duration. The third aspect that this investigation has contributed to learning about the experience of hosting concerns phenomenographical insights. The use of a phenomenographic approach has led to the emergence of an understanding of the phenomenon of hosting itself. The three aspects of learning in the hosting experience will be discussed, followed by implications of the learning in a host family event and finally, an evaluation of the contribution made by this research for the future participation of host families and administrators will be presented.

*Family expectations for learning in a hosting event.*

In this study, participant host families were motivated to venture into a hosting event with the objective of having an educational experience. For novice host families in this research the educational experience that they anticipated and desired had three main objectives. Novice host families wanted an experience that would provide them with learning about another culture, an improvement in their foreign language skills and a way in which to share a spirit of generosity with an unknown teenage exchange student. For host families with previous experience of hosting, a different set of expectations for learning was apparent. A hope of friendship and sharing Australian lifestyle, and a chance for reciprocal participation in the building up of a global amity network were foremost objectives. For the experienced host
family, there was the expectation of working towards the development of those objectives to some degree in the knowledge that the next exchange student may not have the same levels of expectation.

The different host family expectations for learning demonstrate the role that experiential learning plays in living out real life situations. For the context of this research, the focus of learning for the novice host family needs to be about learning how to host an exchange student. Grove and Torbiörn (1993:89) have stated that in an intercultural context, experiential techniques used for preparatory training need to involve participants emotionally and physically as well as intellectually. Experiential techniques in the intercultural context are made up of role plays, situation exercises, community investigations, field trips; learning through actual experience. The traditional literature of intercultural training and the suggested techniques are intended specifically for intercultural trainers. This reinforces the premise of the current research that the host family context is unobserved and not targeted for improved practice. The current research has shown that for host family participation, some level of prior experience or, some degree of experiential learning, will enhance the predisposition of the host family for a reasonably satisfactory hosting experience. In turn, greater understanding of the likelihood of expectations being realised is a significant issue for host families. Learning about another culture, improving foreign language skills and sharing a spirit of generosity with a teenage exchange student as motivating principles for cross-cultural involvement are naive expectations. Cross-cultural training will place the host family in a position to confront the reality of their expectations and adjust or reform them accordingly. In this way, the dilemma expressed by novice host family participants "if only we were pre-warned about these things" might be less intensified or even resolved.

Different perceptions of what learning is and is not, have been highlighted by the host family participants in this research. For novice host families, who shared a particular set of
expectations for learning in the hosting event, a view of learning that related to the absorption of new facts or other material was expressed. Säljö (1979:447) has described this view of learning as 'taken for granted' or absolute, since it relies on reproducing information in a schema in which knowledge and learning are perceived as being congruent. Other host families and in particular, those with more realistic expectations, tended to have an alternate and more flexible view of learning. The perspective of learning being thematic, wide in generality and evaluated through reflection has been described as learning for life. Learning for life is seen as a different perspective from learning for school. These two different ways of viewing learning have been shown by this research to reflect not only the perceptions of learning of the participant host families, but are also an indicator of the appropriateness or plausibility of their expectations for learning in the hosting event. Learning about a culture and improving foreign language skills are nearer to the school-based curriculum and learning for school, than global networking and learning for life.

**Learning in the extra-curricular choice of a hosting event.**

Participation in a hosting event as described by the current research is a choice made from part of the field of extracurricular options in Australian schools today. This is an example of the developing trend of the responsibility of education being taken up by parents who are actively engaging in the lifelong learning of their children and themselves. The current investigation has been able to demonstrate that families are in a position to make a unique contribution to their children's development through cross-cultural exposure in the experience of hosting. Families differ in their ability to be involved in the classroom schooling of their children so that family participation and connectedness with the school exists on a continuum. The governance of education and curriculum issues in contemporary Australian education systems has been described in terms of economic and social forces that have traditionally
mandated an emphasis on Western thought and values. An alternative approach would return to a Deweyan perspective however, and would turn the focus toward a dynamic curriculum that emerges from the community of learners (Lange, 1993). This approach is confirmed by UNESCO (1999) vision for twenty-first century curricula that calls for training that includes developmental life experiences that contain environmental and cultural aspects as issues of importance. Cultural diversity in the community and multicultural curriculum materials have the potential to confront deep seated cultural beliefs in today's world where global networking is increasingly accessible. Family involvement in the experience of hosting, however provides an opportunity for creating a learning environment in the home that incorporates a raised awareness of aspects of intercultural knowledge, skills and insights. In this way, families create their own curriculum for meaningful participation. There are implications here for curriculum and policy development since students enter schools with different knowledge bases that have been influenced by background experiences, such as a hosting event, and cultural practices.

What is learned through intercultural exposure has received much attention in the literature of exchange events (Dragonas, 1983; Grove, 1989; Martin, Bradford & Rohrlich, 1995). Apart from cross-cultural contact, many of the individual gains are associated with aspects of personal growth. Intercultural learning involves identifying one's own ethnocentricism; awareness; understanding; acceptance, respect; appreciation, valuing; selective adoption together with aspects of assimilation, adaptation, biculturalism and multiculturalism (Hoopes, 1981; M. J. Bennett, 1993:23). The list of learning areas for personal growth and understanding from intercultural exposure are a measure of learning for the exchange student or sojourner and also the host family. The similarity of learning areas for exchange student and for the host family as well, indicates that the host family is actually in the context of an intercultural activity.
In the current research, the degree of culture specific knowledge gained from participation in hosting events was demonstrated to be less than the more readily recognisable impact upon host family interest and appreciation of the home culture. Reasons for the lack of culture specific learning have been shown by this research to be due to exchange student resources and ability to relate aspects of their home culture and communication difficulties. Culture specific learning that did occur was often described as being a spontaneous exclamation and reaction to identified differences of daily living. Culture specific details about their exchange student's homeland could include belief systems, customs, behaviours. From an intercultural training perspective however, host families have positioned themselves to learn much about issues in intercultural understanding. Having the experience base from which to appreciate or understand cultures other than one's own has been termed "cultural competence" (Imel, 1998). The current research has demonstrated the experience base that participation in a hosting event provides. Skills of communication, adaptation, lifestyles and attitudes, use of a second language and interpersonal interaction all contribute to degrees of cultural competence. In particular, any decrease in the uncertainty and anxiety that can accompany communication interactions among people who are culturally dissimilar may facilitate understanding about others in an increasingly diverse world.

This investigation also identified the potential that host families may focus upon negative aspects of intercultural exposure especially for those participants whose attitudes and values were not confirmed by their pre involvement expectations. The critical importance of cultural training for realistic expectations for cross-cultural exposure cannot be understated.

Other areas of learning in the literature of exchange experiences, however, pertain more specifically to the exchange student - awareness of customs and interpersonal skills, basic communication skills, information about the host culture, and relationship building (Guthrie, 1966; Roth, 1969; Triandis, 1977; Zaremba, 1984; Grove, 1989). This research has
been able to show the different areas that constitute what is gained from an intercultural learning experience for the host family. The use of content analysis identified four key areas: understanding selves, communication skills, understanding and evaluating the hosting process and cultural appreciation of the host's own culture. These areas represent learning from life, that is, experiential learning as reported by the participant host families.

**Learning and understanding selves from the experience of hosting.**

For the host family, understanding selves covers a range of insights related to personal growth and learning. Key components of learning about selves included reactions to the challenges of responsibility, learning to cope with change and degrees of flexibility and making productive use of the educational potential of the hosting. Further components of learning included developing new interest areas and life goals. Some participants expressed the desire to learn a foreign language so that they could enhance future hosting participation by attempting communication with the exchange student in her native tongue. Other participants reported a renewed interest in world travel and a desire to visit other cultures. Sometimes the nature of learning involved being able to see positive and less desirable personal qualities in other family members. Examples were provided of a family member being recognised as the 'rescuer' in a difficult situation with the exchange student by exhibiting comic relief as part of interpersonal interaction. In other cases, family members abused a situation by flaunting known family rules or by avoiding household chores and responsibilities. How the family as a whole responded to these situations has been shown in relation to family systems theory. Sometimes a family member was not penalised for flaunting a rule due to the presence of the exchange student. At other times the situation was made even more complex when the exchange student stepped in to correct the breach. One host mother reported that she was sorry to see the exchange student leave at the end of the hosting because "she always helped
me around the house whereas no-one in the family ever did". Another participant had anticipated an invasion of privacy prior to the hosting event that was not realised. Concern had been expressed about the effect another person in the family would create and the possible alteration to acceptable behaviour patterns. Upon reflection, the host parent noted that the anticipated problems did not occur since there was a degree of Synergy of fit with the exchange student and there was an accommodation of differences pursued by all members in that family system.

Learning about compatibility, dealing with success, disappointment and failure, relaxing or modifying expectations were other areas of personal growth and understanding. The use of content analysis in this research has demonstrated that host families held the perception that they did learn about themselves and the experience of hosting and that what they did learn about themselves had similar qualities to those aspects reported by intercultural activity. Having survived the life experience of hosting, host families also reported personal growth in terms of commitment and 'seeing it through' whatever circumstances occurred. For some families there was early perception of mismatched expectations during the period of the hosting. In an opportunity of reflection about their experience, participants reported a sense of self-efficacy and positive self-attributes for sustaining the duration.

**Communication skills and the experience of hosting.**

Communication skills form the basis of human interaction and are essential to the host family and their intercultural experience with the exchange student. In the hosting event, understanding each other from a language perspective is not always an issue as in same language hosting events. Problems in communication did however, occur even in these types of exchanges and so the host family was presented with an additional dilemma. The Basic Cybernetics Model of Communication proposed by Weaver (1993:143) is as follows:
Figure 17: Basic cybernetics model of communication.

It was suggested that a problem in any part of the model will result in a communication breakdown. Encoder and decoder terminology describes the breakdowns due to language differences. This model of communication can be applied to the host family context. For the host family and exchange student who as a group, were mutually motivated and persistent in overcoming the communication difficulties, there were many instances of experiential learning. Anecdotes of creative solutions, interesting discoveries about language similarities and reported improvement in the exchange student's English speaking abilities were known.

When there was communication breakdown due to a lack of motivation, little persistence or language fatigue, other difficulties about the whole climate of the hosting event were being signalled. For example, frustration, pain and anxiety were experienced to different degrees by the host family when the exchange student refused to speak or isolated herself from the family in a typical example of language fatigue and culture shock (Paige, 1993:9). The host family did not understand why the exchange student did not wish to communicate with them and a breakdown in the communication process prevailed. The host family response was defensive in nature since they did not recognise the symptomatic behaviour of the exchange student. The breakdown in communication that was experienced in the hosting events also has implications for the affirmation of unhelpful stereotyping. One family lapsed into the stereotype that German adolescents were all monosyllabic in an effort to rationalise the lack of communication interaction displayed by their exchange student. A more realistic appraisal of the particular situation would take into account problems of language fatigue and culture shock.
In other human interactions, the ability to communicate is mostly taken for granted and therefore, non-communication, could be described as a complex reaction to family/cross-cultural learning and adjustment crises. Mehrabian, (1968) described nonverbal codes as being even more significant in cross-cultural communication, since they are learned implicitly, are often culture specific and are most obviously used to convey feelings. The model provided above is therefore useful in describing the communication patterns of the host families in this research whether they experience good communication or breakdown.

Successful communication between participants in the hosting events did occur where there was persistence and a mutual desire for interpersonal interaction. For host families who did engage successfully in cross-cultural communication patterns there was the acquisition of some degree of culture specific knowledge or at least some understanding of the empathetic skills required to overcome communication difficulties. Learning to communicate with others in the intercultural context has been inconclusively linked to the development of empathetic skills in participants (Steward, Borgers, Hanik, Chambers & Brown, 1998). In the current research, however, attributes of motivation and persistence contributed to successful host family communication interaction patterns where Synergy of fit was understood. The attributes of the host families in successful interactions were demonstrated to be somewhere near to "having emotional or mental understanding of the feelings or spirit of someone" (empathy, Macquarie Dictionary, 1990:334) therefore suggesting that feelings of empathy do have some impact on cross-cultural communication systems.

The hosting process and the nature of participant evaluation.

This research has demonstrated the learning through experience, reflection and evaluation of family participants in hosting events. Opinions on what to do next time, or how to improve the process, or what we would change if we had the time over, were expressed by the
participant host families who recognised the educational potential of intercultural exposure even when their original expectations were altered, shattered, or refined. Some observations and recommendations included external (school) matters of administration. Although not the focus of the current research, suggestions for improvements targeted the timing of the hosting event as per calendar year and the clash of activities that resulted from an especially hectic term schedule.

The credibility of the selection process was one of the most frequently reported areas for concern. Aside from the type of exchange student selected, families were aware of the different selection processes that were in operation. In particular, the home school had a selection committee that required intensive investigation and justification for the choice of girls to participate in overseas exchange programs. This was perceived to be in contrast to some of the sending schools and the apparent ease by which students were accepted for participation. Another area of reported concern that involved school administration was related to the publication and communication of information from the school. Many families who were participating in a hosting event for the first time had the perception of not enough information from the school or that the channels of communication operated too slowly. The reaction to the perceived lack of communication resulted in some host families taking up the responsibility themselves to fast track some of the organisational issues.

The content analysis used to identify the learning content in the host experience saw the host family perception that the degree of success of the hosting event was in many ways related to the selected exchange student. Problems for the host family concerning the perception of the exchange student's lack of motivation, were interpreted in a narrow way, in terms of a poor selection. A broader interpretation of the exchange student's poor motivation, may have been seen in terms of symptoms of adjustment and change issues. In some instances of reported exchange student behaviour, classic symptoms of culture shock were
apparent. The symptoms were not identified but rather, a strategy of 'blaming the victim' was followed. Other areas of learning in the experience of hosting were identified through the use of content analysis. Participant reflections about ways of enhancing future participation were of an internal (family) nature. The way in which the family system operated and a confirmation of maintaining a normal lifestyle as much as possible, were experiential outcomes. The continuation of normal lifestyle, rather than extending or widening lifestyle through great expenditure for the continual entertainment of the exchange student, was identified as the actual job of hosting.

*Cultural appreciation and the experience of hosting.*

Host families indicated their expectation of some degree of cultural understanding about another culture from having an exchange student live with them for a period of time. The exchange student who has come to Australia has the expectation of learning something about the Australian way of life. The content analysis of this investigation was able to demonstrate that the cultural learning from participation in a hosting event was much more localised in nature. For most host families, learning about their own culture in a type of cultural appreciation of Australia, greatly surpassed any substantial learning about the culture of their exchange student. The 'twist' at the end of the hosting was identified and reported by all families in this research. Host families acknowledged that they had not seen many parts of their own country, at least for some time, or that they found a sense of national pride that they had not anticipated. The sense of national pride was directly related to the cultural exposure they presented to the exchange student and living out the Australian way of life.

Other cultural insights concerned a reevaluation of cultural and geographical Australia. For example, contrasts with historic buildings in Australia that are relatively modern, became apparent when they were compared with the home country architecture of
Europe or Asia of the exchange student. "I told her that these buildings were very old and then I realised that in her country they were hundreds and hundreds of years old". The Australian families came to a new understanding of the relative youth of their own history when making the connection with the exchange student's background. Another family took the exchange student to visit an area renowned for its mountainous scenic beauty. The exchange student was unimpressed by the mountains having come from a part of Europe where the mountains were by contrast, higher and snowcapped. Families reported saving up until the exchange student had arrived, to have a special holiday or outing that would be an educational experience for their own children as well as the enjoyment of sharing the experience beyond the normal family. There were instances of families going into large-scale organisation, arrangements and expense to procure an image of the 'Australian lifestyle' that entailed covering large distances for visitation to sheep stations and National Rainforests. There was the belief that certain tourist ventures illustrated the national identity. Families in these instances desired to construct an imaginary Australiana that was extraordinary to their usual lifestyle.

*Learning and the phenomenon of hosting.*

Phenomenographic techniques have been used in order to define the outcome space that is the phenomenon of hosting. The conception of Synergy emerged from the data reported by the participant host families. The conception of Synergy is understood in qualitatively different ways in four areas called components that represent the aspects of a hosting event. Synergy as a conception refers to the underlying understanding of proximity to optimally effective degrees of fit, ownership and responsibility, financial investment and perceptions of learning. When the host family expectations for participation in the event of hosting were optimally effective, then Synergy was known. When the expectations for fit or a match in objectives
between the host family and the exchange student were either met or violated, a certain degree of Synergy, or optimal effectiveness, was experienced and understood. Similarly, the impact of financial investment upon the host family and the degree of ownership and responsibility toward the exchange student, had separate categories that were described in qualitatively different degrees of Synergy. Perceptions of learning in the experience of hosting have been demonstrated by this research to be related to what was gained in terms of learning, from the hosting event. When learning was perceived by host families in terms of 'learning for school' then learning from the experience of hosting was harder to find and locate, than when 'learning for life' was the expectation.

The experience of hosting, as an aspect of experiential learning, has been demonstrated in this research to involve dilemmas, when proximity to Synergy was far, and discernment, when proximity to Synergy was later restored, rationalised and improved. The following model is used to represent participant host family expectations and outcomes in relation to the conception of Synergy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYNERGY &gt; WHEN EXPECTATIONS = OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYNERGY &lt; WHEN EXPECTATIONS ≠ OUTCOMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 18: Relationship between Synergy, and expectations and outcomes.*

A phenomenographic approach has been able to identify and describe the phenomenon of hosting in terms of why there are different ways of experiencing a hosting event and to account for how these ways occur. The purpose of a phenomenographic interview is not only used to understand the individual’s interpretation of his or her experience, but to identify any
perceptions of changes in thinking (Bowden, 1994:43). This can occur when the meaning becomes accessible once the individual reflects on the constitutive factors of personal experience (Shutz, 1967). The learning conception saw the emergence of 'resolve' or seeing things in a new way. During the interviews host family participants gained insight into some of the dissatisfactions of their experience as they described and then tried to explain their understanding to the interviewer. On some occasions the interviewer did not probe for an answer but rather the participants engaged in discourse between themselves and searched together for a meaningful consensus. For example, coping strategies and communication strategies were evaluated and discussed – "we found she coped much better if we didn't try to talk to her especially but just treated her as a member of the family". Treating the exchange student as a member of the family, as in family systems, moved their family situation beyond household guest and host nationals to a family unit. As a family unit, there was a more satisfactory level of operation than the alternative. Questions concerning why preliminary pre-hosting correspondence with the exchange student failed to set up adequate or realistic expectations were raised. Host families had made contact with their exchange student prior to the hosting in order to set up programs of activity and to ascertain what kinds of ventures they should organise. The families who fitted into this category were novice host families who had decided that preparation in advance of the hosting event was desirable. In these instances the exchange students had indicated their desire to visit any of the alternatives given. The reality was quiet different upon their arrival in Australia however, with some students indicating their abhorrence to lengthy periods of car travel that are necessarily involved in touring parts of the Australian countryside. Upon reflection, participants explained the responses of the exchange students in terms of confusion and mixed emotions of adolescent females, unrealistic perceptions of the exchange students' coping strategies or the maturity levels of displaced teenagers. The opportunity to see the perspective of others and to see and
understand another culture's point of view was not readily recognised. One host parent suggested that the exchange student was basically "agreeing with everything we suggested and telling us what we wanted to hear".

Some host family participants made recommendations for prospective novice families for future hosting events. From these recommendations the host family 'resolve' or finding solutions to the best way of doing the job of hosting, were identified. Upon reflection, host family participants identified the mentality of taking the opportunity to host a student as it comes. This suggests the adoption of a flexible or casual approach rather than a formal or rigid approach to the job of hosting. The experience of the job of hosting had provided host families with a learning base that recommended having no fixed expectations about how the hosting event should proceed. The notion of preparing activities in advance of the exchange student's arrival was limiting in that decisions would be made without a full appreciation of what was entailed. For example, booking a holiday at a sheep station should be shunned if the exchange student is adverse to long car trips or will respond by sleeping all the way. The message of host families to future participants in hosting events was to acknowledge, reassess and value the intercultural interchange that offering their own normal lifestyle will actually provide.

**Implications of learning in the experience of hosting.**

From this research about participation in a hosting event, there are five implications of learning that are critical for preparing families who anticipate involvement in hosting experiences for potential educational growth. The findings of this research affirm the positive contribution to learning that participation in a hosting event will promote. The implications for learning however, are in themselves related to the responsibility for enhancing positive and productive involvement for all participants. This research is able to make a contribution
to best practice and best preparation for host families and so fill the former gap in understanding about the event of hosting in intercultural knowledge interest.

The first implication for learning in the hosting experience concerns views of learning held by participants. Learning for school and learning for life represent narrower and broader viewpoints. The host family will have the perception of little or much learning from their experience of hosting, depending upon their understanding of what learning is and what learning content embraces.

The second implication for learning has been demonstrated by human interaction in communication skills. The model for communication breakdown represented how communication problems may result from deeper concerns than mere language differences. A breakdown in communication between the host family and the exchange student may be the result of culture shock, the indicators or symptoms of which, can be predicted, identified, analysed and abated. Culture shock that is experienced by the exchange student necessarily involves the host family who will live with the symptoms and share responsibility in any moves towards recovery. Ameliorating the effects of culture shock or language fatigue has direct impact upon host family perceptions about the quality of their participation in a hosting event. Rather than having a 'blame the victim' opinion of poor student interaction, the recognition of culture shock and the associated symptoms should be advocated. The literature of culture shock suggests that it represents a transition period that supercedes personal growth and in this research, personal growth for the host family as well as the exchange student, and learning are congruent (Grove & Torbiörn, 1993).

The third implication for learning in the hosting experience involves the potential of a hosting experience to create national pride and cultural understanding for participants. Learning in these terms was often an unexpected and positive outcome from the hosting experience. The creation of national pride and cultural understanding has significance for
contemporary models of curriculum and the recent launch by the New South Wales Board of Studies of an Australian Civics Course to be implemented in schools from 2000 onwards. Citizenship education is designed to "flow from the study of key features of Australia's political, social and cultural history" (BOS, History Stages 4-5, 1998:8). The curriculum prescribes that learning content focuses upon respect for different viewpoints, ways of living, belief systems and languages. The skills gained from cross-cultural exposure could be used by students to maximise their human capital through the addition of multicultural competence acquisition as part of their educational, albeit extracurricular, activity. Skills such as an appreciation of cultural heritage, the acceptance of cultural diversity and empathy with people of different cultures and societies are strongly linked to current curriculum developments. The experience of hosting, therefore, has the potential to complement learning for school with learning for life.

The fourth implication for learning concerns the host family evaluations and recommendations for future and potential hosting participation. This research has demonstrated that the host family participants represent a valuable resource for cross-cultural organisations, administrators and families to tap into regarding future intercultural ventures. Much information and insight from the inside or counterpart of the hosting experience has been made available so that others can benefit and gain a more realistic perspective of this kind of educational activity.

The fifth implication for learning in the experience of hosting is found in the purpose of using the phenomenographic approach for investigating the phenomenon of hosting. The technique has been used in three significant ways. First, the application of phenomenography has been demonstrated to determine the structure of hosting and the variations of the experience of it. Secondly, the very nature of the phenomenographic interview style has been used to create a learning milieu in which host families gained new insight and understanding
of their experience of hosting. Finally, researcher understanding about the qualitatively different ways in which hosting is experienced and perceived has steered the way for the development of best practice and best preparation for future hosting participants.

*Future directions for learning in the experience of hosting.*

The current investigation has made a contribution to knowledge about participation in the experience of hosting and has developed a new application of the phenomenographic research approach. The knowledge areas that have emerged related to learning in the hosting experience concern participant views of learning, experiential learning, preparation for host family participation and outcomes. These knowledge areas have direct application to current curriculum initiatives particularly in the areas of History and Geography for citizenship education in New South Wales. A way forward that puts this knowledge into best preparation and best practice for future participants has been identified through the use of phenomenographic techniques in this study.

The first area of concern for best preparation and best practice follows from the distinction by participant host families between learning for school and learning for life. The distinction about types of learning emerged through phenomenographic analysis. The literature of views of learning has coined the phrase 'learning to learn' which is ideally applied to a particular learning context (Säljö, 1979; McCaffery, 1993). It is concluded that the same attitude or viewpoint of learning is recommended for application to the host family context so that expectations for learning are less taken for granted or thematically specific but rather taken from the perspective of a learning to learn experience. Learning to learn would therefore embrace such curricula as learning to be, learning to cope, learning how and learning why.
The second area for praxis concerns the role of the host family in addressing and resolving the associated problems of communication breakdowns, language fatigue and culture shock that may be experienced by the exchange student. The host family exposure and subjection to these difficulties, consequently, should be recognised by all stakeholders in the intercultural event of host family participation. Training for the likely emergence of some degree of interaction stress between host family and exchange student is not automatic. Cultural training to cope with adaptation processes has previously been considered the domain of the exchange organisation personnel. Paige (1993:194) has noted the complexity of training sojourners for intercultural activity and the even more complex and challenging training of trainers. Host families in a hosting event are required to make a quantum leap from family providers to experts with a grasp of intercultural skills. The host family with little or no pre-service training take on instead, a job of survival. The issue of the viability of preparatory training for cross-cultural participation for host families represents another dilemma of the experience of hosting. Given the stake of the host family and their centrality to the hosting experience, it is concluded that training in the area of cross-cultural adaptation, either before host family participation or availability in the duration of the hosting event, is critical. Anything less reflects irresponsibility for all involved.

The final application for best preparation and best practice for future learning in the experience of hosting concerns the type of training or teaching that this phenomenographic investigation has identified. The phenomenographic approach has implications for teaching and learning since the different ways of understanding the phenomenon of hosting have been identified. Educators and trainers who are interested in best preparation and best practice for host families have the outcome space for the phenomenon of hosting from which to understand the experience in a powerful way. In preparation training for host families, deliberate efforts can be made to enable them to see certain situations in different ways. It is
concluded that the conception of Synergy provides specific areas to target involving the components of fit, responsibility, investment and learning. Having a knowledge or experience base about certain situations is a way forward for effective understanding when confronting a new situation. Training material must make host families prepared for actions and conscious decision making about their participation in a hosting event. As in a culture general assimilator, specific and significant areas of cross-cultural and family system issues should be presented to potential host families. There is the potential in this approach to facilitate a deeper and more holistic view of the multidimensional and integrated experience of hosting. Host families would then be able to become aware of their own and others' ways of relating to the experience of hosting which would in turn empower them to make more capable decisions and choices about handling those new situations. The qualitatively different ways of experiencing Synergy in the phenomenon of hosting has the potential to inform what to teach or present to host families to bring about for learning in a hosting event. The insights of the host families and the critical aspects associated with them could serve to help those involved in organisation and host event teachers to structure and identify relevant factors to present to create pre-hosting awareness.

**Final comments about learning and the phenomenon of hosting.**

The current research has involved accounts of how a particular group of people understand and explain ways of being in the world. As such, this investigation has provided a development in general knowledge about humanity and human science as well as knowledge concerning pedagogy for best practice and best preparation for praxis. Previous studies concerning student exchange programs have failed to highlight the learning experience of the host family that is well observed in this study. Similarly, the literature of intercultural exchange programs presents a picture of exchange involvement for host families that belies
the reality of the range of participation. A key component of this research has been the identification of the dilemmas of participation experienced by the host family and the learning or discernment that occurred.

For the novice host family there is a dilemma about their participation in a hosting event since there is no prior knowledge base upon which to construct a guiding framework to their experience. The conception of Synergy that emerged in the present study and the related components of fit, ownership, investment and learning, show a way of mapping the experience of hosting that is specifically designed from the host family perspective. Previous studies have not targeted knowledge interest about the host family with the same degree of intention as this research. Critical cross-cultural issues that have assumed significance for sojourners have been shown by this investigation to actually relate to the host family. The current study has also identified pertinent issues that have been previously ignored or under reported in the intercultural literature. Of significance for the host family was the impact of responsibility for the exchange student and the financial investment incurred. The influence of these factors was related to host family perceptions of a successful exchange experience.

What is also shown from the data is the impact of the duration of the hosting event. Previous research has questioned the value of very short exchanges but has not recognised the growth and popularity of short exchange types or addressed the associated issues in a proactive manner. In the current research, very short hosting events did facilitate experiential learning and personal change as in the longer exchange events. Both types of hosting events encountered problems.

An aspect of the perceptions of learning in this research concerned the qualitatively different ways of understanding particular issues and how these ways of understanding change throughout the duration of the hosting event. The use of phenomenographic techniques highlighted the change in understanding. Intra-categorical shifts occurred when
participants moved from one category of description to another without realisation. The movement between categories, as in a spectrum of experience, occurred particularly in the components of fit between participants, ownership and responsibility and financial outlay. The shifts between categories were related to a change of focus and a change of meaning. The movement was similar to the contextual shifts reported by Yan (1999).

This study is able to make a tentative contribution to phenomenographic research in five ways. Firstly, an account has been made of inter-contextual shifts for individual participants that affirms the usefulness of the methodology to move towards a theoretical status about a phenomenon as well as the rich complexity of understanding of it afforded by phenomenographic investigation.

Secondly, the use of family groups interviews has been applied in a phenomenographic context. The use of group interviews in a phenomenographic context, is otherwise unknown. From the application of group interviews in the current research and this extension of the research approach, the way is open for future research to investigation further the range of possible adaptations of phenomenographic interview design.

Thirdly, an attempt has been made to apply the recent development of phenomenography to the experience of hosting, through the identification of both referential and structural aspects of the conception of Synergy. Critical aspects of Synergy of fit between participants in the host family experience, Synergy and ownership, Synergy and financial investment as well as Synergy and learning, have been identified and explored. Continued application of this approach in the study holds the potential for advancing theory development that will take our understanding of the phenomenon of hosting further than has previously been possible.
Fourthly, the qualitatively different ways of experiencing the phenomenon as well as particular ways of experiencing the phenomenon have been described and so finally, progress towards a theory of the phenomenon of hosting has been put forward.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn about the experience of hosting in the curricula of student exchange programs, based on the experiences of the host families in the current study. Firstly, novice host families as well as those who have experienced very short exchanges do experience a dilemma concerning their role in longer exchange events. The host families who had prior knowledge of hosting experiences had taken that experiential learning and had a realistic expectations base for their participation.

Secondly, participation in phenomenographic interviews led to illumination of the hosting experience which was distinct from the conceptions of learning during the course of the hosting event. Active reflective understanding caused the emergence of the categories of description for each conception.

Thirdly, the aspects of the phenomenon of the hosting experience that emerged can give hosting event organisers and insight into the potential problems and expectations to be faced by host families so that enhanced preparation can occur.

Fourthly, aspects of what is to be gained by participants in an experience of hosting can be presented as a viable, worthwhile experiential learning option for developing self-awareness, communication skills, commitment to relationships and cultural awareness. Experiential learning in the experience of hosting involves dealing consciously with relationships and processes in the wider curricula context, as well as acquiring knowledge through factual data and content.

What host families learn through the experience of hosting has not been exhausted by this study but is a question that needs to be asked continuously by all involved. As has been repeatedly affirmed by this research, the experience of hosting is not only a matter of
individual host families and their ability to learn from the hosting event, but rather a question of in what ways it is possible to facilitate and encourage the development of positive interaction between all members of the new family system. The host family and particularly the host family parents, are essentially the most important direct supporters of all the participants in a hosting event. The task for cross-cultural training programs, experiential learning and ongoing support mechanisms is to create the best possible conditions for the host family in this role.
REFERENCES


http://www.ped.gu.se/biorn/diss.sum/calexanl.html


http://www.ped.gu.se/biorn/wild/briefing.html


Board of Studies, NSW. (1999). *Towards greater professionalism.*


292


http://www.scce.com.au

297


Appendix 1

HOST FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEWS
Interview Schedule

1. How did you become involved as a host family participant?

2. What were your expectations for this involvement?

3. In what type of exchange (duration, language) did you participate as a host family?

4. What preparation was there prior to hosting?

5. What excited you most...?

6. What worried you most...?

7. What did you learn from this experience...?

8. How willing would you be to participate as hosts again?...Explain...

9. Describe a satisfying experience you had as a host family participant. Explain.

10. Have your opinions changed about that experience one-year later? Explain.

11. Describe a dissatisfying experience you had as a host family participant. Explain.

12. Have your opinions changed about that experience one-year later? Explain.

13. What did you learn about yourself and others from the hosting experience?

14. Were you able to make use of any support systems during the hosting event? Explain.

15. What information should be given to future host families?

16. Has your view of student exchanges and hosting opportunities changed?

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience as a host family participant?
DILEMMAS and DISCERNMENT:

Towards a phenomenography of the experience of hosting in the curricula of student exchange programs.

By

Lindy Griggs

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Faculty of Education
University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

June 2000
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
I certify that this research has not been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in undertaking this research, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this research.

Lindy Griggs
Abstract

The focus of this research is the learning of host families participating in the curricula of student exchange programs. In the literature of student exchanges and cross-cultural contact, the experience of the host family has been largely ignored. The role of the host family is central to the exchange event, but hosting is often a problematic experience during which the host family faces many dilemmas. The research substantiates the relevance of family systems theory in relation to the host family and positions the host family in an intercultural context. Phenomenographic techniques are used to describe the different ways of experiencing a hosting event and to account for how these ways occur. The phenomenon of Hosting is described by the conception of Synergy. A Spectrum of Experience, rather than a hierarchy, is defined by the four components of *fit*, *responsibility*, *investment* and *learning*. Host family dilemmas and discernment are related to prior experience of hosting and the Synergy between expectations and learning outcomes. Intercultural learning in a hosting event is identified as participants' understanding of themselves, the process of hosting, communication skills and an appreciation of cultural heritage. Host family expectations have an impact before, during and after the hosting event while realistic expectations recognise the potential for learning moments as well as the contribution that conflicts, confrontations and challenges make to learning and growth in an intercultural context. Best preparation and best practice for host family participation involves an understanding of experiential learning, training program design and strategies for ongoing support systems.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the assistance, support and cooperation of a number of people who have made the completion of this research possible.

Special thanks must go to Loxleigh Anglican School for Girls and University of Western Sydney for funding that made an international connection with Sweden possible. I wish to thank the host families for sharing the stories upon which this research is based. Their openness and reflections have provided critical insight into the phenomenon of hosting.

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Dr. Christine Halse, for her vitality, interest and enthusiasm, advice and availability throughout this journey. Her assistance is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Several other people have provided special support to the project. To my friend Catherine Hodgson for the many hours of tape transcription; Peta Black for photocopying assistance and my family support team, Leigh Peggie and Ian Griggs for assisting with formatting, editing and checking as well as providing doses of encouragement when needed.

Through this support and assistance it is hoped that the final research will make a contribution to understanding the nature of participation in hosting programs and provide directions to create the best possible conditions for the host family in that role.
**List of Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFS</td>
<td>American Field Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>Board of Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES</td>
<td>Family Environment Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLAs</td>
<td>Key Learning Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAI</td>
<td>University Admission Index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Acronyms</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction to the Phenomenon of Hosting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards an understanding of the experience of hosting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has the experience of hosting got to do with learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where does the host family fit into a student exchange program?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is known about learning from experience?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why should there be interest in student exchange programs and hosting?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the research problem?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The traditional historical view of student exchange programs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boundaries of the study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the study: an alternative to the behavioural model</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation of the thesis</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: A Survey of the Field</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The components of participation in intercultural events</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The central component in an exchange event: the host family</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for participation in a hosting event: the role of motivation theory</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and the role of expectancy theory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution theory and others in intercultural events</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution theory and the individual self-concept in the intercultural event</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction as a response to motivation and participation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varying descriptions of satisfaction: Worker satisfaction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and satisfaction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent satisfaction</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family systems theory and the host family unit</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation, training and orientation for cross cultural contact</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The culture general assimilator as an aid to preparation of sojourners</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hosting event and the school curriculum</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extra curricular choice of a cross-cultural encounter</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skill development through cross-cultural events</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global understanding through the curricula of cross-cultural events</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations and the intercultural encounter</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of the intercultural exchange in a hosting event</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation and fit in the hosting event</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation, fit and participant selection in the hosting event</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation, fit and responsibilities in the hosting event</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of exchange and adaptation in the hosting event</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of communication skills in the hosting event</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and cross-cultural adjustment in the hosting event</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and culture shock in the hosting event</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and personal and interpersonal skills in the hosting event</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and tolerance for ambiguity in the hosting event</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and persistence in the hosting event</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of successful cross-cultural encounters</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Chapter 3:
Table 1. The base data of the participants in this study.................................................133
Table 2. The initial set of categories.................................................................................135
Table 3. The reduced set of categories............................................................................137
Table 4. The distribution of participants for each category.............................................145

Chapter 5:
Table 5. Dimensions of the sub-category of language learning......................................175
Table 6. Dimensions of the sub-category of responsibility..............................................175
Table 7. Selected sub group data.....................................................................................180
Table 8. Category 1: Understanding selves......................................................................180
Table 9. Category 2: Process of hosting..........................................................................181
Table 10. Category 3: Communication..............................................................................182
Table 11. Category 4: Cultural appreciation.................................................................183
Table 12. Dimensions of category 1: Understanding selves...........................................184
Table 13. Dimensions of category 4: Cultural appreciation...........................................184
Table 14. Open coding: Learning content whole paragraph........................................185
Table 15. Whole document..............................................................................................186
Table 16. Axial coding for ineffective hosting..............................................................187
Table 17. Axial coding for effective hosting....................................................................187
Table 18. The core category and its dimensions.............................................................188

Chapter 6:
Table 19. Referential and structural aspects No. 1.........................................................193
Table 20. Referential and structural aspects No. 2........................................................197
Table 21. Referential and structural aspects No. 3.........................................................200
Table 22. Referential and structural aspects No. 4........................................................201
Table 23. Referential and structural aspects No. 5........................................................203

Chapter 8:
Table 24. Expectancy model for the sojourner in intercultural exchanges..................238
Table 25. Expectancy-value model in the host family context......................................239
Table 26. Expectancy-violations model for the sojourner............................................239
Table 27. Expectancy-violations model in the host family context..............................240
List of Figures

Chapter 1
Figure 1. The context of the host family event from intercultural literature..........................11

Chapter 2
Figure 2. Motivation as a key component of participation in an intercultural event......................17
Figure 3. The host family members in an intercultural exchange event...................................35
Figure 4. Preparation for cross cultural exposure.................................................................43
Figure 5. The school curriculum and learning experiences.....................................................52
Figure 6. Expectations for intercultural participation.............................................................62
Figure 7. The intercultural event of hosting..............................................................................67
Figure 8. Outcomes of cross cultural participation.................................................................98

Chapter 4:
Figure 9. The spectrum of experience in the phenomenon of hosting........................................143

Chapter 5:
Figure 10. Perceptions of the content of learning in the experience of hosting...........................189

Chapter 7:
Figure 11. The hosting phenomenon and the spectrum of the conception of Synergy...................205
Figure 12. The spectrum of Synergy of fit as a component of the phenomenon of hosting............209
Figure 13. The spectrum of Synergy of ownership and responsibility........................................214
Figure 14. The spectrum of Synergy of investment....................................................................217
Figure 15. The spectrum of Synergy and learning.....................................................................219

Chapter 8:
Figure 16. Operation of general systems theory for input and output.......................................225
Figure 17. Communication skills and the experience of hosting...............................................259
Figure 18. Relationship between Synergy, and expectations and outcomes.............................264