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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), no material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Denise Heald: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

The topic of this thesis stems from my interest in finding out whether a partial early childhood Certificate qualification could procure employment in early childhood centres for Chinese student teachers, which could then eventuate in Permanent Residency status. Employment in early childhood centres is currently being driven by the need to comply with Ministry of Education requirements which state that centres need to have fifty per cent of their teachers fully qualified and registered by 2007. The literature surrounding the employment experiences of Asian immigrants to New Zealand reveals negative outcomes, and discrimination is cited as one of the causes of this. However, early childhood education in New Zealand espouses a strong philosophy of cultural diversity and inclusive practice.

The employment experiences of *seven* Chinese early childhood student teachers are documented in this thesis using a qualitative mixed-method approach involving Case Study as the overarching methodology/method, supplemented with Narrative Inquiry and Documentary Analyses to collect and analyse the data.

The main findings of my research were: there are obstacles that this ethnic group faced in gaining employment relevant to their qualification – this was a negative, but not unexpected outcome. The second major finding was that, despite the over-arching philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, I found that there were several areas where the participants of this study were vulnerable to ‘discrimination’. This was predominantly in the form of unfair practices and included: interview experiences; relief teaching; employment contracts; and payment issues. The participants of this study were also vulnerable in other ways. In order to enrol in further study to become fully qualified, they need to achieve a high IELTS (International English Language Testing System) level.

A third and much more positive outcome was that participants who found employment did so through practicum placements, networks of friends, and with those centres that were accepting of ‘cultural difference’. All of these findings were to some extent largely congruent with the literature on immigration experiences of ‘migrants’.

Further research needs to be undertaken on this topic by myself, and others in this field, in particular, how International Students are 'protected' in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I found that there was a 'loophole' in the Immigration Points Table and that International Students are possibly being encouraged to enrol in Early Childhood Certificate programmes in the belief that they will find employment and eventually Permanent Residency status. This research shows that this is not always the case.

In addition to this, further research needs to focus on the views of centre owners and staff, with regard to employing Chinese early childhood educators; the views of Chinese parents with regard to their perspective of Chinese teachers and lastly, in the area of relief teaching. In the conclusion several recommendations for changes to policy and practice at the tertiary level are raised.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction

This chapter begins with an outline of my own personal journey as an expatriate living in Asia, an immigrant to Aotearoa/New Zealand, and as an early childhood educator, which led to my interest in the topic of this thesis. The purpose of this study and its significance is presented in this chapter and this highlights a gap in the literature. The scope of the study provides some background information about the participants of this research and my relationship to them.

Following on from this is an overview of the chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 offer a literature review of the two main topics of this research. Chapter 2 provides information about the immigration journey and Chapter 3 covers part of the philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Chapter 4 explains the methodological approach taken and Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings and the discussion of the findings. In Chapter 7 the strengths and limitations of this research are discussed as well as implications of this study and further research.

My Journey

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that it is important for narrative inquirers to “articulate a relationship between one’s personal interests and sense of significance and larger social concerns expressed in the works of others” (p. 122). Therefore, I begin this chapter with my story of how I came to be an early childhood educator and an immigrant to Aotearoa/New Zealand and this informed my interest in the topic of this thesis.

Originally from England, I spent fourteen years living in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 1981 to 1987 and then from 1989 to 1997. This experience has shaped my thinking about culture and difference because I was the ‘alien’. I experienced the strangeness of living in a foreign culture firsthand and the culture shock for me at this time was acute. The expatriate community in Kaohsiung, Taiwan was very small in the 1980s and when I arrived most of the families had left for the summer to retire to cooler climes. I found myself virtually alone in a country where I could not speak the language, where the

surroundings and transport systems were distinctly different from anything I had ever known, where the food was nothing like the Chinese take-aways I had enjoyed in England and where I stood out in the crowd because I looked so different from everyone else. My empathy with Chinese International Students and the participants of this study stems from this experience.

During my first year in Taiwan, as an expatriate wife with no demands on my time, I responded to the call from other expatriate families to set up and open an early childhood centre. Without any qualifications or previous experience in this field I was very ill prepared for this undertaking, but managed to succeed probably through good luck rather than good management. My two Chinese colleagues taught me much about the Chinese culture and the ways that they valued children which was often in stark contrast to Western beliefs.

In 1989 my family and I moved to Hong Kong where we lived for eight years until 1997. In our last year in Hong Kong, I established a home-based early childhood centre for ten children aged between three and five years old. There were no legal requirements at that time and I employed an assistant whose loving nature and willingness to participate in the children's activities was appreciated not just by me but by the parents of the children we cared for.

Whilst residing in Hong Kong, my family and I undertook the immigration process to become Permanent Residents (hereafter referred to as PR¹) in Aotearoa/New Zealand. At that time, the points system that had been in place since 1987 was in a state of change. Our Immigration Consultant informed us that the point allocation would 'float' which meant that the point allocation would change each month. This system was implemented in order to control the flow of immigrants to New Zealand and ensure a more even spread of applicants across the year. It was recommended that we apply for PR within the first month that this new system was introduced, as it was expected that the points would be set at a low level during this time. We took this advice and with twenty-five points, the exact number needed for that month, we qualified for PR. The

¹ In this thesis I use a host of acronyms. Included are the following: New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA); New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS); International English Language Testing System (IELTS); Full Fee Paying Students (FFPS); Permanent Residency or Permanent Residence (PR); Ministry of Education (MoE).

following month the points had been raised to twenty-nine. Had we waited another month, PR would have been well out of our reach.

Because I had enjoyed the experience of working with children so much in Hong Kong, within one year of my arrival in New Zealand I had enrolled in a Level 5 National Nanny Certificate, not with the intention of becoming a Nanny, but to begin my own journey towards employment in an early childhood centre. With encouragement from my lecturers, I continued on and in 2001, I completed a Bachelor of Education Degree (Early Childhood Education). Armed with my prized degree, I set out to find a centre that would match my high expectations of what early childhood education should be. After nine months of relief teaching I felt completely disillusioned and was left wondering why I had ever undertaken this journey in the first place. I found little evidence in some centres of the 'best practice' and 'quality teaching' that I was taught in the classroom and expected to find in centres. I found that the rhetoric of early childhood education did not match the reality of teaching in some centres.

At that time many teachers were still unqualified but in 2002 the Ministry of Education announced its ten-year strategic plan for early childhood education in New Zealand. This included a requirement that fifty per cent of teachers working in early childhood centres be qualified to a Level 7 diploma or degree by 2007; eighty per cent by 2010 and one hundred per cent by 2012 (MoE, 2002a). Centres that employed fully qualified teachers were rewarded through financial incentives in the form of extra funding.

This produced a surge of interest in early childhood tertiary programmes and employment opportunities to teach at this level. I was offered such an opportunity and worked with Distance Education students for three years from 2002 to 2005 with a private tertiary provider. In 2005 I was offered the opportunity to teach a cohort of Chinese students at a private tertiary provider in Auckland city. This institution offered a 'stand-alone' Level 5 National Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care, which was approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Right from the outset of this course the students' main concerns centred around the possibility of obtaining employment in the field of early childhood education, which would eventually lead to PR status in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As I taught this course, I became increasingly aware of the importance that this cohort of students placed on the

fifty immigration points attributed to this Level 5 Certificate. Very few of the students seemed to have any clear idea of the process that they needed to go through in order to get this highly valued fifty points and most relied on their Immigration Agents to organise this for them. In an effort to assist these students, I did some research myself on the New Zealand Immigration Service (hereafter, referred to as NZIS) website but found that no sooner had I clarified in my own mind what the processes were than it was changed within a matter of days. It seemed that the requirements for immigration was an evolving phenomenon, or more colloquially a moveable feast in terms of policy. There seemed to be a myriad of very fluid options. One of my former students felt that he/she needed to apply quickly before the policies changed once again.

This led to my interest in finding out exactly what the immigration process was in 2006 for International Students. I also wanted to investigate whether the Level 5 Certificate qualification could actually lead to employment opportunities for these students and whether it was possible to gain Permanent Residency via this route.

In the next section of this chapter the purpose and significance of this research are outlined together with the main research questions and the scope of the study. In the last section of this chapter an overview of the chapters in this thesis is presented.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the following issues:

1. To investigate whether a partial qualification was adequate for securing employment in an early childhood centre.
2. To ascertain whether the employment experiences of Chinese Early Childhood student teachers differs from those reported in previous research on Chinese immigrants' employment experiences.
3. To examine what issues arise for the participants of this study in relation to their employment journey.
4. To establish the need to examine current government policies in light of this and other similar studies.

Research Questions

This study seeks to address the broad research question of:

- *What are the experiences of Chinese early childhood student teachers as they journey towards employment?*

The following sub-questions were also considered:

- *What obstacles may Chinese student teachers face on their journey towards employment?*
- *What are the current immigration processes?*
- *How will the participants of this study overcome the obstacles that they may face on their journey?*
- *Are the participants of this study able to find employment in early childhood centres with a partial qualification?*

Significance of study

This research sought to provide a different perspective of Chinese immigrants than those previously documented in other studies regarding migrant settling experiences. Other studies revealed the experiences of *post-arrival* immigrants to Aotearoa/New Zealand. The participants of these studies had completed the immigration process and had been granted Permanent Residency status *prior* to their arrival. Some of the data gathered from these studies revealed that these participants' overseas qualifications and work experience did not assist them in finding employment in New Zealand despite this being a significant part of the initial entry criteria (Henderson, 2003; Henderson, Trlin & Watts, 1999; Watts, White & Trlin, 2002). In contrast, the participants of my research were holders of student visas and had gained a New Zealand qualification, which they hoped would provide employment opportunities in early childhood centres. My research has documented their *journey* towards employment from this perspective.

Other studies have identified the importance of having ethnic representation of the children attending centres (Sanchez, 2006). A significant number of the New Zealand population identify themselves as 'Asian' (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). In this study I am seeking the answer to '*what are the processes for gaining employment in early childhood education for Chinese student teachers?*' I believe that this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge that surrounds the issue of immigrant employment experiences in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses a small sample of one ethnic group, the immigration process and early childhood education. The seven participants that engaged in this study were all aged between twenty and thirty and of Chinese ethnicity. They had all gained the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care in 2005 and were all seeking employment in early childhood education in the Auckland area.

It is important to note that as the researcher of this study, I was known to the participants. As their former lecturer, I had prior knowledge of the participants and their concerns about finding employment as well as being eligible for PR. I believe that my knowledge of the Chinese culture and my experiences of being a ‘foreigner’ in Asian countries as well as an immigrant to New Zealand, established a relationship between us that was based on mutual respect and trust. This enabled the interviews to evolve into narrative conversations and be conducted in a relaxed and informal manner. Had the participants and I been strangers to one another, their responses and my interpretation of these may have been different. This research was conducted *for* the participants and *with* the participants rather than being conducted *on* the participants and I am grateful to them for their willingness to participate in this study.

What follows is an overview of the chapters in this thesis.

Overview of Chapters

In the initial stages of this research project, it became clear to me that the topic of Chinese early childhood student teachers’ journey towards employment would encompass two main issues. Their journey would include visa and immigration procedures as well as the process of securing employment in early childhood centres. These two issues are intrinsically linked. In order to secure employment, the participants of my research need to have the correct work permit. Therefore, in order to explore each topic fully, the literature review has been divided into two chapters, which are: The Immigration Journey and Early Childhood Education.

Chapter 2 – The Immigration Journey

Chapter 2 reviews the literature surrounding the settling experiences of migrants to New Zealand who have gained Permanent Residency status prior to their arrival. Current literature suggests that that the road to employment for some immigrant groups is

challenging with several twists and turns and some unforeseen pitfalls (Henderson, 2003; Henderson et al., 1999; Watts et al., 2002). The barriers that some ethnic groups have found are centred on cultural misunderstandings and racial mistrust. A thorough search of the literature indicates that a study that specifically presents the journey towards employment for Chinese early childhood student teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand is not yet available.

I believe that in order to understand the process for applying for immigration *within* New Zealand, it is important to analyse the New Zealand Immigration Service policy documents as they relate to the participants of this study. Highlighted within this section of the literature review is a loophole in the immigration policy (NZIS, 2006a). This is discussed in terms of the Ministry of Education requirements for early childhood education (MoE, 2002a) as well as the implications for individuals who are hoping that this route will enable them to secure employment in early childhood education.

The significance of these issues is discussed in this chapter in terms of the potential to provide early childhood centres with a higher ratio of linguistic and culturally diverse teachers than may currently be the case. It is important to understand that the discourse of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand strongly supports the notion of embracing diversity. This point is very much a part of its underlying philosophy and is discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Chapter 3 – Early Childhood Education

Chapter 3 outlines the philosophy of inclusive practice in early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand and illustrates the concept of culturally competent care. I argue in this section that Chinese bilingual early childhood teachers can contribute to early childhood centres by facilitating smooth transitions from home to centre for Chinese children; by bridging the culture gap between parents and centre staff and initiating effective parent-teacher partnerships; and by becoming language models for young children's first language (Chan, 2006; Guo, 2004b; Sims & Hutchins 2001).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecological development is used in this chapter to illustrate the influence of macro-level Government policies pertaining to immigration and education on the micro-level development of the participants. This is illustrated and discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

This research sought to investigate the journey towards employment for Chinese early childhood student teachers and is conducted under the general umbrella of qualitative research. Within this paradigm, a mixed method approach is taken, which includes case study, narrative inquiry and documentary analyses. This enabled me to specifically explore the processes that these participants needed to undertake in order to gain valid work visas as well as the processes of finding employment.

I believe that the characteristics of qualitative research are well matched to the overall philosophy of early childhood education, that of being a relational undertaking. One of the features of quality early childhood education and care is the type and frequency of interactions that occur between adults and children (Dunkin & Hanna, 2001). Qualitative researchers recognise that invisible processes can only be accurately understood through dialogue with the person seeking knowledge and those participating in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Research participation in this study was voluntary and the participants were recruited from the cohort of International Students that I had taught in 2005. The participants identified themselves as individuals who were seeking employment in early childhood education in the Auckland area. The experience of finding employment was a novel state for the participants of this study, in that they all had completed a Level 5 Certificate and apart from two practicum experiences, had not sought employment in this field before.

Data was collected over a five-month period in the form of semi-structured audiotaped interviews that inquired into the process of transitioning through the visa process, from a Student Visa to a Graduate Job Search Visa to a Work To Residence Visa. The interview questions also explored the participants' employment experiences. Several themes emerged from the data and these were presented in the next chapter, The Findings.

Chapter 5 – Findings

To honour the participants and respect their style of story telling, Chapter 5 presents the information gathered from the interviews verbatim. This chapter covers the beginning of their journeys when they first left China and moves through their interview and employment experiences. The four main themes that became evident from the

participants' narratives were Immigration Agents; Visa Applications; Employment Experiences and Continuation of Further Study.

By the end of the data collection period, most of the participants had some response to their curriculum vitae, had been for job interviews or were employed. The section on Employment Experiences² presented the largest amount of information, therefore this was divided into the following subheadings: Applying for Jobs; Interview Experiences; Employment Contracts; Relief Teaching; Cultural Difference; Payment Issues; Perceptions of Early Childhood Centres and Luck.

In most of the participants interviews one theme that stood out above all the rest was their 'vulnerability' and this filters through all the other themes, which made it impossible to separate from the other themes. However, this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the Discussion of the Findings.

Chapter 6 – Discussion of the Findings

The findings revealed that participants' vulnerability was a recurring theme. Although the participants were vulnerable in a variety of situations, this seemed to be most evident in their stories about their interview experiences; relief teaching; when they were treated as unpaid labour; and with regard to English language requirements.

Other areas of participants' vulnerability that arose were the obstacles that participants faced on their journeys. These were related to difficulties with payment, employment contracts and continuation of further study and are also discussed in this chapter.

Some aspects of the participants' experiences of finding employment were congruent with the literature presented in Chapter 2. Those participants who were able to find employment did so through networks of friends or were employed by people who were accepting of difference. Participants who were unable to find employment returned to further study in a different area of employment. Other studies relayed similar outcomes (Daley, 1998; Henderson, 2003; Henderson et al., 1999). The issue of *employability* is raised in this chapter. I argue that the motivating force behind the early childhood

² It should be noted that the section on 'Employment Experiences' only covers some of the participants first few months in employment. For the purposes of completing this thesis, it became necessary to curtail gathering further data.

employment market is the need for fully qualified educators regardless of their ethnicity and this is explored more fully in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

In this chapter the research findings are briefly summarised and the strengths and limitations are presented. The main contribution of this research is discussed and it is suggested that the processes that the participants traversed in order to gain employment in early childhood centres, may be useful to other immigrants intending to follow this route.

With regard to future research the following areas could be considered:

- The monitoring of Immigration Agents
- The supervision of Private Tertiary Providers and their marketing techniques
- The protection of International Students
- Relief teaching (relievers, managers and teachers perspectives)
- Managers' and teachers' perspectives of cultural diversity
- Chinese parents' perspectives of Chinese teachers
- The post-employment experiences of fully qualified Chinese teachers

The implications of this research are also discussed in this chapter and I maintain that there is a place for Chinese student teachers in New Zealand early childhood centres. However, I believe that there needs to be systems in place to assist International Students in achieving their goal of gaining a Level 7 qualification and Teachers Registration. In order to do this, I believe that tertiary institutions and the New Zealand Teachers Council need to re-evaluate their policies and practices. Further to this, I believe that the Ministry of Education should consider implementing an Ethnic Child Care Resource Centre similar to those operating in Australia, to support the settling process for immigrants and their families when they first arrive in New Zealand.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an insight into my own personal and professional journey as an immigrant to New Zealand and as an early childhood educator. This journey has enabled me to align myself more closely to the participants of this research despite our differences in culture. An ecological model of development was used as the framework

for this research and this has been particularly useful in portraying the links between high order government policies and the impact that these have on the individual.

This chapter has outlined the purpose of this research, which is to document the journey towards employment for Chinese early childhood student teachers and interpret their experiences along the way. The significance of this study is explained in terms of its relevance to supporting children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds that attend early childhood centres in New Zealand. The scope of this study was summarised in this chapter and my relationship with participants was discussed. Finally, an overview of each chapter has been presented.

In Chapter 2, previous immigration policies are examined in order to reveal how current policies have evolved. The employment experiences of Asian migrants to New Zealand and the obstacles they faced are discussed and this is linked to the issue of discrimination.

Chapter 2 - The Immigration Journey

Preamble

The literature review presented in the next two chapters takes the reader on two tours. The first is through the pathways and avenues that can lead an individual to immigration in New Zealand. While the second guides the reader through the landscape of cultural diversity in early childhood education and highlights the benefits of employing Chinese student teachers in early childhood centres. Together both tours provide some insight into what the journey towards employment might be like for these (the participants) and potentially other Chinese early childhood student teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the ways in which immigration policy has evolved over the past two decades in order to see how the current policy may apply to the participants of this study. This literature review begins with an overview of the main policy changes from 1986 to 2006, which have affected the immigration process for the participants of this study. However, the focus of this chapter is mostly on the 2006 immigration policy that will enable the participants of this research to live and work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Currently there several visas available that allow entry into New Zealand. The visas that are relevant to this research are Tourist and Student visas (NZIS, 2006b). However, in order to qualify for Permanent Residency, migrants must choose from the following six pathways: Skilled Migrant; Work To Residence; Family Sponsorship; Investor; Entrepreneur and Humanitarian (NZIS, 2006c). The participants of this research who are applying for PR will do so through the Work To Residence category, therefore only this policy will be discussed in this literature review.

A documentary analysis of the current immigration policies revealed a loophole in the allocation of points for PR. Fifty points are allocated for a one-year Level 5 qualification as well as a three-year Level 7 qualification. This effectively can reduce the amount of time it would take to gain PR by circumventing the need for three years of study (NZIS, 2006a). This issue is discussed in relation to Ministry of Education requirements for early childhood teachers as well as the implications of this for student teachers.

It is suggested in this chapter that some International Students may be vulnerable to unfair or unethical practices by tertiary providers. Therefore, reference is made in this chapter to the Ministry of Education's *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (2002b).

As outlined above, there are many avenues to migration in New Zealand and finding the best route to suit individual circumstances can be a daunting task to the uninitiated. Therefore, many potential immigrants employ the services of an Immigration Consultant. The role of the Immigration Consultant is examined in this chapter because this may be the first point of contact for the participants of my research in their journey towards employment in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The literature reveals that individuals may also be vulnerable to the unscrupulous practices of some Immigration Consultants and it is suggested in this chapter that this industry needs to be monitored through registration of all agencies operating in New Zealand.

The employment experiences of Asian migrants are examined in this chapter and the literature identifies that English language proficiency is a crucial factor in achieving successful settling outcomes for migrants. An explanation of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is offered here because it is used by most tertiary institutions as part of their entry criteria (IELTS, 1995). This discussion is linked to employers' expectations of English proficiency as well as current immigration policy requirements. Arising from this is the opinion that immigration policy, which includes English language criteria, is discriminatory (Henderson, Trlin, & Watts, 1999). This chapter concludes with a general discussion of discrimination against Asian migrants in New Zealand.

Immigration Policies from 1986 to 1996

In order to understand the journey towards employment for the participants of this research it is necessary to provide some explanation of how previous immigration policies have influenced current policies. What follows therefore, is an explanation of how immigration policy in New Zealand has evolved over the past twenty years to enable the participants of this study access to immigration in 2006.

Post-war immigration policies favoured traditional source countries such as the UK and Ireland, but in 1986 immigration policy was relaxed to allow more immigrants from

non-traditional source countries, such as South East Asia. The reason for this was to boost New Zealand's economic growth (Daley, 1998; Henderson, 2003; Henderson et al., 1999). Henderson, et al., (1999) state that "The governments free-market economic restructuring concerns about brain drain and net migration losses, along with a desire to increase New Zealand's competitive edge globally and to tap into the new powerhouses of Asia, were driving immigration policy" (p. 143). This change caused a surge of applications particularly from China between 1986 and 1996 (Daley, 1998). Although the new changes brought about in 1986 included new criteria that were based on personal merit "without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin" (Burke, 1986) a quota system was also implemented in 1986 in order to regulate the numbers of Chinese immigrants. This was seen by some to be discriminatory (Henderson, et al., 1999). The issue of discrimination is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The changes to immigration policy in 1991 saw the introduction of a points system. At this time, points were awarded for age; qualifications; work experience; a job offer; investment funds and sponsorship by family members and community groups. In the same year, the General Skills Category was introduced, which was designed to actively recruit immigrants for their human capital on a non-preferential basis (Butcher, 2004). This category became the main route of entry for Chinese immigrants in 1991 and numbers of applications tripled between 1991 and 1995 (Henderson, 2003). However, this created a moral panic about Asian immigration and a spate of "Inv-Asian" articles appeared in the mass media (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 22).

As a result of this, a review of immigration policy was conducted, and in 1995 "social cohesion" was added to the existing immigration policy, which sought to strengthen international links and encourage enterprise and innovation (Henderson, 2003, p. 145). The General Skills Category replaced the General Category and under the new policy, points were removed for investment of funds but more points were awarded for qualifications (Henderson, Trlin, Pernice & North, 1997).

Under this new policy immigrants needed to prove that they had a "modest" amount of English language proficiency (Henderson, 2003, p. 145). The reason for this was two-fold. Firstly, English language proficiency had been identified as key to successful settlement. Secondly, it was hoped that by adding this language requirement, it would

change the migrant mix and reduce the “over-supply of high quality” migrants from Asia (Henderson, 2003, p. 145). The issue of English language proficiency is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. These new policy changes caused a marked decline in applications from East Asian countries and other non-English speaking countries. This resulted in a reduction in investment funds from overseas, which then led to calls for further policy revisions (Henderson et al., 1997).

In 1998 immigration policy was adjusted yet again as a result of the collapse of the Coalition Government and the appointment of a new Minister of Immigration. It was recognised by the government at this time, that the strict policy requirements implemented in 1995 had a detrimental effect especially on business migration and the inflow of investment in New Zealand. Therefore, the policy changes in 1998 were designed to make “New Zealand a more attractive destination for migrants from non-English speaking countries with skills and capital” (Bedford & Ho, 1998, p. 127). The key changes to the 1998 policy that impact on the participants of this study was that the existing Student policy at that time was linked to Permanent Residency. In addition to this, points were awarded for New Zealand graduates in the General Skills Category. This change exempted overseas students from the previous requirement of working for two years if they completed a general skills qualification within New Zealand (Bedford & Ho, 1998). This meant that they were able to apply for PR sooner than had previously been the case.

In 2002 more changes were introduced which included four principal immigrant streams. These were the Skilled Migrant category, the Business Migrant category, the Family Sponsored Migrant category and the International/Humanitarian Migrant category. Further changes were then introduced in 2003 and the Skilled Migrant Category replaced the General Skills Category. The points system was expanded to include bonus points for employment in specific skills shortages, taking up employment outside of the Auckland region and gaining New Zealand qualifications (Butcher, 2004).

Current Policy Requirements

The following section of this literature review provides a documentary analysis of the current 2006 New Zealand immigration policy that is relevant to the participants of this

research. This is intended to provide some understanding of the processes that they need to undertake in order to be granted a work permit.

New Zealand currently has an ‘Advance Passenger Screening’ system (NZIS, 2006d) designed to protect New Zealand’s borders. All visitors to New Zealand have to hold a current and appropriate visa. Individuals can apply for a variety of visas that will enable them to visit, live, work or study in New Zealand without needing to apply for Permanent Residency. However, some of these visas can eventually lead to Permanent Residence status and these are Skilled Migrant; Work To Residence; Family Sponsorship; Investor; Entrepreneur and Humanitarian (NZIS, 2006c). For the purposes of this research, only the category that is relevant to the participants of this study will be discussed here and this is the Work To Residence category. Full details of the current immigration policy can be found on the New Zealand Immigration Service website (www.immigration.govt.nz). What follows is a description of the pathway that the participants of this study took to enter New Zealand.

Student Visa

The participants of this research began their journey by entering New Zealand using a Student Visa. Shortly after their arrival this was changed to a Student Permit. In order to evoke this change, individuals need to provide evidence of enrolment in a course of study and have paid course fees. In addition applicants must be of “good character” and have “an acceptable standard of health” (NZIS, 2006b, p. 8). Character requirements entail providing evidence of a Police check from the applicant’s home country. A health check undertaken in New Zealand is also required and this involves obtaining a medical and X-ray certificate (NZIS, 2006b).

Students may be granted a *Variation of Condition* on their Student Permit. This allows them to work up to 20 hours a week and also extend their Student Permit if necessary. However, students may not be self-employed. Students may work full-time when they have completed their course of study under the following conditions:

- They have successfully completed a course in New Zealand that had a minimum completion time of three years; or
- they have successfully completed in New Zealand a qualification that would qualify for points under the Skilled Migrant Category of the Residence Policy;

- they can provide evidence of an offer of employment relevant to that course or qualification;
- they have evidence that their Work Permit application is being made no later than three months after the end date of their Student Permit for that course or qualification;
- or they can provide evidence that they are a holder of a Graduate Job Search Work Permit. (NZIS, 2006b, p. 10).

Graduate Job Search Work Permit

Students may apply for a Graduate Job Search Work Permit, which is open for six months only. To get this they must meet the following criteria:

- They must have successfully completed a qualification in New Zealand that would qualify for points under the Skilled Migrant Category of Residence Policy;
- they must show evidence that they have a minimum of \$2,100 in funds available to maintain themselves; and
- they must show evidence that their Graduate Job Search Work Permit application is being made no later than three months after the end date of their Student Permit for that qualification. (NZIS, 2006c, p. 10).

Work to Residence Permit

Once a visa holder has found a job that relates to their New Zealand qualification, they may apply for a Work To Residence Permit. To obtain this they must meet the following stipulations:

- Have an International English Level Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.5 in the general band. (A fuller explanation of the IELTS process is detailed later in this chapter);
- they must have another health check if it has been over three months since the last one;
- they must have another police check if it has been over six months since the last one and they must have a job offer that is relevant to their qualification (NZIS, 2006c).

Permanent Residency

People intending to migrate to New Zealand and obtain Permanent Residency status can do so under these categories: Skilled Migrant; Work To Residence; Family Sponsorship; and Investor and Entrepreneur (NZIS, 2006c).

Some of the participants of this study have a desire to live permanently in New Zealand. They can do this by applying for PR if they have been issued with a Work To Residence visa. The process for obtaining PR under the Work To Residence category is as follows: Prospective immigrants need to submit an “Expression of Interest”, which provides the Immigration Case Officer with details about the applicant and their suitability for migrating to New Zealand (NZIS, 2006e, p. 1). The Expression of Interest will then be assessed and allocated points based on the following criteria: The principal applicant’s current skilled employment in New Zealand or offer of employment; their work experience; their qualifications, and their age (NZIS, 2006e).

Bonus points are allocated for employment, work experience and qualifications in identified areas of growth or absolute skill shortage. Bonus points are also available for employment outside Auckland and for New Zealand qualifications gained within the past two years. There are also bonus points if the principal applicant or their partner have a close family member living in New Zealand who is a resident or citizen of New Zealand. Applicants may also gain bonus points from their partners’ employment and qualifications (NZIS, 2006a).

Under the current immigration policy, applicants can submit an Expression of Interest if they have a minimum of 100 points. The Expression of Interest then goes into a ‘pool’. These are ranked from highest to lowest points and are drawn from the pool every two weeks. If the principal applicant has 140 points or more then they are automatically selected for immigration and their application does not go into the pool (NZIS, 2006e).

Once an Expression of Interest has been drawn from the pool, or an applicant has been accepted, the principal applicant is then invited to immigrate to New Zealand and he or she may accept or decline this offer. On acceptance of the offer, the principal applicant will then be issued with a visa or permit which allows them to move from a work visa to a residence visa. After three years of Permanent Residency status, the immigrant can then apply for New Zealand citizenship via the Internal Affairs Office (NZIS, 2006e).

Points Table

The participants of this study who are intending to apply for Permanent Residency will gain points for their Early Childhood Certificate. This Certificate is issued by the New

Zealand Qualifications Authority as a Level 5 qualification and, as Table 1 indicates, is eligible for 50 immigration points.

Table 1: New Zealand Immigration Service Points Table

Qualification awarded by New Zealand universities, polytechnics or other New Zealand registered private training establishments	Register Level	Points
Doctoral degree	Level 10	55 points
Master's degree	Level 9	55 points
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Level 9	55 points
Postgraduate diploma	Level 8	50 points
Postgraduate certificate	Level 8	50 points
Bachelor's degree with Honours	Level 8	50 points
1 year Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching	Level 8	50 points
Bachelor's degree	Level 7	50 points
Graduate diploma	Level 7	50 points
3 year Bachelor of Education (Teaching) degree	Level 7	50 points
4 year Bachelor of Education degree/Diploma of Teaching	Level 8	50 points
4 year Bachelor's degree	Level 8	50 points
Graduate certificate	Level 8	50 points
3 year Bachelor of Nursing degree	Level 7	50 points
3 year nursing diploma	Level 6	50 points
3-year polytechnic Diploma, named or unspecified.	Level 6	50 points
3 year Diploma of Teaching	Level 6	50 points
3 year polytechnic Diploma in Business or Advanced Dip Bus.	Level 6	50 points
New Zealand Diploma in Business	Level 5	50 points
New Zealand Certificate in Engineering, Science, Building etc.	Level 5 or Level 6	50 points
New Zealand Advanced Trade Certificate	Level 4	50 points
New Zealand Trade Certificate	Level 4	50 points
New Zealand Apprenticeship	Level 4	50 points
National Diplomas at Level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework or above which are conferred by New Zealand tertiary institutions	Level 7	50 points
National Diplomas at Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework or above which are awarded by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, a New Zealand polytechnic or a New Zealand registered private training establishment	Level 5	50 points
For registration purposes by the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drain layers Board the National Certificate in Plumbing (level 4) and National Certificate in Gas fitting (level 4)	Level 4	50 points

(Source: NZIS, 2006a).

As can be seen from this table, the same numbers of points are awarded for a Level 7 Degree and a Level 5 National Diploma awarded by the New Zealand Qualifications

Authority, a New Zealand polytechnic or a New Zealand registered private training establishment. The level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care comes under this category. This possibly presents a loophole in immigration policy. From this information, it would seem that applicants can circumvent the three year Level 7 Bachelor of Education (Teaching) degree, by completing the one year Level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care and gain the same number of immigration points. However, Chapter 3 of this literature review explains that the Ministry of Education require 50 per cent of early childhood teachers working in centres to be fully qualified to a Level 7 standard and registered with the Teachers Council by 2007; 80 per cent by 2010 and 100 per cent by 2012 (MoE, 2002a).

This has several implications for International Students undertaking this Level 5 Certificate course. This loophole presents an opportunity for individuals seeking a shorter route to Permanent Residency status if they are able to secure employment in a centre that does not require a fully qualified teacher. However, if they want to remain in early childhood education for the foreseeable future they will have to consider extending their qualification to a Bachelor Degree or Diploma in order to meet Ministry of Education requirements. The advantage of this route is that once International Students have Permanent Residency status they can enrol in a tertiary establishment as a Domestic Student and pay reduced fees. I believe that this has become an attractive option for gaining PR for those who may not have previously considered a career in early childhood education. In Chapter 3, I argue that young children attending early childhood centres need to be represented by adults of the same or similar ethnicities in order to achieve positive learning outcomes for children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. This loophole may provide a means of achieving this.

Another implication for individuals undertaking a 'stand alone' Level 5 Certificate qualification in early childhood education, is that they are disadvantaged if they want to continue to a Level 7 Diploma or Degree with another tertiary provider because they may be offered limited recognition of prior learning. The consequences of this are that they will have to take extra papers and their course completion date will be extended beyond the three years that it is normally expected to take to complete a Diploma or Degree in early childhood education. It is therefore, more advantageous for individuals to enrol with a tertiary institution that offers both a Level 5 and a Level 7 qualification.

I believe that this loophole could leave some student teachers in a vulnerable position. They may take this route on the understanding that it may be a shortcut to PR. However, as the Ministry of Education deadline (of 2012) draws closer, individuals without a Level 7 qualification may find it more and more difficult to find employment in early childhood centres. Without an offer of employment that matches their qualification, student-teachers would be unable to gain the necessary points to apply for PR. Therefore, their Level 5 qualification could become less valuable in terms of its usefulness for gaining employment and PR.

Tertiary institutions that offer this stand alone qualification need to take responsibility for ensuring that their students are made fully aware of the Ministry of Education requirements and attendant implications for example, the possible difficulties of finding employment with a partial qualification. They also need to ensure that there are pathways for their students so that they have the option to enrol in a Level 7 qualification at an alternative tertiary institution.

The Ministry of Education has recognised that International Students could be vulnerable to unfair and unethical practices of some educational providers. As a consequence of this the Ministry of Education (2002b) has published the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* with which all education providers in New Zealand are required to comply. In this document, it is stated that: “When students from other countries come to study in New Zealand, it is important that those students are well informed, safe, and properly cared for” (MoE, 2002b, p. 21). This document has a dual function. Firstly, it provides “a framework of service delivery by educational providers” (p. 21) and secondly it “sets out the minimum standards of advice and care that are expected of educational providers with respect to international students” (p. 21). It also offers advice to International Students with regard to the process for lodging a complaint against an educational institution.

The Ministry of Education recognises that the international education ‘industry’ has significant financial benefits to New Zealand (MoE, 2006b) and Butcher (2004) believes that this provides “a crucial source of funding for state educational institutions and subsidises domestic education” (p. 259). Between 2002 and 2003 16,018 people applying for Permanent Residency had entered New Zealand on a Student Visa (NZIS, 2003). Belich (2001) refers to this as “educational immigration” (p. 536) which he

believes is a recent phenomenon, and states that immigrants are using this immigration route to avoid paying full international educational fees. By this Belich (2001) infers that migrants are taking a short cut to PR suggesting that immigrants arrive in New Zealand on a Student Visa, then study until such time that they can apply for PR at which point they become a Domestic Student and continue studying paying domestic fees.

However, Butcher (2004) questions whether educational immigration is that simple, recent or prevalent. He points out that International Students *have* to pay full fees when they first arrive in New Zealand by virtue of the fact that they are not Domestic Students and their fees financially benefit educational institutions, which is why New Zealand is marketed as a study destination. Butcher (2004) also comments that some students return to their home country or use their New Zealand qualification as a springboard elsewhere. Qin (2004) supports this belief, and found from her study that “Chinese international students not only show a neutral intention on staying in New Zealand after they have graduated, but also give little thought to having a career in New Zealand” (p. 81). Qin (2004) states that International Students tend to treat New Zealand as a pathway rather than a destination. Further to this, Butcher (2004) believes that education is not the primary reason for migrating and immigrants arrive in New Zealand for a variety of different reasons, education being only one of them. However, Butcher (2004) goes on to suggest that we are legislatively encouraging International Students to reside and work in New Zealand through current immigration policy, which provides pathways to Permanent Residency status through the Work To Residence policy as described previously (NZIS, 2006c).

Immigration Consultants

Although the immigration process may seem relatively straightforward on paper, it could be a formidable task for the uninitiated. Many prospective immigrants use a consultancy service to assist in processing their immigration application and Lovelock and Trlin (2000) suggest that this is due to several reasons:

- To avoid the stress of having to deal with bureaucracy;
- to maximise their chances of success;
- because they may be fearful of dealing directly with official bureaucracies due to negative experiences in their home countries; and

- so that they can discuss their application with someone who is outside the decision making domain without compromising their application prospects or impacting the eventual decision.

The immigration industry began to emerge in the mid 1980s as a result of the New Zealand government's "free market economy philosophy" that provoked a slackening of the previously tight immigration policies and instigated new policy initiatives designed to build New Zealand's human capital (Lovelock & Trlin, 2000, p. 40). The resulting increase in immigrants to New Zealand created a niche market for immigration consultants.

Lovelock and Trlin (2000) report that up until the 1990s, the immigration industry was self-policing and that there have been many examples of client exploitation and other forms of misconduct. They provide a long list that includes:

- The charging of exorbitant fees for either minimal or no service at all;
- holding passports as security against payments;
- false advertising;
- obtaining documents under false pretences;
- encouraging potential immigrants to proceed with applications without any chance of being successful;
- offering guarantees regarding employment success without disclosing NZQA requirements;
- arranging false jobs for applicants in order to obtain work visas, bribing overseas NZIS staff;
- promoting New Zealand as a country that readily provides social welfare benefits;
- arranging marriages to secure entry and/or residence;
- offering poor quality investment advice;
- being involved in the employment of people on visitor visas at lower than minimum wage rates;
- making false refugee or asylum claims and lastly;
- extortion which involved some consultants in advising their clients that unless they pay extra fees their application process will be sabotaged and the application declined.

Lovelock and Trlin (2000) believe that it is of crucial importance that the immigration industry in New Zealand be registered and regulated. They assert that this will generate respect from government agencies and would strengthen the relationship between industry and the NZIS enabling the industry to become part of the consultation process of policy change. They note that regulation and registration would also establish a reputation of professionalism, integrity and honesty. I believe this would further protect International Students, some of whom may be vulnerable to the unethical practices of some Immigration Consultants.

Migrant Employment Experiences

As explained earlier, in order to qualify for PR, individuals who chose to take the Work To Residence route need to find employment that matches their New Zealand qualification. However, research suggests that finding employment in New Zealand for migrants is not always easy. The Department of Internal Affairs (1996) found that immigrants from ethnic minorities faced formidable barriers with regard to finding employment. The data collected in this research was from individuals who had been granted PR *prior* to arriving in New Zealand; however, I believe that it may be applicable to my research. The barriers highlighted in this report were:

- misinformation;
- misunderstanding;
- denial of opportunities;
- non-recognition of overseas qualifications;
- inaccessibility to the job market; and
- the inability to gain training or work experience.

The participants of Butcher, Spoonley and Trlin's, (2004) study found that recognised and appropriate qualifications, especially New Zealand qualifications, together with New Zealand work experience were a major factor in securing employment. Similarly, the participants of Henderson, et al's (1999) study found that securing jobs in their own or other fields was "largely unsuccessful" based on their overseas qualifications (p. 111). The research that Daley (1998) conducted on the settlement issues for immigrants from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea yielded similar results. She found there was a mismatch in migrants' expectations and employers' attitudes and needs. The qualifications and work experience that some migrants had were not valued or recognised by New Zealand employers despite the fact that these were the criteria that

had provided immigrants with points in order to be able to apply for work permits and Permanent Residency in the first place. Henderson et al., (1999) believe that this presents somewhat of a “Catch-22” situation whereby migrants are unable to find employment in their chosen field because they don’t have relevant work experience and they are unable to gain work experience, even when they offered to work without pay (p. 113). The participants of Barnard’s (1996) research had similar experiences and one participant who was a teacher said: “People told me my CV was wonderful, that I had so much qualifications, but no New Zealand work experience, but how do I get New Zealand work experience when I don’t have a job?” (p. 98).

Both national and international literature reveal that outcomes of negative employment experiences for immigrants are associated with (among other things) poor mental health for the unemployed and their families (Butcher et al., 2004; Henderson, 2003; McKee & Bell, 1986). Butcher et al., (2004) state that “gaining employment and the financial and emotional security which follow, is a key element in the successful integration of immigrants” (p. 18). A research project conducted by NZIS (2003) revealed that migrants from North East Asia had the lowest employment participation rates than any other non-English speaking migrant groups. In particular, they also found that non-English speaking migrants had lower work force participation rates than English speaking migrants.

However, not all Asian immigrants have negative employment experiences. Some have positive experiences and this has been attributed to a variety of reasons. For example, in Henderson’s (2003) study, participants who found work reported that employers were accepting of difference. Teachers who had been on practicum placement were able to prove themselves to employers and this often led to employment. Also successful employment experiences were often attributed to networks of friends and relatives who were able to recommend individuals to employers. Henderson (2003) states that: “Being already known and/or recommended by friends or contacts within an organisation removed the sense of the ‘unknown’ and ‘risk’ for a potential employer” (p. 158). Nevertheless, she goes on to comment that “such opportunities were rare” (p.158) and reports that at the end of her research, only half of the original panel of participants were in any form of employment in New Zealand. She believes that this was due to employers requiring New Zealand qualifications as well as New Zealand work experience. However, she points out that the employment situation for the participants

of this longitudinal study improved with length of residence and this was attributed to greater proficiency in English (Henderson, 2003; NZIS, 2003).

English Proficiency

Burke (1986) believes that “the ability to communicate in English is probably the most important single factor in facilitating participation in the work place and the community at large” (p. 46). This is supported by the NZIS (1995, p. 10) who state that:

Immigration is most successful for the immigrant, the community they live in, and the whole country if the new resident has a modest command of English. This applies not only to the principal applicant but also to the whole family unit. Lack of English can be costly for everyone.

Supporting this position, Henderson et al., (1999) found that a lack of English language proficiency was another barrier in gaining employment for Chinese migrants. However, Friesen and Ip (1997) found that even though 47 per cent of their participants could read English language newspapers they were still underemployed or not gainfully employed.

Immigration policy requirements for English ability have changed frequently over the past two decades and this has been documented in detail in other places (Daley 1998; Henderson, 1997; Henderson et al., 1997). These policy changes have been part of a bigger picture to influence the flow of migrants particularly from non-English speaking countries. Fawcett and Carino (1987) believe that the over-correcting and then under-correcting of immigration policy is a result of national attitudes to immigration and ethnicity, and this would certainly be true given the backlash of feeling that was created by Winston Peters’ comments in 1994 that implied that immigrants were taking jobs from New Zealanders. This stirred up public concern about an “Asian Invasion” (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 22) and subsequent to this, in 1996 policy changes were implemented that increased the English language requirement making it more difficult for applicants from non-English speaking countries to immigrate to New Zealand (Farmer, 2006).

Current Policy Requirements for English Proficiency

Immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds applying to migrate under the current immigration policy in 2006 are required to sit an international English exam known as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (NZIS, 2006f). This is a programme jointly supported by the British Council, the University of

Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) and the IDP Education Australia: IELTS Australia. The primary purpose of the IELTS test is to assess the English proficiency of candidates seeking further and higher education whose courses are conducted in English, but it is increasingly used for other purposes such as fulfilling immigration requirements. The test consists of four skills sections, these are: listening, reading, writing and speaking and these are tested in that order. In the reading and writing modules there are two versions. These are Academic and General Training. The Academic version is designed for students who intend to study at undergraduate and postgraduate level (Henderson et al., 1997). The General Training version is designed to assess candidates “who are going to English speaking countries to complete their secondary education or to undertake work experience or training programmes not at a university level” (IELTS, 1995, p. 6).

The IELTS test is graded on a scale from 1.0 (which indicates the candidate is a non-user of English) to 9.0 (which indicates that the candidate is an expert user). The IELTS handbook estimates that it usually takes between 100 and 200-plus hours of English instruction for an individual to improve by one IELTS level (IELTS, 1995). Collier (1987) states that the difference in terms of how long it takes for a second-language learner to obtain fluency in social language as opposed to academic language is huge. It may only take a short time to become orally fluent in a second language but it could take from seven to ten years to become *academically* fluent. Whilst second language students are developing proficiency in academic language they are also catching up and keeping up with native speakers. Collier (1987) asserts that to achieve successful academic performance at secondary and university levels is a monumental achievement for second language learners.

It should be noted here that most tertiary establishments offering a Diploma or Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care require, on average, an IELTS level of 6.5 as part of their entry criteria for International Students and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis (Unitec, 2006; The University of Auckland, 2006; Auckland University of Technology, 2006; New Zealand Tertiary College, 2006; Manukau Institute of Technology, 2006). In order to meet Ministry of Education requirements, early childhood teachers who have completed a Level 7 qualification in early childhood education also need to become registered by the New Zealand Teachers Council. The entry criteria for individuals who are classified as non-resident, is an IELTS level of 7.0

in the academic band. This is considered to be at the ‘high’ competency end of the scale (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2006a) and is explored more fully in Chapter 3 where I argue that fulfilling the Teachers Council requirements could become an obstacle for the participants of this research in their journey towards employment.

It has been suggested that English language tests are discriminatory (Henderson et al., 1997; Butcher, 2004). There follows in the next section of this literature review, a fuller discussion of discrimination and I argue that discrimination could be another obstacle that the participants of my research may face in their journey towards employment.

Discrimination

Daley (1998) believes that immigration policy that has English language criteria is discriminatory because it favours people from “traditional source countries” (p. 38), and by this she means the United Kingdom and Ireland. Hyde (1996) goes one step further and states that all immigration policy is discriminatory because it seeks to exclude some and include others. This is supported by Butcher, et al., (2004) who define discrimination by asserting that it is an act or policy which advantages or disadvantages groups or individuals.

Discriminatory practices can easily lead to racism when one ethnic group is targeted. Bulmer and Solomos (1999) define racism as:

An ideology of racial domination based on (i) beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and (ii) the use of such beliefs to rationalize or prescribe the racial group’s treatment in society as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment. (p. 4)

Castles (2000) believes that racism varies in intensity from ‘everyday racism’, which he defines as:

The received ideas of racist culture are not expressed openly, but rather in the form of ahistorical common-sense notions about the character and achievements of specific groups and about the inevitability of competitions and conflict between different races (p. 173).

To:

Prejudiced attitudes, discrimination (in legal status, employment, housing, eligibility to services and access to public places) verbal or written abuse,

incitement to hatred, discrimination or violence, harassment designed to intimidate or insult, and physical violence (p. 175).

Discrimination against Chinese migrants has a long history in New Zealand beginning in the 1880s with the levies imposed on Chinese gold-miners, to the anti-Chinese legislation of the 1990s, together with the waves of anti-Asian feeling that have surfaced from time to time, particularly in the early 1990s (Ip, 1996; 2003; Spoonley & Trlin, 2004). The Chinese have been a legitimate part of New Zealand's history for 150 years yet the unwillingness by some New Zealanders to acknowledge this has caused a certain amount of bewilderment and dismay among Chinese New Zealanders (Ip, 2003). However, by 2001, Spoonley and Trlin (2004) reported a shift in perception by some New Zealanders toward Asian immigrants with regard to their presence and contribution to the nation. They found that media reports were more positive than had been in previous years and the general public seemed more supportive of Asian immigrants.

Butcher, et al., (2004) researched immigrant and refugees' experiences of discrimination and social exclusion. They found that the participants of their study did feel discriminated against, not so much overtly but subtly such as the atmosphere in the conversation or room changing when they entered. Perceptions of discrimination was also based on what participants thought were certain assumptions held by people and this influenced their behaviour towards them. This type of discrimination has been described by Ip (1996, p. 111) as "benign racism" and by Essed, (1991, p. 45) as "everyday racism". Essed (1991) defines everyday racism as involving systematic, recurrent, familiar practices, which become part of the normal routine of everyday life. Watts et al., (2002) comment that misconceptions about the cultural affinities of immigrants may create a climate of distrust and suspicion especially when politicians such as Winston Peters make comments about "alien" cultures threatening to undermine the core values that underpin New Zealand's national identity (p. 2).

In their journey towards employment, some of the participants of my research aim to gain PR and settle in New Zealand. Butcher et al., (2004) found that Asians, recent immigrants and refugees were the top three groups in their study that indicated that they had experienced "a great deal" and "some" discrimination (p. 8). This is supported by the Asia2000 Foundation (2003) that found the key difference in a similar survey conducted in 2001, was that Asians were likely to be the target of discrimination in New

Zealand. Fletcher (1999) states in his report to the NZIS regarding migrant settlement that:

Discrimination and prejudice have the potential to make the process of settlement more difficult for newly arrived migrants. It may be a factor affecting economic, socio-cultural or personal aspects of settlement, and is more likely to affect those from culturally dissimilar, non-English speaking backgrounds. (p. 61)

This is further supported by Butcher et al., (2004) who suggest that if the settlement process is hampered by the host society's structures and attitudes, especially in the form of prejudice and discrimination, then immigrants' well being is affected.

As part of the New Settlement Programme, Watts, et al., (2002) investigated the settlement experiences of Asian adolescents and young adults. Their findings may be relevant to my research because most of the participants of my study are young adults. Watts et al., (2002) found that some of the young adults in this study were concerned about the possibility of discrimination against them in the workplace and in other areas of society. This possibility is supported in Henderson's study (2003), which revealed that employers reacted negatively to difference, particularly with regard to difference in culture. Employers saw this as a potential risk rather than a potential benefit. When participants of this study enquired after advertised positions by telephone, they drew negative responses from employers if they could be identified as Asian either by name or accent. This study found a direct correlation between participants' employment experiences and their English language proficiency. The participants of Henderson's (2003) study felt that they were being discriminated against due to their accent. Supporting this information, Butcher et al., (2004) believes that there is reluctance by employers to hire migrants who speak English with an accent, particularly an Asian accent. One participant of this study identified employment agencies as being discriminatory against migrants with a foreign sounding name or accent. Butcher et al., (2004) state that: "The perceived discriminatory behaviour of employers suggests that the issue is deeper than language or accent and may instead be a contemporary response to historical prejudices about the superiority of particular (Western) qualifications, people and languages" (p. 25). These authors go on to suggest that this is racism.

Participants of Berno and Ward's (2002) study also felt discriminated against. These were tertiary International Students who were asked to indicate their agreement to a

range of statements that related to attitudes about New Zealanders and their relationship with “foreigners” (p. 10). Predominantly, Asian students felt that some New Zealanders made fun of them behind their backs and sixty per cent of the participants of this study felt rejected by some New Zealanders. In addition, a significant number of Asian participants indicated that they felt uncomfortable by the way that some New Zealanders looked at them. Furthermore, some of the participants of this study felt that being a foreigner in New Zealand was an unpleasant experience.

Based on the literature presented in the latter section of this chapter, the participants of my research could face discrimination by employers. However, early childhood education in New Zealand has an underlying philosophy of embracing cultural diversity, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Based on this philosophy, I would argue that workplace discrimination towards the participants of this study would be less likely than perhaps in other employment fields.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there is a gap in the literature with regard to understanding the process that International Students need to go through in order to legally work in New Zealand and become eligible for PR, as opposed to those migrants who have already completed the PR process in their home country. An overview of the literature has provided a historical account of how current immigration policy has evolved. A documentary analysis of the current immigration policy in 2006 reveals a loophole in the points table between a Level 7 and a Level 5 qualification. I have argued that the implications of this are that holders of a one-year Level 5 qualification can be awarded 50 immigration points towards gaining PR, which effectively allows them to circumvent the three-year Level 7 qualification. This enables individuals to become eligible for PR sooner, if they are able to secure employment in their chosen field. However, there are potential consequences involved in traversing this route. Applicants may have difficulty in finding employment in early childhood education with a partial qualification and they may be offered limited recognition of prior learning by other tertiary institutions if they decide to upgrade their qualification to a Diploma or Degree.

Arising from this, it has been suggested that International Students may be vulnerable to the unfair and unethical practices of some educational providers. The literature reveals that some Immigration Agents may also engage in dubious practices and it is suggested

that this industry be regulated through a registration process to further protect individuals such as International Students.

This chapter has explored the employment experiences of Asian migrants and it appears that English proficiency is an indicator of successful settling outcomes for migrants. However, this is seen by some to be discriminatory. This led to a discussion about discrimination of minority groups and I have suggested that this could possibly be another area of vulnerability for the participants of my research.

In contrast to Chapter 2 of this thesis, Chapter 3 explores the philosophy of early childhood education in New Zealand with particular reference to inclusive practice and the belief that diversity should be welcomed and embraced by those involved in this field of education. Further to this, the notion of culturally competent care is also described in this chapter and the ways in which Chinese bilingual early childhood educators can contribute to early childhood centres in practical and effective ways to support Chinese children and their families.

Chapter 3 - Early Childhood Education

Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion about the need to support children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. It is argued in this chapter, that due to the growing number of migrant families arriving in Aotearoa/New Zealand, young migrant children attending New Zealand's early childhood services, need to be represented by teachers who share their ethnicities (Sanchez, 2006). The first section of this literature review outlines the ways that bilingual support teachers can contribute to early childhood centres.

It is useful to know why it is important to support children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds and where New Zealand early childhood education stands on this issue. Therefore, the second section of this literature review provides a description of the ways in which inclusive practice and cultural diversity is evidenced in the underlying philosophy of early childhood services in Aotearoa/New Zealand, through its two principal documents, *Te Whāriki* and *Quality in Action* (Ministry of Education, MoE, 1996; 1998b).

Following these documentary analyses, the notion of *culturally competent care* is discussed in terms of its relevance to this study. It is argued in this section that one of the ways in which Chinese migrant children and their families can be assisted during the settling period is with the guidance from a Chinese bilingual support person. A discussion of the ways in which Chinese educators can contribute to early childhood services is then presented and this includes: Initiating effective parent-teacher partnerships by bridging the cultural gap between migrant parents and centre staff; facilitating smooth transitions for migrant children and within this section there is a discussion of some of the consequences to children who are not given support during this transition time. It is also suggested that Chinese bilingual support teachers can facilitate successful outcomes for second language learners by modelling both the home language and English.

In the final section of this chapter is a discussion regarding the under-representation of Asian early childhood teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The possible reasons for this are examined in relation to the statutory requirements for qualifications and registration, which are governed by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Teachers Council. This section includes documentary analyses of the Ministry of Education's ten-year plan for early childhood education in New Zealand.

Following on from this, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development is described as a framework for understanding how Ministry of Education and Teachers Council policy requirements impact upon the professional development of Chinese early childhood student teachers.

Supporting Chinese Migrant Children in Early Childhood Settings

Sanchez (2006) emphasises the need for children to "see themselves reflected in the staff that cares for them" (p. 5). She explains that early childhood centres need to employ adults who are linguistically and culturally representative of the children who attend the centre. This idea has been adopted by some Australian early childhood centres and Sims and Hutchins (2001) explain the advantages of this approach to cultural diversity which include; interpreting; bridging the gap between parents and centre staff by providing cultural understandings; and facilitating smooth transitions from home to school for young children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as transitions within the centre.

Statistics from the 2001 census reveal that 6.6 per cent of the New Zealand population identified themselves as 'Asian' and of this number, 44 per cent are Chinese. This is the third largest minority group and the fastest growing, with an estimated projection of 120 per cent increase by the year 2021 which is mainly due to assumed levels of net migration (Statistics New Zealand, 2003; 2006a). I argue in this chapter that one of the ways that Chinese children and their families can be supported is through the assistance of a Chinese bilingual early childhood educator who can facilitate cultural understandings between parents and centre staff as well as assist in the transition processes that young children encounter. This would also provide a means of incorporating cultural diversity into a centre's philosophy in a practical way.

Sims and Hutchins (2001) refer to an “Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit” in their article (p. 7) but it is not completely clear how this operates. However, it appears, that this is an organisation that early childhood centres can call upon for support if they enrol children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. If this is the case, I would argue that this concept could be adopted by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the New Zealand Immigration Service to support ethnic minorities in light of the information that has been presented in Chapter 2, regarding the settling experiences of new immigrants to New Zealand.

The following section of this literature review provides an explanation of the central policy documents governing the early childhood education sector in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in relation to the concept of cultural diversity and inclusive practice.

Early Childhood Education and Care – a Philosophy of Inclusiveness

The need to embrace cultural diversity has been recognised by early childhood educators in New Zealand and forms a fundamental part of the overall early childhood philosophy.¹ This philosophy aims to foster inclusiveness through an anti-bias curriculum and can be evidenced in both of the early childhood education principal documents: *Te Whāriki*,² the early childhood curriculum and *Quality in Action*, which provides practical examples of how the mandatory *Desirable Objectives and Practices* (hereafter, referred to as the *DOPs*) may be implemented in practice (MoE, 1996; 1998a). Both of these publications honour the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi as the foundation document of Aotearoa/New Zealand as a bi-cultural nation and the inclusive aspects of *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs* stem from this premise. However, Chan (2006) points out that “early childhood centres are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic” (p. 34) and Gunn (2002) asserts that there is an expectation by the New Zealand Government that early childhood services will “actively contribute to countering racism” (p. 27). The Ministry of Education (1996) acknowledges that migrants to New Zealand bring “diverse beliefs about child rearing practices, kinship roles, obligations, codes of behaviour, and what kinds of knowledge are valuable” (p. 18). It is noted in this

¹ Inclusive practice is only one of many parts to the overall philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Due to the AUT University word limit constraints for this thesis, only the parts of this philosophy related to this topic will be discussed here.

² The full title of this Ministry of Education document is: *Te Whāriki: He whāriki matauranga o nga mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*, however, for the purposes of brevity it is referred to as its abbreviated version *Te Whāriki* in this thesis.

Ministry of Education (1996) document that “The early childhood curriculum supports the cultural identity of all children, affirms and celebrates cultural differences and aims to help children gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures” (p. 18). *Te Whāriki* guides practice, and is a framework through which assessment can be designed (Smith, 2006). *Quality in Action* indicates to practitioners and management, ways in which best practice can be achieved by implementing the *DOPs* (MoE, 1998a).

The name, *Te Whāriki* represents a woven mat. This metaphor suggests that this is a mat for *all* to stand on, so the very title of this document denotes its inclusiveness. The warp of this mat is made up of the following five Principles: Empowerment - Whakamana; Holistic Development - Kotahitanga; Family and Community – Whānau Tangata; and Relationships – Ngā Hononha. These are woven through the weft of this mat that is made up of the following Strands: Well-being – Mana Atua; Belonging - Mana Whenua; Contribution – Mana Tangata; Communication – Mana Reo and Exploration – Mana Aotūroa (MoE, 1996). This woven mat can also express the uniqueness of individual services by weaving centre philosophies together with the overriding principles of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Within this document there are several references to cultural diversity. In the strand of Communication it is stated that children should have opportunities to “experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures” (MoE, 1996, p. 16). In the strand of Contribution it is stated that “children are encouraged to learn with and alongside others” (MoE, 1996, p. 16), and in the strand of Belonging, “children and their families experience an environment where they know they have a place” (MoE, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, in the strand of Belonging, it is suggested that “the programme provides opportunities for conversations with toddlers that affirm their identity and self-knowledge” (MoE, 1996, p. 59). In the strand of Contribution it is stated that children should “experience an environment where there are equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity or background” (MoE, 1996, p. 66).

Te Whāriki also provides examples of the types of experiences, which can help children meet desired learning outcomes. For example, in the strand of Contribution it is stated that “each child’s culture is included in the programme through song, language, pictures, playthings and dance” (MoE, 1996, p. 67). It is also suggested that the programme provide opportunities to discuss bias with young children. It is stated that

“Children’s growing capacities for empathy are fostered by reading or telling stories about other people” (MoE, 1996, p. 71).

Although *Te Whāriki* is not yet a mandatory curriculum framework, there is an implied expectation that centres need to use this document in order to receive a positive report from compulsory three-year Education Review Office evaluations. In addition to this, the essence of *Te Whāriki* runs through *Quality in Action* and the *DOPs*. The *DOPs* are mandatory so it would be difficult to comply with the *DOPs* without implementing *Te Whāriki* into an early childhood programme (MoE, 1996; 1998a).

The *DOPs* were developed as a policy to improve the quality of early childhood education and care (MoE, 1998a). This policy document is divided into four sections. These are: Guiding Principles; Learning and Development; Communication and Consultation; and Operation and Administration. Collectively these are used as key accountability measures. In order to provide centre staff with a means of implementing the *DOPs* into practice, *Quality In Action* offers relevant and practical examples of how this might be achieved (MoE, 1998a). As with *Te Whāriki*, the *DOPs* place a strong emphasis on anti-bias curriculum and inclusive practice. It is stated in DOP 1 (e) that educators should “enhance children’s learning and development through modelling non-discriminatory behaviour and promoting this with children” (MoE, 1998a, p. 24). Examples are given regarding how this can be achieved: by demonstrating that teachers “value and respect diversity and individual differences” (MoE, 1998a, p. 24); by “identifying and addressing factors that may lead to discrimination”; by “discussing how discriminatory attitudes and practices become barriers to learning and participation”; by “developing strategies to counter discrimination by and among children”; by “challenging discriminatory behaviour in adults and children”; by “guiding children in the use of non-discriminatory language”; by “praising and reinforcing non-discriminatory behaviour among children”; and by “ensuring that their own behaviour does not discriminate” (MoE, 1998a, p. 25).

Despite the examples that are given in *Quality in Action* to assist with the implementation of an anti-bias curriculum, the Education Review Office (2004) reports that some centres have found difficulty in understanding and putting into practice the *DOPs* (MoE, 1998a). This is seen as problematic in terms of being eligible for state funding. I would further suggest that this also has implications for the ways in which

centre staff might view cultural diversity. If there is a lack of understanding of how to implement the *DOPs*, then this may affect their approach to cultural diversity in terms of their practice as well as the ways in which people from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds are perceived.

In the next section of this literature review, the concept of culturally competent care is discussed in terms of its relevance to the main argument of this chapter, which is the importance of employing early childhood educators that represent the ethnicities of the children attending the centre.

Culturally Competent Care

Within the discourse of early childhood education the concept of inclusive practice is sometimes described as culturally competent care³. This perspective supports the view that to work effectively with people from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, it is important to be aware and respectful of the values, beliefs, traditions, customs and parenting styles of those who are involved in the care of young children (Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Obegi & Ritblatt, 2005; Sims & Hutchins, 2001; Terreni & McCallum, 2006).

Research suggests that culturally salient care provides children with a sense of security, belonging, and personal history (Chang, Muckelroy, & Pulido-Tobiassen, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Education Review Office, 2004; Garcia & Furuto, 2001; Keats, 1997; Lally, 1995; Mallory & New, 1994;). In addition, Klein and Deborah (2001) found that learning outcomes for children are enhanced when cultural connections to their home environments are made and where their cultural expectations are acknowledged.

In general, much of the literature surrounding cultural diversity and inclusive practice in early childhood settings in Aotearoa/New Zealand seems to focus on the need to support Māori and Pāsefika children and children with special needs. There is a paucity of research that relates specifically to the needs of Chinese immigrant children.

³ Culturally competent care is defined as:

a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities, within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs and to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing focused interventions, communications, and other supports. (Orlandi, 1992, pp. 3-4)

However, I believe that the discourse surrounding cultural diversity in New Zealand can be applied to other ethnicities, such as Chinese and this is discussed below.

In the 2004 Education Review Office (ERO) research report, it was found that most early childhood services recognised the need to make some effort towards encompassing cultural diversity within the centre. Ritchie (2001) also found that there was a genuine desire by some centres to begin the process towards creating a culturally diverse environment. However, in the Education Review Office's report (ERO, 2004), it indicated that centres seem to approach cultural diversity on three levels from a "surface acknowledgement of the language... food and art" to "a slightly deeper level of responsiveness" and then to a higher level that shows "deep knowledge of other cultures" (ERO, 2004, p. 8). Overall, ERO (2004) maintains that centres provide largely "token" representation of other cultures (p. 9). This is largely congruent with Cullen and Bevan-Brown's (1999) findings. They note in their study that teachers' responses to the ways in which the child's culture is taken into account in the centre curriculum were non-specific. Many referred to *Te Whāriki* as the rationale for their belief that they acknowledged cultural diversity in their practice. However, Cullen (2003) explains that there was little evidence to show that this rhetoric matched their teaching practice. Chan (2006) states that some early childhood educators believe that they treat all children the same regardless of their cultural or ethnic group. She suggests that these teachers "assume that all children go through universal stages, have similar needs, and will all reach their fullest potential if these standardised needs are met" (p. 34). Chan (2006) maintains that denying racial difference actually perpetuates the marginalisation of subordinated groups.

ERO (2004) suggests that there is still a need for "considerable improvement" in this area of supporting cultural diversity in early childhood centres in Aotearoa/New Zealand (p. 1). However, they do not suggest how this might be achieved and I would argue that endeavouring to understand the intricacies of a culture other than one's own is a complex undertaking. How can a culture be truly known, understood and incorporated into teaching practice unless we are of that culture? This is supported by Ritchie (2001) who questions the appropriateness of people from a dominant culture presuming to offer "expertise" in someone else's culture (p. 142).

Cullen's (2003) research and the ERO (2004) report both found that there is a need to move beyond the tokenism found in the "visible artefacts and rituals" (p. 277) that may present the illusion of cultural diversity. However, Cullen (2003) suggests that centres need to "strengthen their collaborative relationships with communities". Furthermore, she believes that teachers need to "re-evaluate traditional routines and practices that do not mesh well with community understandings" (p. 278). I argue here, that in order to do this, educators need to also re-evaluate how they initiate and maintain partnerships with parents from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds and this concept is supported by Chan (2006) who suggests that "A genuine parent-teacher partnership is required to help Chinese migrant children to develop to their fullest potential" (p. 34). This ideal alongside other strategies aimed at supporting Chinese children and their families is discussed in the next section of this literature review.

Effective Parent-Teacher Partnerships

The concept of parent-teacher partnership is another strong aspect of New Zealand's early childhood philosophy and this is acknowledged in both *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs*. (MoE, 1996; 1998a). It is stated in *Te Whāriki* that "the wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum" (MoE, 1996, p. 14), and it specifies in the *DOPs* that early childhood services should "work in partnership with parents/whanau to promote and extend the learning and development of each child who attends or receives the service" (MoE, 1998a, p. 6). In addition to this, other literature also supports the notion that teacher-parent partnerships have an influence on children's learning and development outcomes. When children observe friendly and warm interactions between their parents and their teachers they are more likely to expect these interactions themselves (Fitzgerald, 2004; Powell, 1998; Riojas-Cortez, Flores & Clark 2003; Whalley, 2001).

It has been suggested that early childhood teachers need to consciously build relationships between themselves and immigrant parents (Chan, 2006; Sims & Hutchins 2001). Further to this, Siraj-Blatchford and Clark (2000) propose that early childhood practitioners need to take responsibility for getting to know the families of the children they care for as people with a life history, which affects their every day actions. They go on to state that there is an expectation of early childhood centres that parents will be proactive in intervening in their child's education and when parents appear to take no interest in their child's progress, Siraj-Blatchford and Clark (2000) believe that some

centres may “abdicate responsibility themselves, seeing the parental attitudes as the problem feature” (p. 101).

A recent study by Guo (2004a) is very relevant to my research in terms of her explanation as to why Asian parents in particular may seem to avoid contact with early childhood teachers. Guo (2004a) maintains that minority ethnic parents in particular, often put their trust in professionals. They believe that the “experts” (p. 101) know best and are acting in the best interest of their child; therefore, they do not need to intervene in the educational process and work in partnership with their children’s teachers. Guo (2004a) goes on to explain that in Asian countries teachers stand for authority and all educational issues are the province of schools. Therefore, when Asian parents have little or no contact with teachers, this is often based on respect and the concept of ‘saving face’. Guo (2004a) states that:

When parents doubt the adequacy of a teacher’s practice, they still avoid questioning the teacher to keep their respectful image to authority. In doing so, Asian parents not only ‘save face’ for the teacher but also save their children from being unfairly treated by the teacher’s power. (p. 7)

Nevertheless, it is suggested that cultural differences between teachers and parents may present barriers and hamper successful learning outcomes for children. These barriers may include, differences in attitudes to education; differences in beliefs about child development; and differences in understanding language and communication (Ebbeck & Glover, 1998; File, 2001; Huang, 1993; Lee, 1995; Lee & Manning 2001; Riojas-Cortez et al., 2003).

Guo’s (2004b) research in Aotearoa/New Zealand, found that both Asian parents and centre staff had reservations about establishing effective partnerships, although some parents did concede that they thought it was necessary to work with teachers. Educators’ perceived difficulties centred on language barriers and confusion regarding Asian parenting practices.

Strum (1997) suggests that some teachers may feel overwhelmed when working with families from diverse cultures which further limits their ability to understand differences. I would argue that one of the benefits of employing teachers from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds is their ability to facilitate cultural understandings.

In addition to this, bilingual support teachers are also able to assist in the transition process from home to centre as well as the initial settling process for migrant children.

Facilitating Smooth Transitions for Migrant Children

Sims and Hutchins (2001) believe that the transition from home to the childcare setting can be a difficult process for young children to undertake. They maintain that this process can impact on young children's development either positively or adversely, depending on how the transition is facilitated. They state that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are particularly vulnerable during this process. Further to this, Merry (2004) asserts that the transition process is important to children's sense of self and believes that children's sense of identity is central to a child's ability to cope in a new and potentially stressful situation. She states that "knowing who you are, your strengths and limitations, and having developed relationships that include trust and reliance during those times of insecurity seems to increase the likelihood of a positive experience" (p. 25).

Lee (1995) suggests that teachers from the dominant culture need to adopt strategies for supporting children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. However, Strum (1997) and Merry (2004) both found in their research that teachers felt that they were already overloaded and that there was a lack of time especially in planning strategies for a smooth transition. I would argue that a bilingual support person could assist in the settling process for migrant children and this would perhaps lighten the load for monolingual early childhood educators. The potential consequences of not providing specific support for children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds are discussed in the next section of this literature review.

The Consequences of Negative Transitions

As immigrants move from their own familiar cultural environment into another culture, their value systems, behaviour patterns and attitudes may change, due to the assimilation and accommodation process of entering a new cultural field (Lee, 1995). Whereas this is not unique to New Zealand, nor is it limited to non-English speaking migrants, it is potentially a stressful time for the immigrant child, particularly those children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Igoa (1995) describes the *typical* reaction from immigrant children when first confronted with a new cultural situation. She states that often the child withdraws into themselves and makes no

attempt to socialize and she refers to this as the “silent stage” (p. 38). Itoh and Hatch (1978) describe the experiences of a two and a half year old Japanese child in an American nursery school setting. This child spent most of his time on a tricycle as far away as possible from the other children and they suggest that this child had entered a period of social rejection. Igoa (1995) found from her research that often children long to join in with others, but their emotions and fears hold them back.

Tabors and Snow (1994) do not entirely agree with the concept of the ‘silent stage’. They prefer to call this period the “non-verbal period” (p. 107). They suggest that although the immigrant child may have stopped *talking* during this settling period this does not necessarily mean that they have stopped *communicating*. They believe that these children engage in various forms of nonverbal communication and found that children would cry when distressed to attract the attention of an adult and mime and point until their request was understood. However, Tabors and Snow (1994) point out that there are social consequences to persisting with these strategies. They found that English speaking children either ignored or treated the second language learners like infants and suggest that for second language learners to become “social equals”, they need to begin to “crack the linguistic code” (p. 109).

Although Tabors and Snow (1994) noted strategies that children used to crack the linguistic code such as spectating and rehearsing, in which the child undertakes intense observation of other language users and then uses self talk to rehearse language and behaviour, without specific assistance, Igoa (1995) believes that this initial stage can sometimes continue for between one to two years. She suggests that “when a child is uprooted from all signs of the familiar and is transported to an unfamiliar foreign land, he or she may experience some degree of shock” (p. 39).

This ‘shock’ may be understood in terms of what is commonly known as *culture shock*. The literature that describes this concept often refers to culture shock in relation to what adults experience. However, I believe that this can also be applied to young children because it is described as an anxiety that is felt as a result of losing all familiar signs and symbols that support social interactions. This is what happens when children are transported from their familiar cultural environment to a new and unknown cultural environment (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede 2002; Ward, Brochner & Furnham, 2001). Without the security of their familiar cultural environment, individuals may feel

uneasy, stressed or even emotionally maladjusted because they no longer have the cultural props to lean on which tell them what they must say or do. Until a person learns the cues of the new culture, he or she may be culturally disorientated (Igoa, 1995).

It is little wonder then, that a recurring theme for immigrant children is the feeling of exhaustion. This is due, not only to the cognitive processes of assimilating a new language but also of assimilating the cavalcade of new cultural cues that maybe part of the everyday events and routines in an early childhood centre. One of the ways in which children cope with exhaustion is simply to fall asleep (Igoa, 1995). Together with feeling exhausted, the immigrant child attending an early childhood centre, may also feel “different, alone and separate” (Igoa, 1995, p. 54). I believe that without the support of someone who understands their needs and can communicate these needs to others, children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds may find the initial experience of attending an early childhood centre a very unpleasant one.

Language Models

In addition to facilitating smooth transitions for migrant children, bilingual support teachers can also be a language model and this is supported by Sanchez (2006) who maintains that:

All young children deserve to hear a clear message: that their language has a significant place at home, in the early care setting and in the larger society... They do not need to sacrifice their home language and culture as they gain skills and knowledge in another language. (p. 5)

Chan (2006) suggests that children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds are “frequently at risk of being verbally overlooked and socially isolated” (p. 36). She points out that in *Te Whāriki* it is stated that children “develop confidence that their first language is valued” (MoE, 1996, p. 76). However, Chan (2006) asks the question “when Chinese children are allowed to use their first language at the centre, will there be teachers who understand their first language to help them develop working theories?” (p. 36). Chan (2006) believes that this could negatively impact on Chinese children’s development. She argues that if Chinese children use native language private speech, monolingual teachers will be unable understand and scaffold them. Private speech is considered an important period of cognitive development with regard to self regulation and problem solving and Clark (2004) recommends that educators should be attuned to children’s private speech so that they can understand children’s thinking processes and scaffold them to an appropriate level. A Chinese bilingual support teacher would be able

to understand Chinese children's private speech and be able to scaffold children's learning as well as relay this information to monolingual centre staff. They would also be able to scaffold Chinese children's second language learning and the benefits of this is discussed below.

Other research suggests that both the home language and English should be promoted side by side in order to maintain the home language as well as to be able to function successfully in the new culture. Maintaining the home language is seen to be significant to an individual's self-identity, cultural heritage and also in assisting in becoming competent in an additional language. Further to this, bilingual competency is related to superior scholastic achievement (Ballenger, 1999; Clark, 2000; Thompson, 2000). Clark (2000) notes that there is little benefit and potential harm in introducing a second language at a young age unless both languages are maintained and promoted as equally valuable and important. She asserts that a stimulating and rich linguistic environment will support language development and comments that young children will become bilingual when there is a real need to communicate in two languages.

However, Guo (2004a) reports that Asian parents are often anxious for their children to speak English because they associate this with success. The issue of English proficiency was discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis and it was revealed that this contributed to successful settling and employment outcomes for immigrants to New Zealand (Henderson, 2003). Guo (2004a) comments that "Asian parents want their children to have a good future" and they believe that speaking English is a "route to success" in New Zealand (p. 7). However, Clark (2000) believes that promoting only English to migrant children, gives the impression that different languages and cultures are not valued and as discussed previously, there are real gains for children who become bilingual which parents may not be aware of. A bilingual support teacher would be able to relate this information to parents and possibly explain the benefits and process of second language learning.

It has been suggested in this chapter that the benefits of employing Chinese bilingual educators are their ability to bridge the cultural gap between Chinese migrant families and centre staff, assist in providing smooth transition for migrant children as well as becoming a language model to support children's first and second language. However, there is evidence to suggest that there is a shortage of Chinese early childhood educators

in New Zealand's centres and the possible reasons for this is discussed in the next section of the literature review.

Asian Early Childhood Educators Under-representation

The research that was generated by the Ministry of Education Demographic and Statistical Analysis Unit, found that Asian early childhood teachers are vastly under-represented in New Zealand early childhood centres. Out of a total of 9,725 teachers that were surveyed, only four per cent identified themselves as Asian (MoE, 2004). However, 'Asians' are presented as a homogenous group and there is no indication of how many of this number identify themselves as Chinese. The reason why this group is under-represented could be due to the challenges that some second language learners may face in becoming fully qualified. These challenges are related to the Ministry of Education policies for early childhood centres, which are linked to New Zealand Teachers Council requirements and the entry criteria of tertiary institutions offering early childhood programmes.

In the following section of this literature review the statutory requirements of these organisations are examined to provide some understanding of the barriers that Chinese early childhood student teachers may face in continuing their education in this field.

Statutory Requirements

As I have explained in Chapter 2, government departments such as the New Zealand Immigration Service play a significant role in determining the boundaries of who is eligible to work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I would suggest that in addition to the NZIS, organisations such as the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Teachers Council and tertiary institutions also have some part to play in determining who is eligible or otherwise to work and study in the field of early childhood education. Therefore, it is important to understand what these policies are and how they impede Chinese student teachers' journey toward employment.

In 2002 the Ministry of Education published a policy document for the early childhood sector of education, called *Pathways to the Future: A 10-year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education* (hereafter referred to as the *Strategic Plan*) (MoE, 2002a). This was developed with the intention of raising the overall standard of quality in early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand and encouraging greater participation

from minority groups. Higher standards of quality are assessed in terms of structural aspects of childcare such as teacher-child ratios, group size and teacher qualifications which lead to higher levels and more sustained interactions between stakeholders such as adults, children, family/whanau and other community members (MoE, 2002a; Phillips & Howes, 1987; Rosenthal, 2003; Smith, 1997). Currently, teacher qualifications in New Zealand are denoted as a Level 7, three year Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or Bachelor of Education (ECE)⁴.

The *Strategic Plan* defines the staffing requirements for all chartered centres in New Zealand over a ten-year period from 2002 to 2012 (MoE, 2002a). Chartered centres are those that are eligible for government funding for each child attending if they have met Ministry of Education approval in compliance with the *Regulations (Early Childhood Education)* and the *DOPs* (MoE, 1998b; 1998a; 2005).

The Ministry of Education (1998b) currently requires that, early childhood centres employ at least one person who holds a minimum qualification of a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) and has Teachers Registration; this person is deemed the “person responsible” (MoE, 1998b, p. 15) in the centre. He or she is required to be available at the centre at all times during opening hours (MoE, 1998b). To allow for holiday entitlement, sick leave and regular lunch and coffee breaks, I believe that in reality this means that at least two registered teachers need to be employed by each centre to comply with the requirement of being available at the centre at all times during opening hours.

By the year 2012 the Ministry of Education requires that all teaching staff working as early childhood educators at centres in New Zealand, need to be fully qualified and registered. This plan is to be implemented in stages, for example by 2007, 50 per cent of all teaching staff in centres must be fully qualified and registered and by 2010, 80 per cent of staff must be fully qualified and registered (MoE, 2002a). In order to meet these quotas, funding incentives and scholarships have been introduced to encourage unqualified staff to become fully qualified and to persuade centre owners to actively employ qualified and registered staff. The aim is to “promote ECE teaching as a career

⁴ There are currently twenty early childhood tertiary education providers in New Zealand, offering either a Level 7 Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) or a Level 7 Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching). These providers vary in terms of cost and quality of programmes. However, not all accept International Students onto their programmes.

to people who are potentially interested in ECE teaching, and groups that are underrepresented in the ECE teacher workforce” (MoE, 2005, p. 6).

However, in order to become fully qualified, people who are second language learners need to show evidence of English proficiency. The IELTS level varies between educational providers. For example, both Unitec and The University of Auckland have an entry criterion of IELTS level 7.0 for International Students (Unitec, 2006; The University of Auckland, 2006). Furthermore, Auckland University of Technology and New Zealand Tertiary College both require an IELTS level of 6.5 and Manukau Institute of Technology require no less than IELTS level 6.0 (AUT, 2006; NZTC, 2006; MIT, 2006). All of these institutions offer a Level 7 qualification in early childhood education and care. In addition to this, to become *registered teachers*, International Students need to have an academic English proficiency of IELTS level 7.0 (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2006a).

In light of the comments made by Collier (1987) in Chapter 2 of this thesis, it is suggested that the IELTS 7.0 requirement could be a potential obstacle for some Chinese student teachers. He maintains that it could take between seven and ten years to become *academically* proficient in English. Even though the intent of the *Strategic Plan* is to encourage greater participation by minority groups, the policies of other organisations such as the New Zealand Teachers Council and some tertiary providers could present obstacles for individuals from minority groups such as Chinese. Yet, the Ministry of Education (2002a, p. 6) states in its *Strategic Plan* that they intend to:

Build on work underway with the establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission, the New Zealand Teachers Council... and education providers to: develop foundation or bridging courses to help people, particularly Māori and Pasifika peoples, meet entry criteria for teacher education courses.... to ensure that ECE teacher education courses meet the wide range of needs of adult learners and the ECE sector.

The need to assist Māori to meet the entry criteria for teacher education courses can be understood in light of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the distinctive status that is extended towards tangata whenua (the indigenous people of the land). Bedford (2000) believes that Pasifika peoples are seen to be an “increasingly significant component of New Zealand’s society” and are no longer seen as immigrants, they are linked by cultural heritage and, in some cases, language to Māori (p. 24). Further to this,

the people of the Pacific Islands are one of New Zealand's closest neighbours and represent the third largest ethnic group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). In *Te Whāriki* the Ministry of Education (1996) identifies Māori and Tangata Pasefika programmes as having a specific identity and focus in New Zealand early childhood education and care (MoE, 1996).

As New Zealand continues to evolve into a multi-ethnic nation, I believe that there is a need to make accommodation for Asian and other ethnic minorities to succeed in our tertiary institutions. This is supported by Zepke and Leach (2005) who suggest that tertiary institutions need to re-evaluate their content, teaching practices and assessment methods to reflect the diversity of people enrolled in the course. They believe that this will enable students to move between their “cultures of origin” and their institutional “culture of immersion” with less culture loss or culture shock (p. 54).

As suggested earlier in this chapter by Sanchez (2006) children need to see themselves reflected in the adults that teach them. Early childhood centres are made up of diverse communities. Therefore, there should be pathways for the people in these communities to achieve their aspirations as well as meet Ministry of Education requirements. Furthermore, I would argue that Chinese early childhood student teachers are able to make a valuable contribution to centres in supporting Chinese children and their families. However, it has become more difficult for Chinese student teachers to achieve their aspirations since the New Zealand Teachers Council (2006a) initiated an IELTS 7.0 requirement for International Students to gain teacher registration.

It is suggested in this research that the policies and practices of government departments and tertiary organisations have the power to influence professional outcomes for individuals such as Chinese early childhood student teachers. The consequential effect of this can be explained by drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, which is described below.

Bronfenbrenner's Human Ecological Perspective

In 1979 Bronfenbrenner suggested that people develop within contexts or ecologies. This model was used to explain how family, community and culture can affect the growth and development of individuals. Bronfenbrenner described four environmental systems which he labelled micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. The premise of this

model of human development is that the elements within each system have the power to affect the other systems, meaning that they are bi-directional (see Figure 1). Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development has been predominantly used in the social sciences to explain the environmental effects on individuals' development. In this research it is used as a framework to illustrate how macro level government policies may have consequences for Chinese student-teachers as well as young Chinese children.

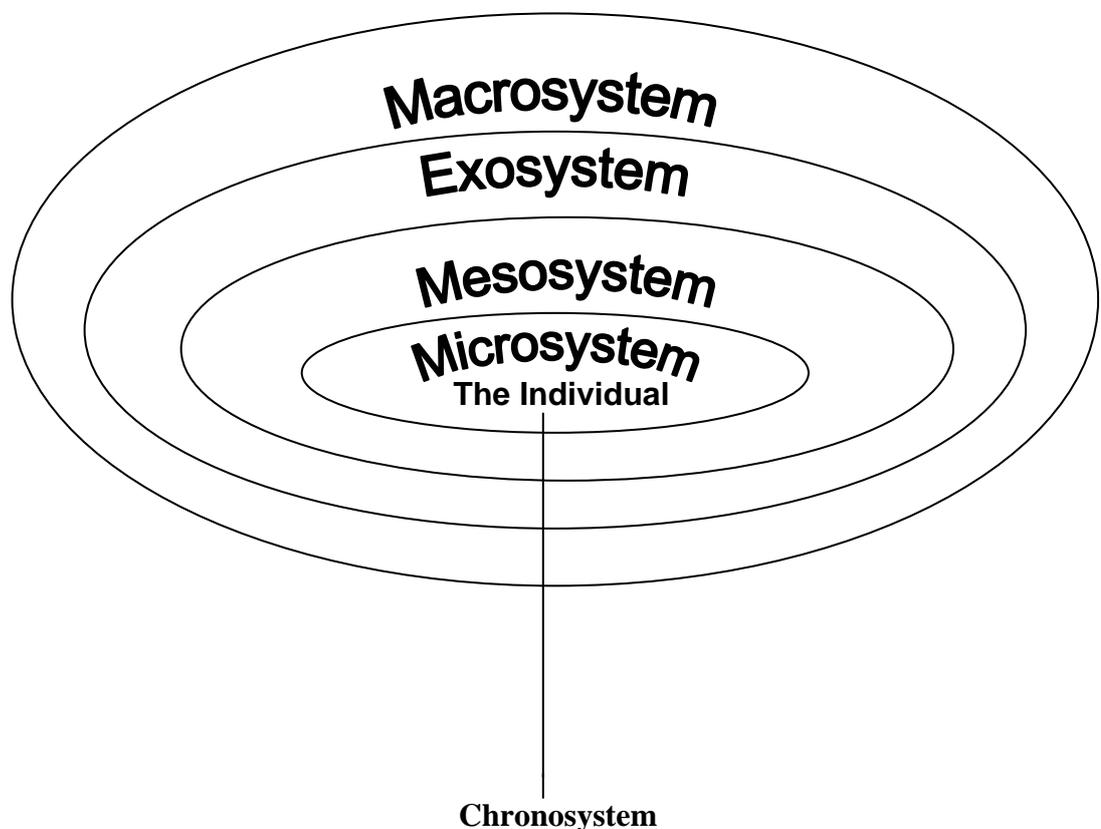


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In this model the individual is considered to be at the centre of a series of concentric circles as depicted in Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that the way in which the individual interacts with people in their immediate environment as well as how these interactions are received by these people, will have the most effect on their development. The immediate environment for the participants of this research are likely to consist of, the people they live with, their friends, peers, colleagues, teachers and possibly parents and family members if they are in close contact with them. For young

Chinese children, this is likely to be their parents, siblings, other close family members such as grandparents and their early childhood teachers.

The mesosystem connects the relationships or channels of communication between the person and the community or institutions in the person's immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For the participants of this study, this may involve using an employment agency, the Internet or newspaper advertisements to find work. It may also involve third parties such as referees that prospective employers might contact in order to assess the suitability of the person applying for the vacancy. For young Chinese children in a centre setting this might include their parents communication with the teachers or it might extend to a third party as an interpreter to assist in the communication process.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that the exosystem "refers to one or more setting that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person" (p. 25). For the participants of this research this might be the amount of recognition of prior learning that is matched to their certificate when they apply for further study at tertiary institutions. This will affect the length of time it will take to complete a Diploma or Degree, which may in turn affect employment opportunities, which may affect their income and possibly the relationships with the people in their immediate environment. For young Chinese children, the quality of the centre in terms of adult child ratios, group size, and teachers' knowledge about the ways in which children learn may affect children's learning and development.

The macro system may be considered the outer-most circle in the individual's environment and is comprised of the cultural values, customs and laws of a society. The effects of larger principles defined by the macro-systems have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all the other layers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It has been argued in this chapter that the Ministry of Education requirements outlined in the *Strategic Plan* and Teachers Council requirements for International Students may have an impact on Chinese student-teachers who are eager to continue their studies, but may struggle to comply with Teachers Council IELTS requirements (MoE, 2002a; New Zealand Teachers Council, 2006a). This may affect their employment opportunities. Furthermore, it is suggested that these policy requirements may also have an impact on

young Chinese children, if they are not supported appropriately through their initial settling in period by someone who shares their language and cultural heritage.

The chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to the individual's environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Time, as a concept in this model can be external such as the timing of a particular event. For example, the relaxation of immigration policy in 1986 provided more opportunities for immigration for people from non-traditional source countries such as China. Time can also be related to a persons' age at any given point. For example, in Chapter 2 of this thesis it was explained that one of the criteria for individuals applying for PR is linked to the applicant's age. More points are given to people aged between 20 and 29 than for older applicants (NZIS, 2006d). With regard to young children, in New Zealand there are differing expectations for infants, toddlers and young children (MoE, 1996). In New Zealand there is an expectation that toddlers will begin to show some signs of independence, for example, feeding themselves, and this is generally encouraged. However, Chinese parents believe that it is quicker and easier to feed their children well past the point where the child is capable of feeding themselves (Guo, 2004a).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) depicts his ecological model as a set of nesting Russian dolls and this example has been used in Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996) to illustrate a young child's learning environment and the influence that other environmental contexts may have on their learning. In New Zealand, this model has been used as a framework for several research projects. Most notably it has been used to: evaluate Te Kauhua Māori in mainstream educational settings (MoE, 2006a); research the interventions used for refugee children in New Zealand (MoE, 2006b); and to evaluate of the roles of women in Samoan language nests (Utumapui, 1998). It has also been used by Nagel and Roxworthy (2006), as a framework to understand the relationships between health professionals and families who have children with disabilities.

With particular relevance to this literature review, Rosenthal (2000) uses Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to explain the ripple effect of macro level systems and beliefs on micro-level practices such as the home-to-centre transition process. She points out that there may be some incongruity between home and childcare centres and that this could be "problematic" for some children (p. 14). Rosenthal (2000) believes that when parents and educators have opposing views on child-rearing and educational

practice, this presents children with conflicting messages, which she feels is too complex for young children to interpret. Chan (2006) supports this idea and suggests that Chinese children who attend early childhood centres may have difficulty in understanding the social expectations of the centre as they move from the home culture to the centre culture.

Rosenthal (2000) proposes a model of “cultural attunement, which allows for continuity in the child’s socialisation” (p. 14). By this she means that educators need to build on and extend developmental processes that have begun in the child’s home and suggests that families and educators need to form “true partnerships” (p. 14) so that positive outcomes for children can be achieved.

I believe that it is possible to see how each of the macro-, exo-, meso- and micro-systems can impact Chinese children in an early childhood centre. For example, on a macro level, the Ministry of Education requirements stipulate that all chartered early childhood centres must have 100 per cent fully qualified staff by 2012 and this has created a gap in the labour market for qualified teachers. This has prompted the NZIS to place this profession on the Long Term Skill Shortage List in order to encourage other nationalities and ethnic groups to fill this gap. This in turn, has created interest from prospective immigrants who see this as a means of qualifying for Permanent Residency status. It has also created a surge of interest in tertiary programmes offering early childhood education at Certificate, Diploma and Degree level. If centres employ immigrant teachers, especially those from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds such as Chinese, these teachers could make a valuable contribution in two ways. One would be to facilitate understanding between the parents of the child and the centre (the mesosystem). The second would be as a direct interaction with the child on the level of the microsystem as a support for this child as he or she transitions into the early childhood setting.

Whereas Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological perspective provides an interesting and appropriate lens with which to view the environmental structures that affect the professional development of Chinese early childhood student teachers as well as the ways that these structures may affect the immigrant child, this earlier work does not account for personal ‘agency’. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory suggests that individuals have minimal control over what happens to them. Although there were structural

aspects of the participants' situations such as the immigration 'rules', they were in control of some of the direction their journey was taking, through personal choice.

In Bronfenbrenner's later work (1995), he points out that individuals are both the 'product' and 'producer' of their developmental course. He states that "human beings, like all living creatures, are widely variable in their biopsychological characteristics and, as a result, are differentially susceptible to the external conditions and forces to which they are exposed during their lifetime" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 633). He suggests that based on individual difference in personality, people will choose to react differently to certain situations they find themselves in and maintains that individuals are "an active agent in and on [their] environment" (p.634).

After extensive research, I have been unable to locate any literature that uses this model to explain the ways in which environmental systems and processes can impact on the professional development of Chinese early childhood educators. Therefore, this model is presented as a theoretical framework for this thesis and discussed further in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified that Chinese immigrants to New Zealand are arriving in significant numbers and this is set to rise in the future. It is suggested that the children of these migrants that attend early childhood centres should be represented by adults that share the same cultural backgrounds. With relevance to this research, it is argued that Chinese immigrant children and their families can be supported by Chinese bilingual early childhood teachers. I have suggested that the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the New Zealand Immigration Service should consider forming an Ethnic Child Care Resource Unit similar to those used in Australia. Bilingual teachers can act as interpreters in forging cultural understandings and building partnerships between parents and centre staff. They can facilitate smooth transitions for young children, and be language models for young Chinese children attending early childhood centres. The consequences of negative settling experiences was discussed in this chapter and it was suggested that it is sometimes appropriate to share with parents information to which they may not have easy access, such as the process and benefits of second language learning.

It was also identified in this chapter that Asian early childhood educators are under-represented in New Zealand and the possible reasons for this were examined in relation to the statutory requirements of government institutions and tertiary establishments. It was argued that tertiary establishments need to re-examine their policies and practices in order to support students from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds.

In the last section of this chapter, a description of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development was provided as a theoretical framework for understanding how the policies of some government organisations and tertiary institutions can affect the professional development of Chinese early childhood student-teachers eager to continue their education in this field as well as young Chinese children attending childcare centres.

In the next chapter, the methodology of this research is described and this includes the contexts of the participants as immigrants to Aotearoa/New Zealand, seeking employment in the field of early childhood education.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter begins by providing some background information on how this research began and it explains how permission was gained to approach the participants of this study. The research methodology used in this study is qualitative interpretivism and this is defined in this chapter. The methodology is justified in relation to its compatibility to the philosophy of early childhood education and a parallel is drawn between a qualitative research approach and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development.

The research methods used in this research are Case Study, Narrative Inquiry and Documentary Analysis. A qualitative interpretive approach forms the foundation of this research and a case study method provides the framework that binds the participants together as people who share similar experiences. However, a narrative inquiry method denotes the individuality of each of the participants' stories. Documentary analysis provides contextual information as well as a measure of understanding of the obstacles the participants of this research may face and why that should be. This information is drawn principally from the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) as well as Ministry of Education (MoE) policies.

There were ethical implications that needed to be considered before this research could begin and in this chapter these are explained with reference to the power relations that existed between myself and the participants as well as the need to protect the participants from any harm that may result from this research.

The research technique that was used in this study was individual interviews and this was designed to encourage the participants to narrate in detail their journey towards employment as Chinese early childhood student teachers. This technique is defined and justified in this chapter with regard to its compatibility to the research methodology and methods. A description of the data collection methods that were used in this research is provided in this section as well as a discussion of some of the difficulties that arose and how they were overcome.

In the last section of this chapter, an overview of the data analysis and how this was organised is presented, as well as a list of the primary and secondary themes that emerged. In addition to this, a description of how the data was validated is explained, and this chapter concludes with a discussion regarding the reciprocity that emerged between myself and the participants of this study.

Beginning with an idea

In 2005 I taught components of a Level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care to a cohort of International Students at a small private tertiary institution in Auckland city. During this time I listened with interest to their experiences of living and studying in New Zealand and recognised that most of the students saw this Certificate as a pathway to gaining Permanent Residency status in New Zealand. Whereas this initially caused me some concern, it was evident after their first practicum experience that early childhood education was not only something that most of the students enjoyed, but it was also something that the Associate and Visiting Tutors felt the majority of students were capable of doing well.

Although I was relieved that these students had enjoyed their practicum experiences, I began to think about the next step in their journey. The conversations in and outside the classroom seemed to be dominated by concerns regarding the NZIS policy and confusion about what the students needed to do to get PR. By the middle of 2005 I was beginning to wonder what the future would hold for these students.

Research questions were beginning to form and these were: What *was* the immigration process? They were already facing obstacles, what else might they need to overcome in order to gain PR? Would there be obstacles in finding employment in an early childhood centre? If so, what form would these obstacles take and how would they overcome them? And so began my own journey, a journey into the terrain of qualitative research.

Participants' Backgrounds

The participants of this study were all aged over twenty years. Most of the participants were the solo children of working parents, but Evan and Frankie had siblings. Most of the participants were financially supported by their parents when they first arrived in New Zealand. This included study fees and living expenses. However, this support

seemed to dwindle the longer the participants stayed in New Zealand. Two participants described their parents as '*wealthy*' or '*quite rich*' and the others said that their parents were '*just like mid level*' and '*not rich*'.

Traversing the Gatekeeper

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) suggest that in order to access information or the research site, it is sometimes necessary to gain approval from “gatekeepers” (p. 242). The gatekeeper in my research was my employer, the owner of the college. I made an appointment with my employer to explain my research project and gain her permission to invite the students to become participants in my research. I assured my employer that I personally would not approach the students, this would be done by one of the other staff members and that the students would not be approached until the course conclusion. The reasons for this are fully explained below. She agreed to my request and I was able to formulate my research proposal for submission to the Postgraduate Board of Studies at Auckland University of Technology for their approval.

My proposal outlined the methodology of my research and the methods that I would use which are described below.

The Research Approach

The approach taken in this research is qualitative. Bassey (1999) believes that qualitative research is difficult to define because it “means different things at different times and in different contexts” (p. x). But Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as:

multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. (p. 2)

Qualitative research is essentially relationship based. The researcher seeks to gather rich and in-depth data through face-to-face interactions with participants in order to make

meaning of socially constructed phenomena. Qualitative research produces both exploratory and highly descriptive knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

One part of the philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand emphasises the importance of positive relationships with people, places and things (MoE, 1996). Qualitative research also emphasises relationships between people, experiences and the environment (Crotty, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Therefore, I decided to take a qualitative approach to my research because it fitted so well with my own beliefs about the importance of relationships as well as the philosophy of early childhood education. However, it is acknowledged that I am a novice researcher and that this is my first experience of applying qualitative methodology.

Qualitative researchers also look at the relationships between the participants' experiences and the context of the study (Crotty, 1998; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In my research the context of the study is the field of early childhood education and specifically, gaining employment in this field. I am seeking answers to questions that relate to the processes of Chinese immigrants being eligible for a work permit in New Zealand as well as the processes of gaining employment, both of which are intrinsically connected and reliant on each other and this has been explained in chapters two and three of this thesis.

In this research, I analyse the participants' experiences in order to construct an understanding of what their journey towards employment entails. By analysing their experiences I also wanted to find out if there are similarities or differences between participants and what these might mean. Therefore, there is some measure of interpretation of events that needs to occur in order to answer the questions of *why?* and *what?* The notion of interpretivism is strongly linked to qualitative methodology and Marshall and Rossman (1999) refer to this as one and the same thing when they speak of the "qualitative, or interpretive paradigm" (p. 1). This perspective emerged as a means of explaining and understanding human and social reality (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). However, Crotty (1998) states that "different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon" (p. 9).

Ecological Theory and Qualitative Research

I believe that there is a parallel between Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development and qualitative research. Bronfenbrenner's model (1979) demonstrates the

relationships between the individual and the environment, the ways that certain events can impact upon the individual. Qualitative researchers examine the relationships between people and their environment in order to explain socially constructed phenomena. For example, the literature suggests that some Asian people may find it difficult to find employment in New Zealand because their qualifications are not recognised; or they do not have New Zealand work experience; or they do not speak perfect English; or they speak with an Asian sounding accent (Barnard, 1996; Butcher, Spoonley & Trlin, 2004; Department of Internal Affairs, 1996; Henderson, Trlin & Watts, 1999). A qualitative researcher would seek to find the answers to why this should be by using data gathering techniques which involve personal contact with the people involved, rather than the slightly removed less personal approach of quantitative research which favours data gathering methods such as questionnaires or surveys.

As previously indicated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research encompasses a variety of methods. In this research I have used the methods of a case study, narrative analysis and documentary analyses and these are explained below.

Method 1 – A Case Study

Due to the small sample size and the individual nature of participants stories I chose to frame this research within a case study. Case studies are typically bound by certain criteria such as a commonality among participants (Hamel, 1993). Yin (1993) states that “case study research can be based on *single* – or *multiple*-case studies” and he explains that “single-case studies focuses on a single case only, whereas, multiple-case studies include two or more cases within the same study” (p. 5). In this research a multiple-case study approach is taken because there are commonalities between participants. However, each participant’s narrative forms a case.

Whether a case study approach is single-case or multiple-case, Yin (1993) believes it can be “exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory” (p. 5). He explains that an exploratory case study aims to define the questions or hypotheses of a potential research project or it may determine the feasibility of the research. A descriptive case study provides a holistic description of a phenomenon within its context. An explanatory case study describes the causes and effects of a particular phenomenon.

I believe that my research is most closely aligned to Yin's (1993) description of an explanatory case study because I want to find the answers to questions such as 'what do the NZIS and MoE policies mean and what effect might they have on the participants of this research?' The exploratory case-study approach matches Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development because this model draws links between cause and effect between the individual and the environment.

Rather than the arguably perfunctory nature of a closed questionnaire, case studies involve deeper, more comprehensive descriptions of the participants' beliefs, understandings or experiences of a particular issue, which can be used to seek a holistic understanding of a situation (Palmquist, 2005). Neuman (1997) suggests that due to the volume of data that can be generated by case study research, the researcher can find themselves immersed in the data to the point of intimate familiarity with the participants' unique situation. From this, patterns or themes may emerge which can lead the researcher to make certain interpretations from the meaning of the participants' experiences.

Many methods can be employed in qualitative research. The participants of my research were invited to tell the story of their particular journey towards employment and each of their narratives forms a case.

Method 2 - Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is about stories "lived and told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Narrative inquiry researchers investigate people's experiences by documenting and analysing their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Sanchez (1999) proposes that "storeying" (p. 8) is a basic form of communication in which the present is linked to the past, but the present is also linked to the future. Phinney (2000, p. 28) states that: "A narrative approach is being recognised as a means of examining the ways in which individuals make sense of their lives within a changing sociohistorical context". Furthermore, narrative approaches may employ literary tools such as metaphors and this approach is particularly useful for integrating culture, people and change (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). These three points are particularly relevant to this study. In this study the culture of early childhood education in New Zealand with regard to diversity is examined; the participants of this study as an ethnic minority in New Zealand are identified; and the changing immigration policies and Ministry of Education

requirements are discussed. The metaphor used within this research is one of a *journey* for the participants.

The use of narrative analysis is discussed further in this chapter in the section under the heading of 'Data Collection Techniques'.

Method 3 – Documental Analyses

In order to provide a deeper understanding of the sociohistorical context of the participants' journeys, documental analyses were undertaken using the NZIS policy documents (NZIS, 2006a, b, c, d, e, f) and the Ministry of Education publications: *Te Whāriki; Quality in Action: The Desirable Objectives and Practices; Pathways to the Future: A 10 year Strategic Plan*; and the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students*. (MoE, 1996; 1998b; 2002a; 2002b). This involves the reading and re-reading of texts and documents in order to analyse their content (Smith, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that documents provide a "rich source of information" (p. 277); are almost "always available on low-cost or free basis" (p. 276) and they are a "stable source of information" meaning that they may "accurately reflect situations that occurred at some time in the past" (p. 277).

When analysing texts researchers need to consider the following questions:

- Who was/is the author?
- What bias is evident?
- Who is the intended audience of the document?
- What assumptions does it make about the audience?
- When and where was it produced?
- Under what political, social and cultural conditions was it produced?
- Why was it written?
- How does it relate to previous documents and later ones?
- What style of writing is adopted?

(Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Wellington, 2000).

When analysing texts, the reader needs to be aware that the text has been deliberately constructed with specific audiences in mind and that they can be an "exercise in persuasion, manipulation and power" (Scott, 2000, p. 8). The information from the

NZIS website is aimed at the general public, overseas visitors and potential immigrants. Therefore, the web pages are intended to be 'user friendly' with links to other information. The text is offered in several languages and in the English section it is written using non-technical language and specific terms are defined. It should be noted that the information gathered from the NZIS website does not provide authorship. Furthermore, websites are updated and altered, therefore information provided at one point in time may be different at another point in time.

I used the NZIS website rather than seeking official policy documents because I wanted to find out what information was available to the participants of this research. One of their frustrations seemed to be the fluidity of the NZIS policies and this was evidenced in the changing web pages. Knowing where to find certain information on the website also proved to be a challenge to the participants as well as myself. I found that there was immigration information being exchanged between my former students that caused confusion because it could not initially be confirmed on the NZIS website. It was not until an extensive search had been carried out, that took a considerable length of time, that information could be verified. Due to the fluctuating nature of NZIS web pages, I found it necessary to print off the information used in this research.

One aspect of the NZIS 2006 Immigration Policy document has been set out in Chapter 2 mainly as background information intended to inform the reader of the process that the participants of this research need to engage in to gain a Work To Residence visa. This information is presented as part of their journey towards employment. However, analysis of this data revealed a loophole in the policy whereby holders of a Level 5 qualification were able to gain the same number of points as a Level 7 qualification holder (NZIS, 2006a). This potentially could provide a quicker route to PR because usually a Level 5 qualification is equivalent to one year of study whereas a Level 7 qualification normally takes three years to complete. This loophole has implications for potential immigrants and tertiary providers and has been discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

The MoE policy documents are written with the education sector and specifically early childhood education in mind. This audience has a better understanding of the philosophy and discourse of early childhood than for example, an average member of the public. Therefore, the language used in the MoE documents tends to draw on this

assumption. In particular, *Te Whāriki* reveals the influence of social and cultural debates within the early childhood community and this is reflected in the language that is used in this document (Nuttall, 2003).

The review of documents is an unobtrusive means of gathering data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) but in my research it is one that portrays the values and beliefs of New Zealand society in 2006. A review of immigration policies reveals that English proficiency is a requirement and therefore has value in New Zealand. Furthermore, it would seem that the current immigration policy encourages International Students to apply for PR through its Work To Residence category via the loophole that was described above. Despite what the media might portray from time to time, it would seem that the government is keen to encourage International Students to live and work in New Zealand. International Students are seen to be beneficial to New Zealand's economy (Butcher, 2004) and the Ministry of Education recognises that they need to be "properly cared for" (p. 27). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that researchers need to ask themselves what purpose were documents produced when undertaking a documentary analyses. I believe that the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* was developed as a result of the ways in which International Students had been treated in the past and this threatened to jeopardise New Zealand's international reputation as a clean, green and safe study destination (Qin, 2004).

A documentary analysis of the foundational documents of early childhood education reveals a strong philosophy of inclusiveness and cultural diversity (MoE, 1996; 1998a). From this one would think that the participants of this study would be welcomed with open arms into early childhood centres in New Zealand. However, the Ministry of Education (2002; 2005) documents reveal that centres need to be employing qualified staff in order to meet 2007 deadlines. From the data generated by this research, I wanted to find out if the need to employ linguistically and culturally diverse educators was being subsumed by the need to employ qualified staff in order to meet Ministry of Education requirements. If this is so, this would perpetuate the cycle of dominant culture educators in early childhood centres because English speaking New Zealanders are more likely to succeed in gaining a Level 7 qualification than speakers of English as an additional language (MoE, 2004). As discussed in Chapter 2, most tertiary institutions require high levels of academic English proficiency from International

Students and as Collier (1987) points out this can take between seven and ten years to achieve. This automatically disadvantages linguistic and culturally diverse educators. Once my research proposal was approved, I was able to write my ethics proposal and outlined below is the process for obtaining this approval as well as certain areas of my research that needed to be given serious consideration with regard to the ethical implications that could arise.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) in November 2005 (Ethics Application Number 05/216). As the researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure that no harm would come to the participants as a result of this study. Therefore, I had to demonstrate to the Ethics Committee how the participants would be protected. The main issues were an imbalance of power between the participants and myself and protecting the participants' identities. How I overcame these issues is explained below.

One of the main ethical issues that I faced was with regard to inviting the students to participate in my research whilst I was still teaching them. The imbalance of power that existed between the students and myself at that time may have caused the students to feel vulnerable and may have put them in a difficult position. If I approached them before the course completion they may have felt that they needed to agree to my request because I might disadvantage them in some way. After all, I was part of the team who had the final say as to whether these students passed or failed the course. On the other hand, the students may have felt that this would perhaps advantage them in some way, that their agreement to my request meant that I was indebted to them and that they could request repayment in some form.

I believed that it would be very difficult to trace the students by ethical means after the course had been completed. To resolve this issue, it was suggested that I design a questionnaire that asked what the students intended to do after they had completed the certificate course. This form also asked them if they would be interested in being involved with a research project as a participant and requested their contact details if they were interested (see Appendix A - Where To Next form).

A college staff member was asked to distribute these questionnaires at a time when I was not present at the College and the voluntary nature of this activity was emphasised to the students. This 'Where to Next' questionnaire was also distributed to the students very close to the course completion date, so the amount of contact that I had with the students from this point in time was minimal. In addition to this, the participants were not contacted about the possibility of participating in this study until after their course completion, at which point I expected the power relationship between myself and potential participants to have diminished. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Twenty-six 'Where to Next' forms were distributed and fourteen were returned. This questionnaire asked for information such as their intention to seek employment in early childhood education in the Auckland region as well as their willingness to be a participant in a research project. Based on the information that students gave about their willingness to participate and their future plans, eight were invited to participate in this research. Each of the selected participants was sent a Consent to Participate Sheet (see Appendix B), and was asked to return this to me using an enclosed stamped addressed envelope. They were also sent a Participant Information sheet, which outlined the nature of the research and what their expected involvement in it would be (see Appendix C). Seven of the eight Consent Forms were returned. When these were received the participants were contacted individually using a variety of media such as text messaging, e-mail or by telephone.

Another ethical issue that I considered was how I intended to protect the identities of the participants of this research. This was an important point because the cohort of students that I taught during 2005 had come to know each other well. There were several distinguishing features of this cohort. For example, there was an imbalance between the gender, age and family and marital status within this group. Within this cohort of twenty-seven students there were only two males, three people over thirty; two who had been married and one who had a child. In order to protect the participants' identities I have ensured that no distinguishing features are referred to in Chapter 5 The Interviews and Chapter 6 The Discussion. I have done this by allocating androgynous pseudonyms to each of the participants and referring to each participant either by this name or as his/her or he/she. This was discussed with each of the participants and outlined in the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix C). Most of the participants used a

'preferred' Western name and when asked whether they wanted me to use a Chinese or Western androgynous pseudonym in this thesis they all replied in a similar manner which was "what ever you like" or "whatever is easiest for you" or "I don't care" or "I don't mind". Therefore, in order to ensure accurate tracking of the interviews I firstly categorised each participant by the letter of the alphabet in the order that I interviewed each one, for example the first interviewee was Case Study A. From this I allocated androgynous pseudonyms, for example Alex, Baylee, Cameron, Drew, Evan, Frankie and Georgie.

In order to further protect the participants of this study I took steps to ensure that they were fully informed of what this research would entail and what their role would be so that they could make an informed decision regarding their participation. This information was presented to them in the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C) and was written in English. This was done for practical reasons because all of the participants had a good understanding of the English language having just completed the National Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care, which was conducted and assessed in English.

At the first interview, I checked that they had received and read the Participant Information Sheet and asked each participant if they had any questions about this information. I stressed to the participants that their identities would be kept anonymous on the cassette tapes, on the transcripts and in the final report. I explained that the transcripts would be sent to them to read and if there was anything they wanted to add, change or delete they could contact me and this would be done without justification or explanation on their part. I also explained to the participants that I would allocate a code to each transcript that only I could identify which would further protect their identities. The participants were notified that they could withdraw from this research at any time without any explanation. All of the participants showed a keen willingness to be involved in this research.

The Ethics Committee was informed that the identities of the participants would only be known to me. On the transcripts they would only be known as a case number and in the final report they would be allocated androgynous pseudonyms. Further to this, the recorded data would be coded and be kept at a safe location and separate from the transcribed data.

Data Collection Techniques

In the context of this research project, exploring the participants' experiences involved collecting data using an interview technique. Twenty-one individual interviews were conducted between December 2005 and April 2006. I believed that it was important to collect information from the participants as soon as possible in order to document their stories as they unfolded. Each interview lasted between fifteen and sixty minutes.

My aim was to gather a rich description of the participants' experiences, and I believed that this could be achieved through face-to-face informal interviewing. I believed that informal interviews would enable the participants to express themselves more openly and in more detail than may have occurred in a focus group. Additionally, I wanted to protect the participants from the judgement of others that could occur in a focus group and cause embarrassment.

Embarrassment or 'loss of face' has significant meaning in the Chinese culture. This concept stems from Confucian teachings, which encourages individuals to always do their best. Guo (2006) states that "In Confucian terms, the highest purpose of living is self-perfection" (p. 8). She goes on to explain that within Confucian societies, there is a strong emphasis on "self-cultivation", which includes learning about shame and how to avoid being shamed, in other words, saving face.

According to Kvale (1996 p. 14) interviews are "an interchange of views between two people talking about a theme of mutual interest". Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believe that often narrative inquiry researchers begin with the intention of conducting an interview, but "the interview often turns into a form of conversation" (p. 110). I certainly found this to be the case. The conversations that I had with the participants led to other avenues that were explored and enabled me to respond to the participants' stories with flexibility.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that "the way an interviewer acts, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and therefore the ways participants respond and give accounts of their experience" (p.110). During our face-to-face meetings I was able show empathy and understanding of their situation. The interviews that I conducted were semi-structured in that they began with a set of premeditated open-ended questions and evolved into a progress report of the participants' journey.

The reason for taking an informal semi-structured approach was to achieve a natural flow of conversation within the perimeters of the topic. Daley (1998) used a similar technique in her study of the settlement issues of Asian migrants and commented that working through the same questions with each interviewee is artificial, whereas allowing more flexibility to suit each individual enables the conversation to flow more naturally.

I found that the participants involved in my research were all at different points on their journey and therefore, not all of the questions could be asked of all of the participants. Some had just begun to send off their curriculum vitae to centres and so the questions relating to interview experiences were not relevant in this situation. Some participants were much further along in their journey and had been for several interviews and some had even been offered employment soon after they had completed the certificate course. In these cases, most or all of the interview questions could be asked in the first interview. It also needs to be noted that although the participants were all interviewed at least once, due to their personal circumstances, it was not possible or necessary to interview some of the participants more than once¹. However, those that were in the early stages of their journey were willing to meet with me more than once and in some instances, several times, in order to record their unfolding experiences.

Many appointments were made and cancelled by the participants due to their personal circumstances. Often, participants had been invited to go for job interviews or were doing relieving work on the day that we had scheduled to meet. Although this was at times, frustrating for me, I was, at the same time, pleased that my former students were being pro-active in seeking employment.

At the first point of contact, each participant was invited to meet for an initial interview. I invited each participant either for lunch or coffee depending on their availability and I offered to reimburse their travelling expenses. These were offered as a means of thanking the participants for their time and support and not as an inducement to participate in this research. I suggested to participants that they choose a meeting place

¹ One of the purposes of this research was to find out if a level 5 Certificate qualification would lead to employment and whether this in turn would then lead to PR. Although some participants were offered employment, the nature of the contract did not qualify them for PR. Therefore, I continued to interview these participants whenever possible in order to track their journey. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

that was convenient to them since I was not reliant on public transport as they were. I found they preferred to meet me in a mall or café.

I was aware that my previous professional relationship with the participants and the power relation that existed between us at that time could be difficult to completely erase. Igoa (1995) states that Chinese students hold teachers in very high regard and they are taught from an early age to love and respect their teachers more than their parents. She suggests that the reasons for this are that, although parents brought them into the world, a student's teachers would help them contribute their talents to the world. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) maintain that "research interviews normally have an inequality about them. The direction of the interview, along with its specific questions, are governed by the interviewer" (p. 110).

In order to put my relationship with the participants on a more informal basis, and to redress the power imbalance as discussed previously, I made the conscious decision to dress more casually than I had done in my previous role as a lecturer. I also decided to conduct the interviews in an informal environment for two reasons. One was to accommodate the participants' preference to meet at a location that was convenient to them and secondly, I believed that the participants might feel more comfortable talking about their experiences in a more informal environment than that of an academic setting such as one of the AUT library facilities. I also consciously tried to build a relationship with the participants by being empathetic to their situation and needs. Prior to each interview we engaged in social pleasantries and I believe that this strengthened the bonds of trust. This approach is endorsed by Daley (1998) who comments that "a good interview is based on empathy and trust" (p. 17).

Data Collection Methods

The interviews were recorded on cassette tape and transcribed by me on to a Word document. I used a small hand held cassette tape recorder that was easily portable and relatively unobtrusive. Recording the interviews provided an accurate method of capturing all of the participants' conversations and allowed me to focus my full attention on what the participants were saying and to participate in and contribute to the conversations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Recording the interviews also made it possible for me to use the participants' quotes verbatim in this research report, and this is congruent with the narrative approach of enabling the participants to tell their story.

The cassette recorder that I used had a particular feature that clarified the speaker's voice. This proved to be useful in situations where I was interviewing participants in environments that had a lot of loud background noise such as cafés and malls. When transcribing the interviews I used a set of 'Bose' (trademark) earphones, which also had the added feature of reducing background noise. The features of the cassette recorder and earphones coupled together, enabled the interviews to be clearly heard and transcribed easily with only minor difficulty in understanding just a few words. When it was not possible to have face-to-face meetings with participants due to their time constraints, I was able to get an up-date from individuals of their situation over the telephone. When this happened I made telephone notes that I added to the previous data. This information was confirmed with the participants via e-mail.

The interview transcripts were analysed for similar themes amongst participants. Emerging patterns or themes from the data were noted and coded using coloured symbols. These themes were then used as topic headings in Chapter 5, The Findings.

Data Analysis

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that narrative researchers "make themselves as aware as possible of the many layered narratives at work in their inquiry space" (p. 70). In order to work through these 'layered narratives' I read and re-read the transcripts. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000) "narrative inquiry carries more of a sense of a search, a "re-search", a searching again" (p. 124) and that the researcher needs to look for "patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes either within or across individual's experience" (p. 132). By focusing on my main research question, and then the interview questions, I was able to analyse and organise segments of the transcripts into 'themes' that were identified from the participants' conversations.

I was then able to begin to organise the data into the participants' *steps* towards employment. From this I was able to generate headings or categories of participants' experiences that were similar and link these to information I had found in the literature review. As I progressed through the analysis process I was able to make connections between categories and systematically order the headings in a logical way, so that collectively they portrayed a map of the journey towards employment for the

participants of this research. This was a lengthy process, which required reflection and interpretation. van Manen (1997, p. 79) believes that:

Making something of a text or lived experience by interpreting its means is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning.

Although each participant presented an individual ‘case’, and each of their stories were unique to them, there were some common themes that emerged from the data, such as the immigration process. More interestingly, it was possible to draw comparisons between relief teaching experiences, the responses to their curriculum vitae, and their interview experiences. There was also a desire among most of the participants to achieve Permanent Residency status so that they could continue studying as a domestic student at much reduced fees. However, it should also be noted that some of the information presented in the next chapter may have been experienced by only one participant, but was nevertheless included due to its relevance to this overall topic. The original themes that emerged from the data were as follows:

1. Participants’ backgrounds
2. Perceptions of New Zealand prior to arrival
3. Reasons for choosing New Zealand as a study destination
4. Immigration agents
5. Home-stay/accommodation experiences (noted as accommodation experiences)
6. Perceptions of getting employment prior to arrival
7. Perceptions of getting employment at the close of the data collection
8. Reasons for choosing early childhood education
9. Responses to CVs and Interview experiences
10. Experiences of relief teaching
11. Experiences of employment agencies
12. Perceptions of early childhood employers
13. Continuation of study
14. Perceptions of IELTS
15. Work Permits and Visas
16. Employment from practicum placement
17. Experiences of finding employment
18. Perceptions of NZIS

19. The desire to gain PR
20. Fees (immigration, agent and tertiary)
21. Cultural values
22. Employment contracts

The themes were then condensed by grouping them into topics that had common links to one another. These are listed below:

- a) Beginning the Journey
- b) Immigration Agents
- c) Visa Applications
- d) Employment Experiences
- e) Continuation of Further Study

These themes are outlined in more detail in Chapter 6 The Discussion of the Findings.

Validity of Data

After each interview I transcribed the data onto a word document and this was either e-mailed or posted to the participants for accuracy and verification. In some cases where I was meeting participants regularly, I could personally hand the transcribed interviews to them. When the transcripts were sent or handed to the participants, I invited them to read through it in their own time and to let me know if they believed that this was an accurate record of our conversation. I also advised them that they could edit anything in the transcript. None of the participants took up this offer of changing the data and all of them confirmed with me that it was an accurate record of our meetings. The data were also analysed by my supervisors and this provided a means of validating the themes that emerged.

Reciprocity

There is a certain amount of reciprocity embodied in this research. The participants of this study willingly gave up their time in order to support my pursuit of a higher qualification. At the same time, I willingly guided them through the employment process when asked to assist with supplying references, critiquing curriculum vitae, providing interview techniques and examining employment contracts. Daley (1998) comments that the position of the researcher can be one of being actively engaged as a

participant of the research as an “interactive, empathetic force” (p. 16) as well as being able to stand outside the research to reflect on it.

Throughout this research, I became increasingly aware of my own part in the participants’ journey towards employment. Without breaching participant confidentiality, I was able to pass on valuable information about the details of applying for work visas that was gained from the experiences of the participants who were slightly ahead of some of the others.

Conclusion

The research approach taken in this thesis is qualitative interpretivism, which posits that meaning is constructed from the lived experiences of the participants as they interact within the environment. This approach matches the philosophy of early childhood education in New Zealand, which emphasises the importance of relationships with people, places and things (MoE, 1996). It also fits with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development, which depicts the relationships between the individual, and events that occur in the immediate and wider environment.

This research approach and this theory has enabled me to form questions around the immigration and employment processes that the participants of this study have had to undertake in order to legally live and work in New Zealand. In order to assist in answering some of these questions, this research has utilised several methods. These are: case study; narrative analysis and documentary analyses. Each of these methods complements the other. A case study binds the participants together through their common experiences. A narrative analysis allows each individual participant to tell their story about their journey toward employment in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Documentary analyses provides contextual information that assists in understanding the possible difficulties that they may face in their journey.

Formulating this research has produced some ethical implications and these have been considered in light of the power relationship that existed between myself and the participants as well as their vulnerability to any harm or discomfort that may have resulted from this research. Strategies were designed to diminish the power relationship and minimise any discomfort.

Once the research was approved by the AUT Ethics Committee the data-gathering phase began in earnest and individual interviews were conducted. The data that was generated from these interviews were analysed and organised into primary and secondary themes that became evident. This data was validated by the participants, who were asked to read the transcripts and verify their accuracy. The data were also validated by my supervisors who read the data and endorsed my interpretation of the themes. In the concluding paragraph of this chapter, the reciprocity that existed between the participants and myself was discussed in relation to the ways in which new knowledge can assist others in their journey toward employment.

In the next chapter, The Findings, the participants' narratives are presented and grouped into themes comprising of their backgrounds; their use of Immigration Agents; visa applications; their employment experiences; and continuation of further study.

Chapter 5 - The Findings

Introduction

The participants of this study consisted of seven people, all of whom are Chinese and all had completed the Level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care in 2005 at the same private tertiary establishment. In order to protect the participants' identities I have allocated each an androgynous pseudonym.

In keeping with the method of Narrative Inquiry, what follows are extracts from the participants' interviews. Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) state that "narrative analysts work with natural language" (p. xii). Rather than changing the participants' words to conventional English, I have presented extracts from the interviews verbatim. This has been done in order to honour the participants' story telling styles and to give personality to their narratives. However, it should be noted that I found it challenging to accurately portray the tone, expression and emotions of the participants' conversations in a written form, therefore I have added my interpretation of their feelings from what I heard in the tone of their voices and from what I observed about their body language.

The question of 'voice' is often problematic in Narrative Inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly, (2000) suggest that there needs to be a balance between the participants "voice" and the researchers "signature" (p. 149). Whereas the voice of the participants needs to be heard, the authorship of the researcher also needs to be evident. I believe that the voice of the participants should be heard predominantly throughout the findings but the signature of the researcher comes to the fore in the interpretation and analysis of the findings. Therefore, in this chapter, I have kept my voice to a minimum, but have revealed my signature in the next chapter, the discussion of the findings.

Another dilemma that often surfaces in Narrative Inquiry is the inclusion and exclusion of texts. I was acutely aware, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out, that in writing this chapter, I may obscure or silence important parts of the participant's narratives. Stake (1996) comments that "Many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot, the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing and anyone's telling" (p. 240). I found that from a practical point of view, it was not possible to include every detail of every conversation that I had with each participant, the word

limit guidelines for this thesis precluded this. After reading and re-reading the scripts, I found that not all of the information was relevant to the research topic, but the most important point was that from an ethical standpoint, I could not include anything that would reveal the participants' identities¹. It should be noted at this point that these participants had all studied together during 2005 and they had shared aspects of their lives with one another. It was from this perspective that I culled the data.

It should be observed that some sections of this chapter might represent several participants' experiences or views and some only detail one participant's conversation. Furthermore, not all of the participants experienced every issue that is raised in this chapter.

The information in this chapter begins with a general outline of the participants' backgrounds. Following this, the data is grouped into relevant themes or headings and these include: Beginning the Journey; Immigration Agents; Visa Applications; Employment Experiences and Continuation of Further Study. Whilst the terminology of 'themes' is in keeping with the discourse of qualitative research, in actual fact correlations between participants' narratives were exposed, much like that of an iceberg, the more that I analysed the data.

The information presented in the section on 'Beginning the Journey' refers to the start of these participants' journeys, for example, why they chose New Zealand as a study destination; what their expectations were of finding employment; and why they chose a career in early childhood education.

The section on 'Immigration Agents' relays the participants' perceptions of this industry and their personal experiences of dealing with agents. This then leads to the section on Visa Applications and details the participants' understandings of the process for applying for visas. The section headed 'Employment Experiences' amounts to the largest section of this chapter and in order to delineate some of the details, this section has been (sub)divided into sub-headings. These are as follows: Applying For Jobs; Interview Experiences; Employment Contracts; Relief Teaching; Cultural Difference; Payment Issues; Perceptions of Early Childhood Centres; and Luck. The reason why

¹ Whereas there were aspects of the participants narratives that would have been interesting to report in this thesis, these aspects were considered distinguishing features and would have possibly revealed the participants identities. Therefore, these aspects were excluded from this thesis.

this section became so large is because there were several very distinct aspects of the participants' employment experiences, which could not be discussed properly without separating the issues. Further to this, most of the participants had encountered some or all of these experiences. Some of these aspects of their employment experiences became obstacles for the participants and for some, these issues left them vulnerable to acts of unfair treatment and discrimination.

The section on 'Continuation of Further Study' outlines some of the participants' future plans. Most of the conversations that I had with the participants about future study were linked to their goal of gaining PR and their perceived difficulties regarding IELTS.

Beginning the Journey

To protect the participants' identities I have allocated them the following 'gender-neutral' pseudonyms: Alex; Baylee; Cameron; Drew; Evan; Frankie and Georgie². Their journeys began in China when they first made the decision to study in New Zealand. Some used an Immigration Consultant to assist them in the initial stages of their journey and others relied on their own judgement and recommendations of friends to find accommodation and educational facilities. Most participants had enrolled in a language school when they first arrived in New Zealand. The length of time averaged at a language school was between five months and one year.

All of the participants have lived in New Zealand for at least two years and most commented that the reason why they chose New Zealand was because they thought it would be "*better*" than China, because of the "*clean, green environment*"; because it was "*cheaper*" than other places and because they wanted to learn to speak English. Cameron said that:

"...you know the visa is quite hard to apply for America. You know before I want to go to Australia but you need to have an IELTS 5.5 at least then you can go... [pause]... but in New Zealand it's different, you can go to New Zealand first then get the IELTS, so that's the better way".

Evan noted that "*New Zealand is a good study environment*".

² One of the recommendations of one of the examiners of this thesis was the notion of gendered education. However, using my agency as the writer of this thesis, I believed that I acted ethically and responsibly in protecting the participants' identities by assigning androgenous pseudonyms. The use of he/she was also criticised and whereas this may seem 'clumsy' again, I believe it was necessary in order to protect the identities of the participants.

Alex came to New Zealand because of the:

“...Weather, the environment and the people... [pause].... Kiwis are really friendly [pause] it’s a quiet place, I like the quiet place”.

Drew’s family had concerns about the terrorist attacks on the United States and they had heard that New Zealand was “...a nice peaceful place...”.

On this basis these participants chose New Zealand as a study destination. Daley (1998) also found that the majority of her participants were attracted to New Zealand for its “promise of paradise and its clean, green, unpolluted environment” (p. 86).

I asked the participants what their expectations of getting a job in New Zealand were prior to leaving China. Alex felt that his/her perceptions were “...not so positive”. Prior to his/her arrival in New Zealand Alex was told that “...New Zealand is not quite good for working”. Alex knew that New Zealand’s population was small compared to that of China and s/he thought this would be a problem. The other problems Alex perceived were:

“...I am a foreigner, actually just an International Student so the language should be a problem and the working experiences should be another one”.

In contrast, Evan believed it would be easy to get a job in New Zealand, he/she said:

“Yeah, I think so, because even you go to another country, if you work harder and are serious to working, everyone want to employ you and it’s easy to get a job...”.

When I asked the participants why they had chosen early childhood education, most said they felt that the Certificate qualification would eventually lead to Permanent Residency status.

Evan liked the idea of doing the practicum component of the Certificate course. S/he said:

“We can learn the knowledge during the practicum not just from the book. That for me is not boring and I like to learn from practice, that for me is easier to understand and interesting”.

Baylee chose Early Childhood Education because he/she thought s/he could “...learn some knowledge from children...so I want to have the experience in early childhood...”.

Baylee had read in the newspaper that early childhood education was on the short list and therefore s/he also thought that this could be an “...*easy way to get the Permanent Residency*”.

Cameron thought this would be a pathway to Permanent Residency but also chose this course because:

“...International Students...we need to think about money and spending in our situation so that’s why I thought I should just study the course which can help to find a job first”.

Frankie chose Early Childhood Education because he/she ‘...*enjoy working with children*’. Georgie’s response was similar but s/he also said that:

...early childhood education is on the short list ...[pause]... well ...[pause]... so, I think it will be easier for me to find a job after I do the course...

Drew did not enjoy the Early Childhood Course. Originally he/she had wanted to do another course but realised that it would be difficult to find a job in New Zealand with another qualification. Drew believed that s/he was not a very social person and just wanted to:

“...do some job, get some money, help myself and give something back to my parents”.

One of the questions I asked the participants was how they found out about employment opportunities in New Zealand. Some of them referred to Immigration Agents as their source of information about work and study options.

Immigration Agents

Lovelock and Trlin, (2000) comment that the participants of their study used an Immigration Consultant/Agent to reduce the stress of having to deal with bureaucracy and to maximise their chances of success. Some of the participants of this study said that they had used an Immigration Agent whilst still living in China and they engaged the services of an agency that was advertised in the newspaper or recommended by friends. Cameron said an agent arranged everything for him/her; this included the student visa and home-stay accommodation.

Georgie told me that the agent was supposed to arrange a home-stay accommodation but when he/she arrived in New Zealand, Georgie found that s/he would have to stay at

the language school dormitory. Georgie didn't seem perturbed by this arrangement and seemed to accept it. He/she said that the agent at that time cost \$15,000 Chinese Yuan.³

Cameron felt that his/her agent was helpful and explained:

"I gave all my documents to my agent. My agent is quite nice and they will do that sort of thing for me...they will put the documents to the immigration, they will do that for me, so I just go on working at the centre".

Baylee said:

"I just go through an agent because when I enrol in the early childhood this course in XXX [name of college] I went through this agent and now she is willing to help us to get the open work permit and no charge".

Three participants said that they did not use an agent to assist them. Instead they had a friend that helped them to find accommodation as well as help them enrol in the Certificate course. Evan said that:

"I just apply by myself from Hong Kong and after I come here for one year I want to study and I just look from the newspaper and look at the early childhood and I just call the agency ask them about the detail and go to find the school [pause] yep".

Drew had strong feelings about Immigration Agents and said *"I don't trust them to be honest with you"*.

Cameron provided some anecdotal evidence that may support Drew's mistrust of agents. S/he noted:

"You know one of my friends in my home, the boy he studied in Tourism and Travel and he spent about \$4,000 on the working visa ...[pause]... the company he working with have another agent together... [pause]... just like working together ...[pause]... I think so they just put the money to his company...[pause]... the boss will do that sort of thing for him so he said "it sounds to me like he sold the working visa to me, it's quite expensive". Yes, some place do that, some business do that sort of thing, like sell the working visas. It's quite expensive, \$18,000 (New Zealand Dollars) ...[pause]... something like that".

Another question that I asked the participants was about their understanding of the visa process. Most of the participants seemed to be well informed regarding the process of

³ This is approximately equivalent to \$3,000 New Zealand dollars.

applying for a work permit and did not elaborate on this in detail. Alex provided some interesting information regarding the flexibility of Immigration Case Officers and this is documented below.

Visa Applications

At the beginning of the interviews, each of the participants held a Student Visa, which were due to expire at different times in 2006. Most commented that they would prefer to get a two-year Work To Residence visa rather than a six-month Graduate Work Search Permit, but realised that they may have no choice in this. When asked what the process was for obtaining a work permit, most referred to documentation requirements such as getting a medical certificate, getting a police clearance check from China, providing copies of their bank statement and passport. For most participants, once this documentation was collated it was handed over to their agent who would check it and submit it to the NZIS.

However, Alex who began by processing the visa application initially, had difficulties and the application was returned twice due to incomplete information. Alex did not seem clear about the documentation that was needed to support the application. When I asked about this, Alex stated:

Well, some requirement is optional and some is compulsory. But I didn't know which one is optional and which one is compulsory ...[pause]... sometimes it requires that documents, sometimes if you didn't hand in that alright so... [pause]... I'm not an expert, agent should be the expert so that why the agent has lots of experience with that.

I recapped on a previous conversation that we had engaged in and said:

“They sent your first application back because your passport was almost out of date? So why didn't they tell you then that you needed to get your police check and your medical”?

Alex replied:

“I dunno, probably a different officer [pause] you know it really depends, depends on the officer. Some officers, OK, are really strict even over strict and some are “OK that's fine”.

This is congruent with the findings from Henderson, Pernice, Trlin and North (1997), who suggest that Immigration Officers have some flexibility with regard to the interpretation of policies. I believe that Alex found this frustrating.

Employment Experiences

The next section of this chapter documents the participants' employment experiences. This is the largest section of this chapter because most of the participants were involved in the activity of finding employment for a large part of the data collection duration. The employment experiences of the participants covered a range of issues and topics. In order to distinguish between these topics and issues, this section has been divided into subheadings.

Applying For Jobs

Most of the participants sent out over twenty curriculum vitae to centres that were advertising in a variety of different media. These included the Education Gazette website, local and national newspaper advertisements, the Yellow Pages business directory, Employment Agencies and recommendations by friends.

The *Education Gazette* is a Ministry of Education sponsored magazine and website that provides information on many things, one being vacancies across all domains of education (MoE, 2006c). As discussed in Chapter 2, the Ministry of Education are encouraging all centres to employ fully qualified staff, so the advertisements on the *Education Gazette* website predominantly required fully qualified teachers. However, some centres were flexible and occasionally adverts appeared stating that the centre would consider employing someone who was near to completing their qualification.

Responses from centres varied, some participants were invited for interviews and some received no responses at all. Georgie told me of one centre's response to his/her enquiry:

"I just went there and gave my CV to the Manager and she said she would give my CV to the boss and arrange an interview [pause] but just nothing... [pause] ...and she sent me a letter saying my interview is unsuccessful ...[pause]... I wonder why"!

Georgie's facial expression and tone of voice implied that he/she was very bewildered by this.

Several participants attended job interviews, which was an encouraging sign that they were at least being considered for employment. However, not all of these experiences were positive and these are presented below.

Interview Experiences

Frankie had three job interviews. One was a negative experience whereby Frankie was asked to work for the centre but was not paid for this work and this is referred to later in this chapter under the section headed *Payment Issues*. The second interview was a positive experience, which Frankie related:

They asked me about the course and Level 5 and yeah ...[pause]... they want me to continue study to get the Diploma. Two people ask me... [pause]... it made me very nervous. They asked me about my practicum and something about reference. I just told them I can do the relieving work at first and if you feel good you can give me full time. They asked me...because they never heard of XXX [the tertiary institution] before so they just ask something about this school. They ask me about the first aid certificate and ask me which kind of group I like... [pause]... I just said I like under two years old.

The third interview that Frankie went to was less stressful and this one turned out to be a success story. This is what Frankie said:

Because we were look for a job on the internet, and probably one month ago we just found a place is locally in XXX [name of place], so I rang them and they said they need two staff, one is non-qualified and they want a qualified staff [pause] so they already got one, their name is XXX [name of friend] I said this is my classmate... [pause].... And then XXX [name of friend] just called me ...[pause]... she said the supervisor just told her they haven't found any qualified staff so probably they want to interview me. It was very exciting!

I asked Frankie what happened at the interview. He/she replied:

In the interview... [pause] ...because the situation is the same as XXX [name of friend] the supervisor hasn't got lots of questions for me, just ask me a little bit like my experience about ece. Also I met the Butterfly Room Head Teacher, so we were just talking for about half an hour [pause]. I think XXX [name of friend] gave me a very huge help for this job. Because XXX [name of friend] always told the supervisor, "why you don't give my friend a chance because we are all hard working". So the supervisor say "OK you can ask her come for an interview".

I asked Frankie what happened after the interview. He/she stated:

“The supervisor just said to me she needs to talk to the centre owner next Monday and then when I come back home she just give me a call, “what size of uniform do you want?” A uniform! Yes, very happy”.

Frankie seemed excited by this prospect.

Cameron told me of his/her first interview experience:

It’s quite nervous. I’m wearing the clothes that are very formal and I went in and they asked me some questions all about ece and how can you control the children if they misbehave or something like that.

And she asked me some other questions like contribution I just said “well, I am a very hard working person and I will pay my attention to my work during the day and I will prepare my activities before I work and something like that. And she said “Oh OK”.

And they asked me if I have any questions about the centre and I said “How about the professional development?” They said it’s quite flexible and sometimes they have some people to come in to do some training like that and portfolio always by the head teacher ...[pause]... so normally I only do two or...[pause]... and the daily three observations.

And she took me to the centre to just see the conditions and the children’s play. She said “It’s quite good if you come in and do some work for us” I said “yes, that good for me, and thank you for the opportunity”. And the boss told me something like how many the payment you like. And I said \$13 or \$14. And she said that’s a little bit high, I think that one includes the holiday pay. I said “Oh it doesn’t matter for me I just want to get a job first, it’s quite helpful for me to get experience” But she said “All right, we’ll talk about it later”.

And then she asked me “ will you do the future study?” And I said “Yes, I will and I already applied to MIT and Unitec but its still processing and I haven’t got my certificate back so I need to wait until I think July”. And she said “That’s all right for us”. And then I go home and she said “we will get back to you”. But I wait for about another week and still haven’t got the result and that’s why I thought she doesn’t want to offer me the job.

However, this did turn into a success story and Cameron was later offered the job.

Employment Contracts

Employment contracts became an issue for some participants of this study. For immigration purposes the job description needs to match the qualification. It was important to have ‘Teacher’ written on the employment contract in order to be eligible for PR. When asked about her/his employment contract Alex said:

...I got this letter when I was working for the centre for a while and I discuss again with the centre manager and she told me we can’t pay you until you sign the caregiver/reliever contract. I said alright, so I go through that and say

that's fine for me so I sign that, basically they will pay me from the next time I go to work and pay off from my previous work and then [pause]...

.... I had the 'careworker' [contract] [pause] caregiver like a reliever ... [pause] ... casual ...[pause]... and then you sign that and you can work full time and when you waiting for the work permit and when you got the work permit you can sign the formal contract as a permanent worker. And when you got the job offer you can apply the formal work permit and that's the process.

Alex was concerned about the term 'Caregiver' on his/her employment contract. S/he stated:

I'm going to talk about my future with her, [the centre manager] like do you really want to employ me as a permanent teacher or not? If you do ...[pause]... I mean when can I sign the contract? Because the sooner I sign the contract the sooner I can apply for permanent work permit. This is really important. And how long the contract should be, one years or two years? I wanna know that because it's relevant to my PR application ...[pause]... It's really important to me. And if they can employ me and sign the contract with me probably I can apply for the formal work permit directly and hop over the open work permit.

The employment contract is crucial to the Work To Residence visa application as Baylee explained:

"...[the visa] depends on how long the employee will provide you the work for and the contract. I think two years contract is much better than one year for the immigration. So I still need to negotiate with her and see how's it going. But first I need to get my open work permit" [Graduate Job Search Permit].

I asked "Does the centre have to provide immigration with any information like a letter?" Baylee replied:

"Yes, I think they need to give me a contract first that's the usual ...[pause]... it says it's a job offer. And another letter is the job description, it means what I do in the centre what is the title".

Due to Baylee's time constraints I was unable to conduct any further interviews, but we kept in telephone contact and what follows in an update of his/her situation from my telephone notes with regards to Baylee's employment contract and work visa:

Baylee talked to the Centre Manager and asked for an employment contract for two years but was only offered a *Fixed Term* contract until September. This is when Baylee's six months Graduate Work Permit was due to expire. The employment contract title was 'Caregiver' but it needed to state 'Teacher' in order to comply with the Residence from Work Visa policy. Baylee told me that this is a "big problem".

Without the appropriate employment contract Baylee faced the prospect of returning to China, which was a concern. Up to this point Baylee's experiences of employment in this early childhood centre had been positive. After five months employment at this centre Baylee was disappointed that he/she was not told earlier that the contract would be entitled 'Caregiver' rather than 'Teacher'.

To maximise their exposure to the job market and to gain employment experience, some participants undertook relief teaching work. This also became an area of vulnerability for some participants and this is explained below.

Relief Teaching

After getting a negative response from the CV's that were sent out, some of the participants of this study undertook relief teaching in order to get work experience. This was also seen as a way for participants to prove themselves to employers. Alex and Baylee found long term relieving work through their practicum centre and both hoped that it would lead to a permanent position. I was interested to know what the participants' experiences of working in an early childhood centre were. Baylee said:

We [the centre staff and management and Baylee] got used to each other and feel comfortable and the routine of the centre, and the policy ...[pause]... so maybe I try to work hard and they feel that and so when I apply for the job in that centre they said "Oh that's nice if you work here because the children used to you and all the staff used to you" they feel trust each other ...[pause]... they feel you are reliable something like that and so they are willing to offer me a job there. This is very nice.

Alex also had positive experiences initially:

Well, most of my experiences are positive especially this centre where I'm working now, it's pretty cool, the children, the staff, the centre, the manager, everything is pretty cool. Yeah, pretty enjoy that ...[pause]... Yeah, probably you get some difficult times, but that's normal [pause] such as life ...[pause].... Just build a bridge and get through that.

However, Drew portrayed a different picture. S/he went for a job interview and was asked to do some relieving work but Drew did not enjoy this experience. This is what Drew told me:

The first day was alright ...[pause]... I was in the babies room, ... that was nice ...[pause].... But after that the lady said, "Oh can you come for another day because you was late?" So I said "OK". So I came back on Wednesday. And I don't like this centre, the over two ...[pause]... the children has no discipline at

all ...[pause]... because maybe it's the area ...[pause]... it's a very rich area ...[pause]... XXX [place] ...[pause].... And those kids never listen ...[pause]... like they know you and if you ask them to do some thing they said, "You are not the teacher" and "Leave me alone, I don't like you". So it was yeah ...[pause]... and especially the owner was a bit [pause] I don't know ...[pause]... just swears ...[pause]... and after that day I just got rid of this as soon as possible.

I believe Drew felt disappointed by this experience but despite this he/she continued to do relief teaching for a number of centres via an Employment Agency. At a later interview Drew informed me:

I have been to lots of centres now ...[pause]... some centres the environment is not very good ...[pause]... sometimes it looks like a garage underground area ...[pause]... quite dark and umm ...[pause]... it's not really have daylight in the centre ...[pause]... but the teachers were nice ...[pause]... and I think every centre have got the same problem they got ratio problem ...[pause]... never have enough staff ...[pause]... like after 4 pm in the afternoon all relievers, not even the permanent staff there ...[pause].... That's the reality so ...[pause]... yeah ...[pause]... I mean ...[pause]... they don't care, why should I care about? I mean, I can't make a suggestion or anything ...[pause]... but I still feel sorry for the kids ...[pause]... there is some really, really lovely kids and I think ...[pause]... sometimes ...[pause]... I can't do anything for those centres because I'm a reliever and I really feel there is no education and there was no ratio and no routine ...[pause]... no nothing ...[pause]... we are basically just babysitters ...[pause]... yes ...[pause]... so I feel maybe I can do something ...[pause]... make some change after I qualified as they talk ...[pause]... you know "You are not qualified teacher and you don't have experience and you don't have kids, you don't even have hands on experience."

Drew recounted another negative experience at a different centre:

...because they've got three or four teachers at the centre but only two was working, one was always on the phone the other one was always stay in the kitchen ...[pause]... so like one teacher inside and me always outside so ...[pause]... so only me dealing with fifteen to twenty children all the time and I even couldn't get a bonded for the kids you know ...[pause]... I really think they need people though ...[pause]... many centres have the same problems with staff and I don't think there's any learning going on anyway it's like our job is babysitting and I have no time to teach them anything anyway, there's no time for interaction especially one to one interaction. You know you're one teacher dealing with ten to fifteen then how can that happen?

I asked Drew if he/she felt that s/he was taken seriously as a relief teacher. Drew said:

... basically I'm just doing cleaning job ...[pause]... like yesterday I went to a centre ...[pause]... the centre was great I mean ...[pause]... quite a big centre ...[pause]... basically what I was doing was just cleaning yeah ...[pause]... and

you know it was raining outside eh? And they asked me to clean all the rubbish bins so I carried like four or five bags of rubbish to outside to the metal ones so ...[pause]... yeah ...[pause]... I don't know ...[pause]... maybe it's just normal for some people but I think I've never been treated like that.

I believe that Drew felt disempowered because he/she was not regarded by the other staff as a 'proper teacher'. I think this led Drew to become apathetic about the realities of working in early childhood centres, because Drew felt that he/she could not make a difference.

Georgie also decided to apply for relieving work through an Employment Agency. He/she described the experience:

I called the lady and she asked me have you done anything about that, I said I have a certificate of ECE [Early Childhood Education] and she said "wonderful, wonderful", and I also have a first aid certificate and she says "wonderful" ...[pause].... She asked me whereabouts I'm living and I say I'm living in XXX, [name of town] and she said "oh that's good you know there are a lot of centres looking for teachers around this area". And she ask me umm ...[pause]... if I can drive or not and I say, "I drive" and she said, "is relieving work OK"? And I said, "OK, relieving is fine". And she say "\$14 an hour is that OK"? I say "OK, no problem". And then she asks me almost everything and then she asks "are you resident"? And I say, "No, I'm not". "So what kind of permit are you holding"? I said the "student visa currently". And she said "Oh then you can only work twenty hours per week and you need to get a work permit before we can register you to our agency" and I say "yeah, yeah I'm going to apply it", but she said "sorry before you can get it we can't register you to our company" and she asked me to call a man when I get the work permit ...[pause]... yeah.

This was puzzling to me, because I knew that Drew was also holding a student visa and was doing relieving work for the same agency that Georgie had applied to.

Cultural Difference

Cultural difference was another area of some of the participants employment experiences. I wondered if Drew's disillusionment with early childhood education in New Zealand was possibly due to cultural differences between his/her expectations of what children should do in China and what they are allowed to do in New Zealand. Drew answered:

Nah ...[pause]... cos I think if I had my early childhood certificate done in China then I think it would be different but I'm educated here and I think my perspective of early childhood education is kind of matching to this culture ...[pause]... I don't think this is culture clash or something ...[pause]... but

there is something really different between what I expect and the reality going on in centres.

I believe that Drew felt that his/her upbringing and cultural background had not affected how s/he was feeling about early childhood education in New Zealand. However Alex portrayed a different picture. When I asked Alex about his/her employment experiences, this is what Alex told me:

...you know, the tradition, the cultural background is different, it's totally different and your thinking process is really different from theirs [the other staff] so the consequence is that your contact with the children ...[pause]... there will be some conflict. That's not because the children don't listen to you or your language is not fluent or good it's because of cultural shock.

I said "The cultural difference, yeah?" Alex continued:

Yeah, and then the cultural different leads to some results, for example probably the children don't listen to you. Or you will be isolated in some measure or yeah ...[pause]... So the language, language is part of the culture and the culture is different so the language is different. The language difference leads to the difficulty in practice.

I asked Alex if he/she thought this was a barrier. Alex said "*It's a barrier for everybody from abroad... from overseas*".

The literature suggests that culture shock is an anxiety that is felt as a result of losing all familiar signs and symbols that support social interactions as individuals move from their familiar cultural setting to a new and unknown cultural environment (Ward, Brochner & Furnham, 2001; Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede 2002). Early childhood centres in New Zealand offer a unique cultural environment in which staff take on roles and responsibilities that are dictated by their intrinsic values and beliefs. The discourse of early childhood education as well as colloquialisms used by staff may have been part of the reason why Alex found the language so different and led to 'difficulty in practice' as well as 'isolation'. I believe that this is a form of discrimination and this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

I asked Alex if s/he found it difficult to understand why the staff and children do the things they do. Alex replied:

"...because they are the majority and I am the minority, but sometimes I don't quite understand why they do stuff like that, but for me if I was them I won't do like that".

I asked Alex if he/she found this frustrating. The reply was: “*Well, not really a big deal, but sometimes, you know, it’s accumulative, pretty tiny, but accumulated together it will be a big deal*”.

Baylee also mentioned some cultural differences. S/he said:

...and sometimes if I deal with the children in a different way and maybe not actually the right ...[pause]... she [the manager] will tell me how to handle that problem properly and yeah because I think I was raising by the Asian style not the Kiwi style so still some cultural difference.

And I thought that the parents in this centre they maybe they don’t mind to have an Asian teacher even though English is my second language but I think they can accept me and my culture....So I’m happy I find this centre because I don’t know if other centres is good or not. Some of our class mates said some centres don’t like Asian people.

Payment Issues

Some participants experienced problems being paid by centres and in some instances some were not paid at all. In a later interview, Drew told me “*I worked as a reliever for two days and I feel that this was absolutely awful*”.

I asked Drew to explain why he/she felt this way. Drew said:

I don’t know, I hate the system you know the payment system ...[pause]... you know they have to fill out the time sheet and the owner sign it and you fax it back ...[pause]... but sometimes ...[pause]... I don’t have a fax machine, I mean [pause] I have to ask the centre to fax it ...[pause]... and sometimes they have a phone call coming in and that always cuts it off, so I fax three times the time sheet ...[pause]... so I didn’t get paid for two days.

From Drew’s tone and expression I believe that he/she felt helpless in this situation.

Alex had a long term relieving position with a corporate day care centre, which s/he hoped would become a permanent position. However, Alex also had some problems with getting paid:

I got this letter when I was working for the centre for a while and I discuss again with the centre manager and she told me we can’t pay you until you sign the caregiver/reliever contract. I said “Alright”, so I go through that and say “That’s fine for me” so I sign that, basically they will pay me from the next time I go to work and pay off from my previous work.

Several weeks later I asked if this situation had been resolved, Alex said:

I haven’t been paid even one cent ...[pause]... when I did the relieving I know I can’t do the full time so I just the ...[pause]... fifteen hours per week for three

weeks or four weeks I can't remember clearly. And they tell me they will pay me, but the week before the Christmas holiday the Manager told me sorry, you have to...[pause]... we can't pay you until you sign this contract as a caregiver worker. "OK" I said, "I'll sign the contract", but they said "Can we pay you after Christmas?" I said "Yes". Otherwise what can I say? ...[pause]... Yeah the last week was the first week after the Christmas holiday and this week is the second one and this morning, probably another manager tell me ...[pause]... "we want to pay you this week but the board say no because it's too late for them to know I can work full time". But I think its nothing about full time or not, its something about my previous work yeah. I work legally, only fifteen hours a week so you should pay me ...[pause]... it's not an excuse and if you want to check if I can work full time or not you should check with the Immigration. But that's only from last week but what I'm talking about is my previous work before the holiday. It's a big deal for me ...[pause]... I've done legal work from my student visa for my fifteen hours per week for three weeks or four weeks or sixty hours probably \$500 or \$600 is big dollars for me. I need to have that for my rent.

Alex sounded annoyed when s/he was telling me this. I asked Alex what he/she thought about this company. This was his/her answer:

I don't know, whether it discrimination specifically to me or to anybody else or its only just a technical error, I don't know. But how can I find out? I can't! ...[pause].... I wanna see XXX [name of centre manager] next time ...[pause,]... I wanna see her and discuss why they pay me so late ...[pause].... Yeah I want some explanation ...[pause]... and I'm going to talk about my future with her, like do you really want to employ me as a permanent teacher or not ...[pause]... if you do I mean when can I sign the contract? Because the sooner I sign the contract the sooner I can apply for permanent work permit. This is really important. And how long the contract should be, one years or two years? I wanna know that because it's relevant to my PR application. Yeah, we need a conversation about my future. If you don't want to employ me, or you want to delay that, or is there something you worry about, or you are concerned you can let me know and we can discuss the solution. So I wanna make everything sense and make everything on the table.

Alex made an appointment with the manager and the issue of payment was eventually resolved. At a later interview Alex told me:

She [the centre manager] told me she recognised it's not nice for me and not fair for me ...[pause]... that I didn't get paid for such a long time.... And she promise me she will try her best to work it out and until this morning the reception lady told me you will get paid tonight and overnight it should be in your bank tomorrow morning, so I will check it and everything will be fine.

Cameron also described an incident where s/he worked for a centre without pay. Cameron went for a job interview but was asked to work voluntarily for one day. This is what Cameron told me about his/her experience:

... she [the centre manager] said "Can you try just one day and let me see how is your working attitude and how can you get on with children". I said "No problem". And she said "Do you want to be a volunteer for that day?" And I said "Yes, sure, just one day, it doesn't matter for me". So I say I can start 1st of January and at the end of my first day she told me "I think its quite good for you to have an experience like this, but I think you haven't known things well in the centre but I think you still need to more and let me see". I said "OK, how many days?" And she said "Until Friday". So that's two more days, I thought that's all right. I said "OK I will do that". And I came the next day and do the things. You know on the first day I was quite tired, I went back at 7.30 in the evening, you know it's quite ...[pause]... And the next day she asked me to do more jobs, you know the cleaning every morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, she will ask me to do the cleaning after and toilet cleaning and kitchen cleaning the dishwasher and the nappy change. I like to do the nappy change my first experience to the nappy change with children, its good for me. But no, also I think the tidy up of course, the outside environment, inside, the laundry all of them.

I asked, "how does that tell her how good you are with children, doing all the cleaning"? This is what Cameron said:

Yes! You know the one teacher told the other teacher "Look she employed an assistant for us", I heard this and it quite hurt me, you know I don't want to do that, but she asked me to do, if I'm not to do that she will say how come you don't do that [pause] she will say look at she, she can only do the cleaning things.

I enquired how many staff were at that centre. Cameron said "The centre only got three teacher include me". I asked how many children there were. Cameron said "More than ten babies and other eighteen older children". I asked Cameron these questions because I wanted to ascertain what the adult to child ratios were at this centre.

It should be noted here that the *Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations* (MoE, 1998b) stipulate that for every three children of mixed ages attending a centre there should be a minimum of one adult supervising these children. If the children are separated by age, the *Regulations* state that there needs to be one adult for every five children *under* two and one adult for every eight children *over* two. From this information, I calculated that there should have been at least two teachers attending to the ten children under two years old and at least four teachers supervising the seventeen children over two years old. This centre was severely under-staffed and this could have been the reason why the centre manager wanted Cameron to work at this centre. The fact that Cameron was not paid for this work must have been a bonus for this centre manager.

Frankie's first interview experience was similar to this. He/she told me "... *the first one is in XXX [name of place]*".

I said "So, how did that interview go? What did they ask you"?

Frankie said "*They just ask me to do something, I show them*". I asked Frankie if he/she got paid for that day and the reply was: "*They said they will pay but in the end they just let me go*".

From the information that Cameron and Frankie had given me about their experiences, I suspected that perhaps this was one and the same centre.

Perceptions of Early Childhood Centres

I was interested to know what the participants thought about their experiences and whether they thought that centre managers were fair in employing immigrants. This is what Alex stated:

I think so, because actually New Zealand is a multi-cultural society so yeah, so the labour market should be multi cultural as well. So for the centre there's children from lots of countries based on different cultural backgrounds, so for the teacher they should be multi-cultural as well. So that's the advantage of the immigrant teacher. Actually lots of centre managers they are immigrants themselves so that's quite normal. So the globalisation is linked to the localisation.

This was a positive response from Alex and s/he thought that it was an advantage to be a teacher from a linguistic and culturally diverse background.

When asked about the staff at the centre that Frankie worked in he/she said:

"The staff is very kind. They've got lots of Pacific Island staff and some Fiji Indian and the Supervisor is Māori. My head teacher is Samoa".

A common theme among some of the participants who had found employment, attributed their success to 'luck' and this is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Luck

Alex sent out twenty applications and s/he got "*seven or eight*" responses and three interviews. When asked what Alex thought of his/her experiences so far in finding a job, Alex said "*Probably I am lucky, but I have to say that I didn't find it really*

difficult". I asked Alex why s/he thought he/she was lucky and Alex said: "*I didn't feel any difficulty or any, you know, discrimination, and also I got lots of extra support from my tutors ...[pause]... so I feel lucky*".

I asked Alex if s/he thought that he/she had worked really hard to get the Certificate qualification and Alex agreed with this. I then went on to ask if he/she had received references from the Visiting Tutors and practicum Associate Tutors and Alex said that he/she had. I asked what sort of things did these people say in their recommendations. Alex replied:

"Like, I'm a conscientious and I'm diligent and I'm hard working and really helpful ...[pause]... really social and logical sometimes ...[pause]... and friendly ...[pause]... sort of things".

I then asked Alex if s/he still thought that it due to luck or hard work that they had been offered three jobs. S/he said:

"Both of them, I worked hard, but although you're working hard you can't get the equal treatment from others, I mean the equal reward you know"?

I asked Alex why he/she thought that and he/she replied: "*Well, because it's true. The society is not fair ...[pause]... you have to work really hard for even a tiny reward*".

When Frankie was offered a job h/she too felt that she/he were "*quite lucky*". I asked him/her why she/he thought this and the reply was he/she got this job because s/he knew someone who was already working at the centre where Frankie was offered a job, and this person recommended Frankie to the Centre Manager. Frankie said that if his/her friend had not been working there first then maybe s/he would not have this opportunity. When I pointed out to Frankie that he/she had worked hard and presented a good impression of themselves to others and perhaps this had contributed towards getting the job, Frankie said that it was "*half and half*".

When I asked Baylee about his/her perceptions of finding employment s/he stated:

My classmates told me it's very hard to get a job and can't get an opportunity, but maybe the reason is, the centre that they do the practicum in, they already have enough staff. That's one reason; the other one is the lucky one because I got this one because some staff leaving and maybe two or three are leaving so

the centre needs some staff there. The other one is the attitudes is very important.

I commented that I thought attitude was more important than being 'lucky'. I said "I think if you had gone into any centre, I think they would have been really pleased to have you because of your good attitude and you're hard working". Baylee responded by saying:

Yeah. And they can feel that from your heart and not just for appearance ...[pause]... they really want a person who is honest and reliable and to get a good relationship with the staff in the centre ...[pause]... they want a stable person not just playing doing the centre work sometimes and going away and ask the day off because sick or something like that.

And another thing is we are lucky to have this course although its one year it's much more than the people who didn't get anything ...[pause]... and then maybe you can go on and get further study after that but at the moment you know how to deal with the children and how to handle the problem and you know what age the children can do those things ...[pause]... and what's the best way for them to learn and how to teach them. I think that's the reason the centre may think about this.

So I think that's the way if you actually want to get a job in the centre in this country ...[pause]... Because I have no experience of getting a job in this country actually I'm very new, but now I know there are some things the same during the human beings, the common sense everybody want people to work willingly and actually you have the passion something like that.

The need for further study was an occurring theme in the participants' narratives and the next section in this chapter addresses this issue.

Continuation of Further Study

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, continuation of further study is an important issue for the participants of this research who want to pursue a career in early childhood education. I asked Evan, "Now that you've finished your Certificate what are you going to do now"? This is what he/she told me:

I would find a job working first and after I earn enough money for school fee I will continue study. Think because I like the New Zealand study environment ...[pause]... it's different between China and New Zealand ...[pause]... it's very good for the student to study, so I really, really like to study in here.

Later Evan noted:

I think I got two ways I can choose. The one way is, if I can't get the full-time job from the children's centre, so I will go to study in July ...[pause]... but I think maybe I will choose a different subject. And the second way is, if I can find the full-time job in the centre I will work in the centre, talk to them, tell them what I plan for the next study, yeah, that's it.

When asked about further study, Cameron said “*My centre they asked me to do that and I already said that I will*”.

However, some of the other participants had concerns about the cost of further study as Full Fee Paying Students (FFPS). Georgie said:

“I'm planning to study after I got PR so I can pay less fee but it kind of depends ...[pause]... on if I can get a job soon, otherwise I can't just wait and do nothing here”.

Frankie also made a similar comment about his/her intentions for further study, he/she said “*Yes, after I got PR because it's a very low price*”.

On the same topic, Baylee stated:

The fees for the International Student and the Domestic Student is totally different, and maybe double or triple. For the Domestic Student maybe two or three thousand per year but for International Student will cost maybe \$17,000 this is expensive. At the moment I can't afford that.

Alex said:

My problem is if I go further I have to pay the international tuition fee as an International Student it will be \$15,000 it will be too much for me. I have no choice. I need to get PR first otherwise I can't afford that...

Drew's response was:

...the international student fee is just ridiculous, it's just ridiculous. You know if I want to achieve my goals and go further study at university with my own interests then I have to get Permanent Residency first and then get a reasonable price. And you know for us as International Students we have no ...[pause]... how to say ...[pause]... we have no rights sort of in this country but we pay the most that sort of thing.

I believe that Drew felt indignant that he/she had to pay more than other Domestic Students and was being taken advantage of as an International Student. S/he possibly

felt vulnerable in this situation. However, I do not think that Drew had a clear understanding of the reasons why International Students have to pay full fees. Possibly h/she did not know that tertiary education is subsidised by the government for New Zealand residents and that this is ultimately funded by resident tax payers.

Not all of the participants of this study felt that PR was a high priority for them. This is what Cameron told me:

I'm not hurry to get my Permanent Residency. Well, I'm not really care about staying in New Zealand; you know I already came from China to here, so I just want to get some experiences for my life. Personally, I want to go back to China and my parents want me to go back as well.

Most participants indicated that if they continued to study they would apply to the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand Tertiary College, Manukau Institute of Technology or Unitec. These universities, polytechnics and colleges all offer a Diploma or Degree in Early Childhood Education. Drew said of the tertiary institutions “*They all think English is essential*”. Frankie said:

The teacher asked us to keep going ...[pause]... they never said to me but they said to XXX [name of colleague]. I don't know if this is good or bad ...[pause].... Yeah, I want to study, but IELTS 6.5 is quite difficult to get and the school is not easy to find. Unitec you need 7.0 ...[pause]... it's quite high.

Two participants said that they would study by themselves to work towards a higher level of English proficiency that would enable them to meet the entry criteria for some universities, polytechnics and colleges. Frankie said “*I just prepare some books. I study by myself. I have no time to go to language school, in the night-time I'm quite tired*”.

In a later interview Evan realised that he/she would not be able to pursue a career in early childhood education because s/he would not be able to attain the IELTS level that is required by tertiary institutions offering early childhood courses. Without a higher qualification, Evan felt that this would reduce his/her opportunities of getting full time employment in a centre. He/she decided to undertake further study in another field of employment, one that did not have an IELTS entry criteria.

Conclusion

The information presented in this chapter encapsulates the experiences of the participants' as they perceived them to be. Presenting the data in its raw form gives the

participants a voice in this thesis. This is congruent with the Narrative Analysis approach as explained in Chapter 4.

Some of the participants of this research had similar backgrounds and had negotiated the visa process in similar ways. Some had employed the services of an Immigration Consultant, whereas others had not. Most of the participants had similar interview and employment experiences. However, one participant realised early in this research project, that s/he would not be able to study at a higher level due to his/her current English proficiency and this participant felt that this would hinder their employment opportunities. This participant chose to abandon the idea of working in an early childhood centre in favour of further study within another field. After experiencing the realities of relief teaching, another participant decided to exit the study and pursue further study in a different profession.

After a period of time spanning several months, two participants became disillusioned with corporately owned centres that were unwilling to provide long term 'teacher' employment contracts. This had the potential to negatively affect their PR application process and at the close of the data gathering process for this research, both of these participants were in negotiation with their employers regarding this issue.

Disturbingly, some participants experienced problems with regard to payment for work that they had done in centres. This, and the other issues that have been raised in this chapter are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 'The Discussion'. These issues are analysed in detail and where relevant, linked to information provided in Chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis.

Chapter 6 - The Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is divided into headings and subheading that relate to the themes that emerged from the findings of this research. The chapter begins with a reflection of the major findings and links to the ways in which Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development relates to the participants of this research and their journey towards employment.

Discrimination was a recurring theme emerging from the literature and it was also evident in the participants' narratives, where it could be seen in a variety of situations. Discrimination is discussed at length in this chapter and this topic is divided into four subheadings where discrimination was most evident. These are Interview Experiences; English Language Requirements; Relief Teaching; and Unpaid Labour.

In the next section of this chapter, Immigration Case Officers interpretation of immigration policy are discussed in relation to one participant's experience of this. The possible interpretation of the points table is also explored.

Some of the participants faced obstacles on their journey towards employment. These obstacles are explored in this chapter with regard to payment difficulties, employment contract issues, and continuation of further study.

Two participants were diverted from their journey towards employment in early childhood education. One felt unable to overcome the obstacle of English proficiency entry criteria requirements by tertiary institutions, and the other was left disillusioned by the realities of early childhood education after a period of relief teaching.

This chapter ends on a positive note, relating to the success stories of the participants who did achieve their goal of securing employment in early childhood centres. The concept of 'luck' with regard to success is explored in this section. Finally the shortage of qualified early childhood educators in relation to implications

for individuals embarking on this journey as well as implications for tertiary providers are considered.

Reflection of the Major Findings

Analysis of the participants' transcripts reveals that in some cases their journey towards employment paralleled one another and their similar experiences can be grouped into clusters. These are listed below:

- Cameron and Frankie were both asked to prove themselves by doing unpaid work for a centre and they both found employment in a centre where there was a diverse range of cultures and ethnicities among staff.
- Alex and Baylee both undertook long term relieving positions with corporately owned day-care centres. Both had to eventually resign from that position in order to pursue permanent employment opportunities that would lead to Residence from Work visas.
- Drew and Evan both decided to withdraw from early childhood education altogether and pursue a career in another field of employment.
- Georgie's similarities with the other participants resided in the fact that he/she was among the group who felt they were unable to continue studying in early childhood education unless they could enrol as Domestic Students, this meant that these participants needed to be granted Permanent Residency status.
- Alex and Drew both experienced payment difficulties for work they had completed and finally,
- Alex, Baylee and Frankie all felt 'lucky' regarding their employment opportunities.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Development

With regard to the analysis of the data, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model as described in Chapter 2, could be seen in the lived experiences of these participants. On a meso-level, the relationships that linked the participants of this research to employment opportunities were: Employment Agents; media such as the Education Gazette website and newspaper advertisements; networking through friends and via the practicum component of the Level 5 Certificate course. The links between the

participants and successful visa outcomes were Immigration Consultants. For continuation of further study, the links between the participants and tertiary institutions were also Immigration Consultants as well as media such as newspaper advertisements, websites and recommendations by friends.

At an exo-level, the interpretation of an immigration policy by an Immigration Case Officer may have the power to influence an individuals' eligibility for work visas and potential immigration. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that immigrating to another country involves crossing macro system borders. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Immigration Policy changes can affect outcomes for migrants. Furthermore, in Chapter 4, it was made evident that Ministry of Education and Teacher's Council requirements can influence immigrants' employment opportunities and acceptance into tertiary institutions.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that changes in any one of these systems could, through a domino effect, influence the development of the individual and he terms this an "ecological transition" (p. 26). Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintained that every ecological transition is "both a consequence and an instigator of developmental processes" (p. 27). For the participants of this research, engaging in a New Zealand learning environment instigated new ways of perceiving young children's care and education. In seeking employment, the participants needed to use problem-solving skills when faced with obstacles and this brought about realisation regarding the ways things were done in New Zealand. Alex recognised the changes that had occurred for him/her and said that:

...after my first practicum, for my self evaluation I thought I did pretty well, both my academic or my practical and also I got a dramatic change in my personality...I become confident with my future in this field and as the course progress I got better and better.

When he/she had started work Alex realised that:

...you're not a student anymore, you can't do whatever you want, you have to follow the rules and as a teacher...because the other teachers probably rely on you and the children start to rely on you as well and also the parents and the manager...take on some responsibility, I like that, I like somebody trust me so it gives me some confidence... let me do better.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that "development never takes place in a vacuum; it is always embedded and expressed through behaviour in a particular environmental

context” (p. 27). The context for these participants was their journey towards employment in Auckland, New Zealand in 2006. This journey encompassed the processes of applying for work visas as well as applying for teaching positions. I believe that the behaviours and attitudes of some of the participants changed as they developed new understandings about the realities of working in early childhood education and some of these changes are described later in this chapter.

Discrimination

As discussed in Chapter 2, Asian immigrants are a very visible ethnic minority in New Zealand and are therefore, vulnerable to acts of discrimination (Butcher, Spoonley & Trlin, 2004; Daley, 1998; Ip, 1996; 2003; Spoonley & Trlin, 2004; Watts, White, & Trlin, 2002). Although the participants of this research were proactive, persistent and resilient in the face of obstacles that they encountered in their search for employment, a common thread running through the data was their vulnerability. However, none of the participants of this study believed that they were discriminated against overtly. Alex said on two different interview occasions that he/she did not feel discriminated against. Nevertheless, Alex believed that being a “*foreigner*” and “*just an International Student*” presented problems for him/her. I believe that this was an area of vulnerability for Alex. S/he stated that although he/she works really hard he/she did not feel that others treated him/her equally. Not being treated equally by others is in fact discrimination. When I pressed Alex for more information about why s/he felt this way, he/she could not fully explain, except to say that society was not “*fair*” and that s/he would have to “*work really hard for even a tiny reward*”. In addition to this, Alex felt that the cultural difference was a barrier for “*everybody from overseas*”. All of these comments tell me that in fact, Alex did feel that s/he was discriminated against. Ip (1996) refers to “benign” discrimination, which is characterised by feelings of inadequacy and inferiority and defined as “low-level but steady and insidious” (p. 110).

I believe that Georgie may also have experienced discrimination but also was possibly unaware of it. He/she applied for a job at a centre, was not invited to an interview but was then sent a letter saying that the interview was unsuccessful. The centre may have sent out a standard pro forma letter, but the reason why Georgie did not get an interview was possibly due to his/her Chinese name. Butcher et al., (2004) believes

that there is reluctance by employers to hire migrants who have a foreign sounding name or who speak English with an accent.

There are other situations where I believe these participants were discriminated against and these are discussed in the following subheadings: Interview experiences; English Language Requirements; Relief Teaching; and Unpaid Labour.

Interview Experiences

On the whole, those participants that were invited to job interviews had positive experiences. However, it appears that possibly one centre was aware of two participants' eagerness to find employment and took full advantage of their vulnerability in this area by requiring them to 'prove' themselves. This appeared to be a ruse and both Cameron and Frankie were treated like unpaid cleaners. I argue that Cameron and Frankie were put in a vulnerable position and that this was a discriminatory action by the manager of this centre.

English Language Requirements

The reason why more participants did not get interviews seems to be linked to the Ministry of Education requirements for fully qualified staff (MoE, 2002a). As discussed in Chapter 3, in order to become fully qualified, firstly the participants must meet the English Language entry criterion of tertiary institutions, which is a minimum of IELTS 6.0. Evan felt that this was unattainable and decided to withdraw from a career in early childhood education altogether.

Butcher (2004) believes that an English language entry criterion that is required of most colleges and universities is discriminatory. Butcher (2004) points out that there is a fine balance between institutions enrolling students with special learning needs for which they are under-resourced, and refusing to enrol students due to lack of English language proficiency. This could deny the institution funds as well run the risk of being labelled exclusionary and even racist. On the other hand, institutions that are under-resourced and unable to fully support International Students that are enrolled in their programmes, may run the risk of increasing their student attrition rate and this could be perceived as unethical.

Relief Teaching

Relief teaching is an area that does not appear to have attracted much research attention and this is why I have not mentioned it in the literature review of this thesis. However, I

believe that it is an aspect of centre life that is crucial to the smooth running of centres and the communities they serve.

Legally, centres should not accept children unless they have adequate staffing ratios of one adult for every five children *under* two years old, and one adult for every eight children *over* two years old, unless the children are of mixed ages in which case there needs to be one adult for every three children. If ratios cannot be met, parents are required to either stay at the centre with their child until staffing arrangements can be made, or they may need to make alternative childcare arrangements. In my experience, relief teachers are usually called at very short notice and are often willing to cancel prior engagements in order to help out at a centre.

I believe that centres that have very low adult to child ratios run the risk of increasing the stress levels of their staff. Duncan (2001) refers to this in her research that looked at the pressure that was placed on Kindergarten teachers to increase the numbers of children attending and to ensure that they always carried a full attendance roll. Whereas this did not adversely affect the ratios it did increase group size and Duncan (2001) believes that this was a “great source of tension for all teachers” (p. 110). This policy also had implications for the age range between children because higher numbers younger children were taken onto rolls than had previously been the case. This also attributed to increased stress levels in staff and this was discussed in terms of “dissatisfaction with the programme that teachers were able to provide for children” (p. 112).

In this research, Drew did relief teaching for a number of early childhood centres in the Auckland area and for the most part found this to be an unpleasant experience. Alex and Baylee were also relief teachers, but were classified as long-term casual relievers. I believe that there is a significant difference between these two types of relieving. Alex and Baylee were involved with the children and staff at the centres where they were working, on a daily basis. They formed relationships and Baylee at least, was treated as part of the teaching team. He/she was invited to join the centre staff for a Christmas lunch and s/he also felt accepted by the parents at this centre as well.

However, even though Alex was technically part of the teaching team as a long-term reliever, he/she became aware of cultural differences and as time went on, this became

more and more noticeable. Alex did not feel completely accepted by the other staff members and felt that s/he was in the minority. Alex stated that it was the small things that accumulated into “*a big deal*” and he/she said that “*I don’t quite understand why they do stuff like that, but for me if I was them I won’t do like that*”. Schnittker (2002) maintains that the cultural mismatch between immigrants’ and the host society causes stress. I believe that this was a stressful time for Alex. S/he was adjusting to full-time work in an early childhood centre where he/she was in the minority. Alex also experienced payment problems with this centre and was disappointed that he/she was not offered a permanent ‘teacher’ contract. In addition to this, his/her student visa expired which meant that Alex was no longer able to work.

As a short-term casual reliever, I believe that Drew experienced ‘benign’ discrimination. S/he was required to do much of the cleaning and was put on “*outside duty*” to supervise “*fifteen to twenty*” children whilst other staff members elsewhere.

Drew felt that he/she was not in a position to contribute to the centres s/he worked for other than ‘babysitting’ the children. Drew felt that he/she would only be in a position to contribute when s/he had a full qualification. Other staff members told Drew “*You are not a qualified teacher and you don’t have experience and you don’t have kids, you don’t even have hands-on experience*”. This clearly told Drew how he/she was perceived in the centre and could account for but not justify, his/her poor treatment by staff. Nuttall (2003) suggests that early childhood teachers monitor and prescribe each others role and that tensions between teachers are often based on level and type of qualification held by others¹.

These attitudes are concerning, given that the underlying philosophy of early childhood education in New Zealand is based on the principles of inclusive practice, respect, positive relationships, effective communication, building a sense of belonging and valuing the contribution of others. This is clearly portrayed by the Ministry of Education documents, *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs* (MoE, 1996; 1998a). Perhaps there needs to be a clearer understanding of how these documents can apply not just to children, but to adults too. Early childhood educators are an influential role model to children and children are very keen observers of adult behaviour. When respect for

¹ A fuller discussion of beginner teacher experiences is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, for those interested refer to Aitken (2006).

others is not practiced in early childhood centres, this sends a negative message to children about the ways that people can be treated. Nuttall (2003) suggests that teachers need to reflect on their practice continually “in order to identify the assumptions they hold and perpetuate” (p. 180).

Educators, who are a positive role model to children, are able to work alongside newcomers to the centre with respect and compassion. This fosters a sense of belonging and demonstrates respect to others. Children learn these traits by watching and listening and then eventually by emulating this behaviour. This is outlined in Te Whāriki where it is stated that “Children learn through collaboration with adults and peers, through guided participation and observation of others...” (MoE, 1996, p. 9).

Drew told me that she had been to several different centres as a relief teacher. There are opportunities for reciprocity within relief teaching. Drew was exposed to a variety of different ways of doing things, which enhanced his/her work experience. Relief teachers in turn, present centres with an opportunity to find out how things are done by other centres if they are invited to share their knowledge.

Nuttall (2003) suggests that “within socio-cultural, constructivist pedagogy (such as Te Whāriki) both teachers and children are understood to be engaged in a process of actively constructing knowledge, through their interactions with time, space, objects, and people” (p. 167). I would suggest that sharing knowledge and implementing new ideas helps centres to evolve and grow as they work towards a higher standard of quality. Change is slow in early childhood education (Nuttall, 2003), but by sticking to a ‘that’s the way we do things around here’ attitude brings it almost to a standstill. What makes early childhood education interesting is its potential to evolve and develop new ways of doing things. Sharing knowledge can be a motivational force in implementing change. Maōri have a proverb which says *‘nau te rourou, naku te rourou ka ora te iwi’* which means *‘with your basket of knowledge and my basket of knowledge, we will succeed’*. Just as teachers from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds can assist mono-lingual teachers’ professional development by adding to their basket of knowledge about other cultures and parenting beliefs, relief teachers can also add to the basket of knowledge by sharing their experiences and the ideas that have been implemented in other centres.

From Drew's account of his/her experiences as a relief teacher, there was a certain amount of vulnerability present in her/his narrative. Drew stated that he/she had "*never been treated that way*" when s/he was asked to do the bulk of the cleaning. The staff at this centre positioned Drew as unqualified and inexperienced and Drew felt powerless to change the situation. Suggesting improvements would mean challenging the practices and attitudes of the staff, who were perceived by Drew as more experienced. The risk for Drew in challenging the centre's practices was further derision from the staff.

Cameron and Frankie also had similar experiences of being expected to clean when they did some 'free' relief teaching. Cameron felt "*quite hurt*" that the other teachers thought that he/she had been hired as an assistant for them. Centre Managers who take responsibility for establishing clear lines of communication between staff and new comers to the centre, promote a high standard of quality, not only for children and their families but also for the staff that work there, whether they are on a permanent *or* casual contract.

Cameron and Frankie were quite eager to find employment and both felt that they were not in a position to complain about their poor treatment by centre staff or management. Centre Managers that promote equitable practice, genuinely embrace diversity and are able to model this to their staff as well as the children they care for. In 2004 the Teachers Council published a *Code of Ethics* for all teachers. The rationale for developing this document was that "there is widespread public expectation in our changing and diverse society that teachers in schools and early childhood centres will treat people fairly..." (2006b, p. 1). The Teachers Council states that "The code is binding on all teachers who hold a practising certificate" (2006, p. 1). For licensed centres this would include the persons responsible, which is usually the centre manager. I would suggest that further research into the ways in which this document is being implemented in centres needs to be undertaken.

Unpaid Labour

It was disconcerting to find that some of the participants of this research were used as unpaid labour by centres. Most of the participants of this study were very keen to find employment and were willing to prove themselves to employers. However, for some their goodwill was abused. I believe that Cameron and Frankie were used as unpaid labour in a centre in an attempt to meet the ratio regulations.

The Education Review Office is the government agency that monitors education establishments in New Zealand, and concerns regarding individual centres can be expressed to this organization. Although we did not discuss what action they may have taken against this centre, I believe that Cameron and Frankie may have been reluctant to do this. Yee (2003) explains that Asians in New Zealand do not like to cause trouble and prefer to remain anonymous where possible in order to appease the host nation.

Immigration Agents

Most of the participants of this research relied heavily on their Immigration Agents to collate and process documentation relevant to immigration visa applications. As discussed in the literature review, Lovelock and Trlin (2000) found in their study of the immigration industry evidence of unethical practice by some Immigration Agents. Whereas this was not reported by the participants of this research as a first hand experience, and this could be due to the small sample size, Cameron did provide some anecdotal evidence that supports this claim.

I believe that these participants were potentially vulnerable to the level of competency of individual agents. Immigration Agents need up-to-date knowledge on policy changes in order to achieve successful outcomes for their clients. Documentation that is presented to the NZIS that is incomplete delays the visa process and could jeopardise participants' employment opportunities. Without the correct visa, individuals are unable to work full-time hours, which is often a requirement of most centres.

Interpretation of Policy

Although most of the participants had a good understanding of the visa processes or relied heavily on their Immigration Agents, Alex initially attempted this task unaided. From his/her previous experience he/she found that there seemed to be some flexibility by Immigration Officers in the interpretation of the policies. This was frustrating for Alex and led him/her to engage the services of an Immigration Agent for advice and assistance.

Allowing Immigration Officers discretion with regard to the interpretation of policies seems to have been initiated in the late 1980s and was initially related to English proficiency requirements (Shroff, 1987). I would suggest that a measure of flexibility

on the part of Immigration Officers works both ways. In some instances it is appropriate that common sense prevail. However, there is a certain level of stress associated with the immigration process (Lovelock & Trlin, 2000) and to know that one's future may hinge on the Immigration Case Officer's interpretation of the policy must add to this stress. I believe that Alex's confusion regarding immigration policy was based on his/her understanding of what Immigration Case Officer's interpretation could be of those requirements. Alex stated that "*...some requirement is optional and some is compulsory. But I didn't know which one is optional and which one is compulsory...*". He/she also commented that "*...it really depends on the officer. Some officers... are really strict....and some are "OK, that's fine"*". I believe that this is an area of vulnerability for the participants of this research.

As depicted in Chapter 2, the immigration points table show that individuals can be awarded 50 points for a Level 5 *Diploma*. The participants of this research hold a Level 5 *Certificate*. There is a possibility that Immigration Case Officers could interpret this differently, which could affect the outcome of individuals' visa application. If taken literally by all Case Officers, this could effectively close the loophole, which would have ramifications for individuals as well as the providers of a stand-alone Level 5 Early Childhood Education Certificate programme.

Overcoming Obstacles

Payment Problems

Some of the participants of this research experienced problems with payment for work that they had completed at centres. Although Alex seemed, at first, quite happy working for a corporate organisation, he/she had to wait several weeks before s/he was paid. Whereas this appeared to be a technical error rather than a deliberate act of discrimination, Alex found it difficult to approach management about this, partly because the appropriate person was not always available and partly because this constituted a "*big deal*" for him/her. I believe that this took courage on his/her part to address this problem. Being an employee, Alex was in a vulnerable position and complaints could jeopardise his/her chances of permanent employment prospects with this company. Chan (2006) points out that under Confucianism, Chinese children are taught not to be assertive and there is a strong sense of conformity in the Chinese culture. The payment systems of this centre could be located within Alex's exo-system and this had the power to adversely affect his/her micro level relationships. This

situation of non-payment had the potential to affect the relationship Alex had with his/her landlord. It may also have affected Alex's budget in other areas such as food purchases, which could affect his/her physical wellbeing.

Drew also experienced payment problems. S/he was not paid by an employment agency due to administrative problems. Drew had to rely on the centre's fax machine to send through his/her time sheet. Drew found that sometimes the fax machine was not available. I believe that it is unreasonable for employment agencies to expect staff to have available to them equipment such as fax machines, and it is unreasonable for casual staff to use the centre's office equipment, especially when it is used for other purposes such as telephone calls. Furthermore, there are only limited times when staff can use this equipment such as lunch and tea breaks. I believe that employment agencies, such as the one that Drew was employed by, need to design a better system to ensure that staff are paid for the work they complete.

Employment Contract Issues

Some of the participants of this study experienced issues with employment contracts and it would appear that, for work visa purposes, the job title and the job description were important features of an employment contract. Alex and Baylee found themselves in a predicament. They had worked as long-term relievers for corporate childcare organisations, but were only offered fixed term *caregiver* positions. In order to be eligible for a Work To Residence visa their job title and job description had to match the qualification of early childhood *teacher* (NZIS, 2006b). Therefore, Alex and Baylee needed to be employed as *teachers* rather than *caregivers*. Alex and Baylee both felt very disillusioned with the centres that they had been working for and both resigned from their caregiver position in order to pursue other employment opportunities elsewhere.

The main disadvantage of working for a corporate organisation seems to be that the Centre Manager is not the decision maker regarding alterations to the standard employment contract. In a corporate organization, employment contract issues needed to be presented to the Board of Directors who made arbitrary decisions based on company policies and not on their knowledge of the individual teacher involved.

The benefits of working for a small privately owned centre are that the owner can often be found on-site and is therefore easily accessible. Furthermore, employees need only deal with one person and this person has the authority to make decisions regarding employment matters.

Continuation of Further Study

Many of the participants of this research recognised that they needed to continue studying in order to attain a Level 7 qualification and meet Ministry of Education requirements and centre expectations. However, the cost of this was of major concern to most of the participants, they realised that studying as a Domestic Student would be far cheaper than as an International Student. Drew linked this issue to the rights of the International Student. He/she felt that International Students had limited rights and were expected to “*pay the most*”. I believe that Drew felt this was discriminatory.

The participants all realised that in order to become a Domestic Student, they first needed to become a Permanent Resident in New Zealand. This was an important factor that influenced their decision to initially enrol in the Certificate course.

Belich (2001) terms this “educational immigration” (p. 536) and believes that migrants are using education as a short cut to PR. However, as pointed out by Butcher (2004), migrants to New Zealand are legislatively encouraged to take this route, as the NZIS points table clearly shows equal points are allocated to a Level 5 and a Level 7 qualification (NZIS, 2006a). This macro level policy provides prospective immigrants with an opportunity to gain PR in a shorter length of time and at a lower cost in terms of educational fees. I would suggest that this loophole is possibly promoted by Immigration Consultants and tertiary providers as an attractive option, and may be used as a marketing tool to attract International Students onto Early Childhood Education and Care Certificate programmes.

Diversions

Some of the participants of this research chose to divert their career and take up other study options. This is congruent with Henderson (2003) who found that the most favoured recourse for Chinese immigrants who could not find employment was to engage in further study.

The macro-level systems of the Teachers Council and tertiary institutions influenced Evan's decision to undertake a course of study in a discipline other than early childhood education. Evan realised quite early on in the research process that he/she would have to work very hard in order to attain the IELTS level required for further study in early childhood education. At this point, Evan decided to terminate his/her journey towards employment in early childhood education.

Drew also made the decision to withdraw from the early childhood sector. This was possibly due to two reasons. Drew was beginning to gain a significant amount of experience, as a relief teacher in centres but became disillusioned on two levels. One was the way in which s/he was treated by the Centre Management and staff. Drew felt that he/she was treated as a cleaner rather than a teacher with a qualification, albeit partial. The other disappointing factor that Drew perceived was the lack of learning that children were engaged in. McCormack (1996) suggests that there is a huge adjustment to be made by teachers as they transition from the tertiary classroom to the centre environment where reality does not always match the rhetoric of what they have been taught. Veenman (1984) refers to this transition as "reality shock" (p. 143) and describes it as the collapse of ideals formed during teacher education by the harsh realities of the workplace.

Drew's collapse of ideals contributed to his/her decision to leave the field of early childhood education. The changes in Drew's perceptions of early childhood education were possibly brought about by the "extent and nature of knowledge and attitudes existing in one setting about another" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). Within Drew's micro-system, the attitudes and behaviours of the staff that he/she worked with clashed with the macro-system ideals and philosophy of early childhood education. This contributed to a shift in Drew's thinking and led to the decision to re-evaluate his/her career goals.

Success Stories

Those participants who were successful in securing employment found this through a variety of means. Cameron was employed by a centre who had advertised on the Education Gazette website. Frankie found employment at a centre because he/she was recommended to the Centre Manager by a friend who was working there. In Henderson's (2003) study, successful employment experiences were often attributed to networks of friends and relatives who were able to recommend individuals to

employers. Henderson (2003) states that: “Being already known and/or recommended by friends or contacts within an organisation removed the sense of the ‘unknown’ and ‘risk’ for a potential employer” (p. 158). On a micro-level the relationship that Frankie had with his/her friend afforded him/her an employment opportunity.

Both Cameron and Frankie found employment in a centre where there was a broad cultural mix. Frankie said that at the centre where he/she was working there were:

“...lots of Pacific Island staff and some Fiji Indian and the Supervisor is Maori and my head teacher is Samoan”.

In Henderson’s (2003) study, participants who found work reported that employers were accepting of difference and this seems to be the case here. In a later e-mail communication, Frankie told me that the ethnicities of the children that attended this centre were also broad and comprised of European, Maori, Asian, African and Pacific Island nationalities. This matches Sanchez’s (2006) ideal of harmonising children and their teachers so that children can “see themselves reflected in the staff that cares for them” (p. 5).

On a micro level, the relationships that Alex and Baylee formed during their practicum placements provided them with employment with these centres. This is congruent with the findings of Henderson (2003) who found that teachers in her study that had been on practicum placement were able to prove themselves to employers and this often led to employment. Although, as discussed previously, this did not translate into a permanent teaching position for either of these participants, it did provide a measure of practical experience that should serve them well with other employers.

Three participants of this research attributed their success to ‘luck’. Alex said “*probably I am lucky*”. Frankie said he/she was “*quite lucky*”. Baylee said the reason why he/she found employment was “*the lucky one*” because his/her practicum centre had vacancies at that time.

It was not until after I’d pointed out their hard work and good character that these participants conceded that perhaps it was a mix between hard work and diligence on their part and being in the right place at the right time. Although Alex conceded that it

was all of these things, he/she still felt that even though s/he worked really hard he/she still would not get “*equal treatment from others*”.

Unlike other themes in this research, I have been unable to link the concept of luck to anything found in the literature. However, based on my own experience of living in Chinese societies, I believe that ‘luck’ or ‘fate’ is one of the main pillars that hold up Confucian beliefs. There is much importance placed on repelling ‘bad luck’ and inviting ‘good luck’. This is also tied to ancestral spirits. I have been told that some Chinese people believe that they are born with a full quota of luck and this is gradually used up during their lifetime. In order to spread this out, some Chinese people prefer not to gamble because they believe that if they win this would drastically reduce their stores of luck.

Employability Equation

In order to understand why some of the participants of this research were unsuccessful in securing employment in early childhood centres it is necessary to look at the ‘bigger picture’ of early childhood education and the forces that are driving the employment market. What follows is a discussion of the ramifications of the Ministry of Education qualification requirements for centre staff and the employment market in this sector.

In her study, Henderson (2003) found that New Zealand qualifications did not necessarily open the door to employment opportunities. She cites the example that even though there was a shortage of computer professionals in New Zealand at the time of her study, the participants with appropriate qualifications in this field were still unable to gain employment. In recent years, early childhood education has also experienced shortages of qualified teachers and this is evidenced by the number of vacancies regularly appearing on the Education Gazette website; the Ministry of Education’s incentives to encourage more people to enter this field of education and become qualified; as well as the fact that ‘Early Childhood Educator’ is featured on the NZIS skilled long term short list.

Unlike Henderson’s (2003) study, this research has shown that even without a full qualification, four out of the seven participants of this study were able to secure employment as early childhood educators. This is very encouraging and shows that despite Drew’s negative experiences of relief teaching, centres are willing to employ

teachers from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds even if they do not have a full qualification.

At this point in time, I believe that centres are so focussed on the need to fulfil Ministry of Education staffing requirements for 2007, that the issue of cultural diversity does not enter into the employability equation. The main feature of employability is the Level 7 qualification. The shortage of qualified early childhood teachers has created a gap in the employment market and until this gap is filled, I believe that centres will not be in a position to pick and choose educators based on their compatibility to the children attending the centre.

There is a possibility that as the Ministry of Education deadline draws closer, partially qualified student teachers may find it more and more difficult to find employment as centres come under pressure to employ only qualified staff. In the short term, I believe it is possible that qualified educators will simply job hop, lured by better salaries and working conditions that centres will have to offer in order to attract qualified educators.

Alternatively, as centres achieve their 50 per cent qualified staff goal, they may be more inclined to employ partially qualified staff at a lower rate of pay than a fully qualified person, thereby reducing wage overheads.

Conclusion

The data generated from this research has shown that for some the journey towards employment is a rough road with many twists and pitfalls. The participants' journey began in China when they first decided to choose New Zealand as a study destination. At that time they may not have been aware of the professional journey they were undertaking. For some perhaps, they merely intended to complete a qualification and return to China or move on elsewhere. However, having arrived in New Zealand they became enamoured with this nation and decided that they wanted to stay – at least for the time being. At this junction in their journey, they decided to follow the path towards early childhood education and care because for many, this was seen as an 'easy' route to gaining Permanent Residency status.

The framework for this research has drawn on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of development. This model has been explained in this chapter by revealing the

ways in which government policy; centre policy and staff attitudes can affect outcomes for individuals.

A disconcerting theme that was revealed from the Findings was the participants' vulnerability to acts of discrimination, particularly in the context of early childhood centres where a lack of equity and respect was demonstrated. This goes against the overall philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand in which inclusive practice and anti-bias is promoted in both of its foundational documents (MoE, 1996; 1998a).

Immigration Consultants seemed to be the favoured route for most of the participants of this research in obtaining the appropriate visas and for one participant, this seemed to ease his/her frustration of what this participant felt was interpretation of the policy by Immigration Case Officers.

Some of the participants faced obstacles in their journey towards employment. These obstacles predominantly related to payment problems, contract problems and continuation of further study. For two participants the obstacles of their perceived difficulties in continuation of further study and their treatment by others were insurmountable and they both decided to pursue a career in another area of employment.

Those participants who had found success in finding employment attributed this to networks of friends, practicum placement and a measure of 'luck'. This chapter concluded on a discussion regarding the implications of skill shortages in the early childhood education sector and it is argued that centres will need to increase pay and provide better working conditions in order to attract fully qualified and registered teachers.

The following chapter summarises the findings of this research and considers the strengths and limitations of this study as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the research are briefly summarised and the strengths and limitations of this study are discussed. Following this, the potential contribution that this research could make to existing literature surrounding the settling experiences of Asian immigrants is considered and avenues for further research are recommended. In the final part of this chapter, the implications of this research are examined with regard to the Teachers Council policy; the policies and practices of tertiary institutions and early childhood centres as well as the implications of Ministry of Education support for immigrants from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. Finally, this chapter ends with my concluding comments, which includes practical ways of protecting children and teachers from unethical practices of centre staff.

This study sought to address the broad research question of:

- *What are the experiences of Chinese early childhood student teachers as they journey towards employment?*

The following sub-questions were also considered:

- *What obstacles may Chinese student teachers face on their journey towards employment?*
- *What are the current immigration processes?*
- *How will the participants of this study overcome the obstacles that they may face on their journey?*
- *Are the participants of this study able to find employment in early childhood centres with a partial qualification?*

Summary of Findings

The processes that Chinese student teachers need to undertake and engage in, to achieve their goal of finding employment in early childhood centres have been explored in this research. The employment process and the immigration visa process are intrinsically linked and this was explained in Chapter 2. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model has provided a theoretical framework that demonstrates the effects of macro-level

government policies on micro-level systems of individuals such as the participants of this research.

The findings of this study are generally congruent with the literature surrounding employment issues for Asian migrants in that there are obstacles that this ethnic group face in gaining employment relevant to their qualification. However, in this study, the barriers are possibly more to do with the *level* of their qualification rather than the *incompatibility* of their qualification, which was the case in other research literature (Daley, 1998; Henderson, 2003). This research found that over half of the participants initially found employment in early childhood centres. However, this did not necessarily translate into permanent employment or Work To Residence visas. Two participants found that due to their partial qualification, the employment contract offered by corporately owned early childhood centres did not match immigration requirements for obtaining a Work to Residence visa. After several months of ‘casual’ work, these participants were faced with beginning their search for permanent employment again.

Two participants found employment where other linguistic and culturally diverse teachers were employed and this also corresponds to the literature in which immigrants were more likely to be offered employment by employers who were accepting of difference. One participant found employment through a friend already working at a centre. Again this matches the findings of other studies whereby immigrants found employment through their networks of friends (Daley, 1998; Henderson, 2003; Henderson, Trlin & Watts, 1999).

Other studies have revealed a level of discrimination directed towards Asian immigrants (Butcher, Spoonley & Trlin, 2004; Ip, 1996; 2003; Spoonley & Trlin, 2004) and whereas the participants of my research did not seem to think that they were vulnerable in this area, their narratives told a different story. Four of the participants believed that they had not been treated fairly by centres, one participant was confused about his/her treatment by an Employment Agency and one participant thought that being a “*foreigner*” and “*just an International Student*” was problematic. Furthermore, this participant felt that he/she was marginalised in the centre where s/he worked as a long-term casual reliever. These aspects of the participants’ narratives led me to believe that they did in fact experience ‘benign’ discrimination, which Ip (1996)

portrays as “low-level but steady and insidious” (p. 110) and defines as feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.

Strengths and Limitations of Study

I believe that a strength of this research is its significant contribution to the New Zealand literature surrounding the experiences of International Students. Specifically, this research provides new information regarding their experiences of transitioning between visas as well as their experiences of seeking employment in early childhood centres in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Previously there has been little evidence of research in this area.

One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it explores the concepts of meaning, feelings, values and beliefs and these are presented in terms of the lived experiences of the participants. The intention of this research was to document the participants’ experiences and to conduct a thematic analysis of the findings. It could be argued then, that a further strength of this research was the design of the qualitative methodology in achieving this aim. Using the mixed-method approach of a case study; narrative inquiry and documentary analyses provided a means of rich data collection from which several interesting themes became evident.

Another advantage of this research is that it has afforded this small group of participants a vehicle to voice their experiences and this has provided detailed insights into their experiences, which may not have been possible with a larger sample group. Documenting the participants’ narratives also validates their experiences.

A further strong point of this research was the reciprocal nature of the relationship that existed between the participants and myself. I believe that the professional relationship that existed between the participants and myself enabled them to speak freely with me and this assisted me in understanding the issues that the participants faced in their journey towards employment. Had we been strangers to one another, this may have affected the participants’ responses and my interpretation of their responses, thereby affecting the findings of this study.

Along with the strengths of a study such as this one, there are inevitable limitations. The findings of this research need to be considered with some caution, in particular its level

of generalisability. This study was conducted at a time when early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand was undergoing radical change in its efforts to raise standards of quality in centres by employing qualified and registered teachers. A similar study undertaken at a different time may offer a different set of findings. However, as a mixed-method qualitative study, the aim was not to provide generalisability but to present this research as a unique *case*.

Researchers hold personal values, beliefs and attitudes that may impact on the outcomes of their study. I am no exception to this and I have acknowledged my bias(es) in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In addition to this, it is acknowledged that I am a ‘novice’ researcher. Had I been more expert an interviewer I may have explored some of the avenues that opened up in the participants’ narratives more fully, and this may have taken the research in other directions (as yet unexplored directions). In addition, a more experienced researcher may have used more sophisticated interviewing techniques to draw out the participants’ stories – however, like all new processes, one learns through practice and experience.

Potential Contribution of the Study

In this thesis I have documented the participants’ experiences in order to construct an understanding of what their journey towards employment entails. This has assisted in answering the question of how achievable it is for Chinese student teachers to find employment in early childhood centres. The insight into the experiences of Chinese early childhood student teachers could be informative to others who are considering embarking on this journey.

This study encompassed two interesting fields. One was the immigration process for International Students and the other was the concept of culturally competent care in early childhood centres. These two aspects of this study are relevant to different groups. The literature regarding immigration provides information about the processes of gaining work permits and Permanent Residency. This is relevant to those who are interested in the changes to immigration policy as well as those interested in the current immigration process. This thesis adds to the literature that details the settling experiences of Chinese immigrants by providing a different perspective, that of the post-arrival immigration process. This is relevant to those seeking an understanding of the process of gaining employment in early childhood centres for immigrant teachers.

This research is also pertinent to those interested in the practical aspects of culturally competent care in early childhood centres. This thesis has highlighted the concept of inclusive practice as a fundamental part of the philosophy of early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It has been suggested that children need to see themselves reflected in the teachers that care for them (Sanchez, 2006). I have argued that in centres where young Chinese children attend, this can be achieved by employing Chinese student teachers that can contribute to the centre in several ways. One would be to facilitate smooth transitions for Chinese children both from the home to the centre as well as transitions within the centre, such as routines (Sims & Hutchins, 2001). A bilingual support teacher could also assist Chinese children in understanding their role in meeting expectations of other teachers (Chan, 2006). Chinese student teachers can also contribute to building effective parent-teacher partnerships and bring a new level of understanding between both parties by taking on the role of translators.

This model of culturally competent care is supported by Sims and Hutchins (2001) who explain that in Australia, centres are supported by an Ethnic Child Care Resource Centre who employ bilingual support teachers for the reasons outlined above. Chinese student teachers also bring with them a plethora of cultural experiences and ways of knowing that have the potential to extend children of all ethnicities in creative and effective ways. Further to this Chinese bilingual support teachers are able to understand Chinese children's private speech and scaffold their learning appropriately (Chan, 2006).

The findings of this research add to existing literature regarding the 'vulnerability' of International Students and acts of discrimination against Chinese immigrants. It provides details of the participants' experiences as relief teachers and of their employment experiences which brings to light information that may not have previously been documented in other studies. Unfortunately, the reality for *some* of these Chinese student teachers was a relatively negative experience in *some* of the early childhood centres that they were employed in as casual short-term relievers. This may have given them a rather pessimistic view of early childhood centres in the Auckland area. Furthermore, it casts a less than positive reflection on some of the more 'dubious' employment practices which are occurring in some of the early childhood centres the Chinese students had worked for.

It should be noted that emerging themes from this research support the need for greater consideration to be given to the ways in which *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs* are implemented in centres, ensuring that the staff have a good understanding of equitable practice and that this concept needs to be extended towards children *and* adults attending centres. Further to this, I believe that the findings of this research could bring further awareness to centre managers and staff with regard to their treatment of people from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. This raises a number of questions and could be explored in further research, which is discussed below.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are several areas of this study that could be investigated further. This could include a study of how International Students are protected in Aotearoa/New Zealand. For example, the following research questions could be explored:

1. In what ways are Immigration Agents supervised/monitored?
2. How are Private Tertiary Providers monitored, and by whom?
3. What are the protocols of Private Tertiary Provider's marketing campaigns, and who monitors these? Of particular interest are those that are directed at International Students. These providers often advertise for students in the Chinese language newspapers and the information provided may be dubious or inaccurate in relation to immigration policies and the subsequent employment opportunities with the qualifications conferred.
4. Do International Students feel they are adequately protected against unethical behaviour by such organisations?

I invite other researchers to take up these challenges as well as those advanced below.

Another area of research could encompass the views of centre owners and staff in employing Chinese early childhood student teachers. For example:

- Identifying potential biases toward employing Chinese early childhood educators.
- Investigating how the *Code of Ethics* is implemented in centres.
- In what ways is language 'proficiency' perceived as a barrier for full-time employment in centres?

- To what extent do teachers believe that the principles of *Te Whāriki* apply to themselves?
- How are ethnic minorities valued in centres?
- What are educators' understandings of cultural diversity?
- Do centres believe it is important to employ teachers from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds?
- What strategies do teachers use to provide a sense of belonging for immigrant children and their families?

Furthermore, it would also be interesting to find out if Chinese parents would welcome Chinese teachers in centres. In Guo's (2004a) article she explains that many Asian immigrants want their children to succeed in the new country. They see speaking English as an indication of success and learning English will enable their children to become knowledgeable members of the mainstream cultural group. Therefore, Chinese parents may not welcome a bilingual support teacher for their children.

As a further continuation of this study, Chinese student teachers could be interviewed post-employment to discover their views and document their experiences of working in early childhood centres in New Zealand. This may or may not add to the literature regarding discrimination depending on the findings of the research.

Relief teaching is another area that could be explored by further research. It would be interesting to discover whether the findings of my research regarding this issue is typically experienced by other linguistic and culturally diverse relief teachers. Research into relief teaching might also consider how relief teachers are perceived by other educators and what contribution they are considered to make to centre life.

I believe that the role of relief teachers is an important one and that there will always be a place for relievers in centres. In early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a natural attrition rate among staff. This is due to a variety of reasons. For example: teachers that seek employment overseas; educators leaving the profession to start families; educators that leave to take care of elderly relatives; teachers that seek employment in other employment areas; and teachers that retire. Added to this, staff take leave entitlement and sick days. This means that there will always be a need to employ relief teachers in a short, as well as long-term capacity

Relievers constitute a significant proportion of the support workforce in early childhood education and I believe they should be acknowledged and recognised for the part they play. It will be interesting to see in 2012 when the Ministry of Education's requirements are fully in place whether relief teachers will be required to be fully qualified too.

Implications of this Research

Reflecting on the findings of this small-scale study and the literature surrounding immigrant settling experiences as well as the concept of culturally competent care, I believe that there is a place for Chinese early childhood teachers in New Zealand. However, at the present time, the need to employ qualified educators is driving the early childhood employment market, regardless of teachers' ethnicities. The *Strategic Plan* outlines the Ministry of Education's strategies to increase teacher supply. They intend to do this by "promoting ECE teaching as a career to people who are potentially interested in ECE teaching and groups that are under-represented in the ECE teacher workforce" (MoE, 2002a, p. 17). Unfortunately, those that are under-represented are groups such as Chinese student teachers, but in order to become fully qualified they need to meet the IELTS entry criteria required by tertiary institutions and the New Zealand Teachers Council for teacher registration.

It may be argued that further study needs to be undertaken in this area. In particular I believe that the Teachers Council needs to re-evaluate and justify their IELTS 7.0 criteria for International Students applying for registration and I would question their emphasis on English proficiency rather than on cultural diversity amongst teaching staff in early childhood centres. I suspect the New Zealand Teachers' Council would argue that we need teachers with high level English skills to be a language model to young children, but as indicated in Chapter 3 of this thesis, children's first language needs to be supported as well as any additional languages in order to achieve positive learning outcomes. Chan (2006) questions whether this can be achieved by mono-cultural and monolingual teachers.

Loophole in the Points Table

The implications of the NZIS points table loophole presents a dilemma. I believe that some private tertiary providers are using the loophole in the points table to market their early childhood programmes to International Students. Without clear pathways to further education in this field, I would question the ethics of this. Are International

Students being lured into investing \$15,000 (the cost of a one year Level 5 Certificate course in early childhood education) on the assurance that they will secure employment and that this will lead to Permanent Residency status in New Zealand? These institutions need to be properly monitored to ensure that International Students are adequately protected.

The following are raised as ethical and policy considerations.

Should the loophole be closed in order to prevent other International Students from taking this shortcut to PR in order to protect them from unethical advertising from tertiary providers that offer a stand-alone qualification? Or should the loophole be left open to encourage more people from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds into early childhood education? Is it ethical to do this in light of the Ministry of Education's requirements for qualified and registered educators?

Although the participants of this research were mostly willing to continue studying to a Level 7 qualification, they found that the entry requirements for most tertiary providers in the Auckland area a barrier. In addition to this, I believe that it may take longer overall for students enrolling in a 'stand alone' Level 5 qualification than in a three-year Degree or Diploma course. Courses offered at one establishment are not always compatible with other educational institutions. Sometimes there is a shortfall in recognition of prior learning, which means that the student has to do extra papers before they can move to a Level 6 and 7 programme.

If the loophole remains then private tertiary providers have an obligation to ensure that there is a clear pathway for students to enable them to continue studying at a higher level. Furthermore, I believe that tertiary establishments who offer a stand alone qualification such as the Level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care, need to take responsibility for ensuring that students are made fully aware of the Ministry of Education requirements and the possible difficulties of finding employment with a partial qualification. Tertiary institutions that offer a three-year programme also need to assess their entry criterion, assessment and teaching practices to ensure successful outcomes for International Students and this is discussed in more detail below.

Academic English – Is It Necessary?

Academic English is not used in everyday teaching practice in early childhood centres. Therefore, I question the usefulness of academic English for early childhood education. After all, it is mostly only used in academic environments such as tertiary establishments, possibly because it is a manageable way to assess students' work. If this is the case, I would ask whose interests are being served here? In early childhood education we talk about the need to support children holistically, focussing on their interests, strengths and needs. I believe that this should also apply to tertiary students. If written work is necessary in some instances to assess students' abilities then I believe it would be far better to accept creative writing that is not necessarily academic. In my experience, many native English speakers also struggle with academic English and I would suggest that tertiary institutions are trying to 'fit a square peg into a round hole'. Therefore, I believe that Tertiary providers have a responsibility to create environments that promote learning for students from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. This may mean moving away from traditional teaching paradigms and assessment practices to include other approaches that secure more favourable outcomes for International Students. Tertiary institutions may also need to re-examine their entry criteria to appropriately support these students.

When linguistic and culturally diverse students have gained a full qualification they will be able to make a significant contribution to the field of early childhood education, in a centre setting as well as other situations. If the Ministry of Education were to adopt the Australian idea of an Ethnic Child Care Resource Centre, teachers from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds employed by this facility, would be able to contribute to centres and communities which would assist in the settling process for immigrant families.

Concluding Comments

Some of the information that has been generated by this research has been published (see Heald, 2006) and I intend to publish in other educational journals both in the early childhood education sector and in journals that publish material relating to International Students. In addition to this a copy of this thesis will be available in the AUT University library and a copy will be sent to each of the participants.

I have noticed that the literature surrounding early childhood education in New Zealand predominantly portrays a rather rosy picture. Very little is written about the unethical practices in centres that exist, as this research has revealed. I would suggest that this is because the early childhood community possibly looks at this sector through ‘rose coloured spectacles’. I understand that it is probably unhelpful to simply raise the issue of a lack of ‘quality’ employment practices of a few ‘rogue’ centres, without signifying some practical suggestions for improvement. What I am suggesting is that if the early childhood community wants to raise the quality of early childhood education and care in Aotearoa/New Zealand, we need to find practical ways of doing this.

Rather than threats of funding withdrawal and closure, centres need to be assisted in reaching higher standards of quality. The Ministry of Education already provides this service to playgroups and centres that are working towards becoming licensed. I believe that this service needs to be extended to licensed centres that are struggling to *maintain* Ministry standards. I suggest that Education Review Office (ERO) needs to more clearly identify these centres and one approach could be to carry out spot checks on all centres. A spot check does not need to consist of a full evaluation of the centre but at the same time this possibility should not be excluded. A spot check need only evaluate the basic necessities, for example, ratios; group size compared to available play space; hygiene; and safety standards. This will assist those centres that are not meeting basic standards of quality and will hopefully protect children and teachers from further and continued unethical practice.

Whilst not wanting to finish this thesis on a negative tone, perhaps this issue outlined above requires further investigation as the ‘problem’ might be more widespread than this small study has uncovered. I encourage both the ‘authorities’ and other researchers to take up this challenge. As a committed early childhood educator I want to be employed in a profession, which acts with probity and integrity. In one where the learners (children), the educators (and the owners of centres) as employers are *all* committed both to continued improvements in practice, which ultimately promote and might even fundamentally exceed the principles of *Te Whāriki* – it is a dream I hope will become a reality.

Appendices

Appendix A

What's Next for You?

This is a questionnaire about what you think you might do next year with regards to seeking employment or continuing study. The purpose of this questionnaire is to seek an initial indication of interest in participating in research and to gain your permission to contact you as a possible research participant. Completing this questionnaire is completely voluntary and whether you choose to fill it in or not will NOT affect your course results in any way. If you are contacted you will be sent an information sheet about the research which will assist you in your decision of whether you want to participate or not.

Dr Richard Smith at the School of Education, AUT is supervising this research and he may be contacted on 921 9999 extn 7935 or e-mail richard.smith@aut.ac.nz if you have any comments or concerns regarding this questionnaire.

Name

.....

Preferred Name

.....

I give my permission for the information provided on this questionnaire to be used for research purposes.

Signed

.....

Address:

.....

.....

Tel:

Mobile:

E-mail:

Please underline the responses that are applicable to you.

After you have completed this course do you intend to:-

Seek employment in early childhood education **within** the Auckland Region?
Yes/No

Seek employment in early childhood education **outside** of the Auckland Region?
Yes/No

Seek other employment that is not related to early childhood education?

Yes/No

Continue studying within early childhood education?

Yes/No

Continue studying but **NOT** in the field of early childhood?

Yes/No

Travel overseas?

Yes/No

If you intend to continue studying within early childhood education underline the following organisations that you would consider approaching:-

Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

The University of Auckland

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Unitec

Massey

New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC)

Thank you for your co-operation, we hope that you will be successful in all of your future endeavours.

Appendix B

Participant Information Sheet



The Journey Towards Employment for Chinese Early Childhood Student Teachers: A Case Study in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I am a student currently enrolled in a Masters of Education programme at AUT and I would like to invite you to be a voluntary participant in my research.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this study is to document your journey towards employment as an early childhood student teacher. The findings of this research will be published in a thesis and may be used in presentations and publications within an academic or professional context.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of this research?

You have been selected to participate in this study because you have recently completed a Level 5 Certificate of Early Childhood Education and Care and you have indicated on the 'What's Next For You' form that you completed in November 2005, that you intend to pursue employment opportunities as an early childhood educator in the Auckland region.

What happens in this research?

I will contact you by phone or e-mail and ask you to meet with me for an interview that is expected to last no less than 30 minutes. I hope that you will meet with me at least once a month between January and March, The interview will be recorded on cassette tape and then I will transcribe it onto a hard copy. You will be sent a copy of this by e-mail so that you can check the accuracy of it and make any changes if you want to. After all of the interviews, I will look at this information, compare it to the information gathered from the other participants of this study and I will group this information into themes based on the similarities or differences. I will then write a report about your experiences.

What are the discomforts and risks? And how will my privacy be protected?

I hope that you will feel comfortable about talking about your experiences to me. However, if you should at any time, feel any kind of distress as a result of this research, please let me know so that I can help you to contact the AUT Health and Counselling Service.

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential and I will be the only person who knows who will be participating in this study. Although your experiences will be documented in the final report of this study, your name will not be used. Instead a coding system will be used when I refer to your responses to my interview questions. Your consent form will be stored at a different location to the raw data.

What are the benefits?

The benefits to participating in this research are that it will give you an opportunity to tell your story about your journey towards employment as an early childhood student teacher, and the experience of being involved in research.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no financial cost to yourself in participating in this research. Any travel expenses incurred will be reimbursed at the conclusion of this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, please return the consent form by the 20th December 2005. If, after you have consented to participate you would like to withdraw for any reason, you may do so without any adverse consequences.

If you would like to know more about this research you may contact me directly (see details below). You may also wish to contact my supervisor Dr Richard Smith whose details are also below.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to participate, please contact me by e-mail and I will send you the consent form to sign. We can arrange our first interview meeting at this time and I will collect the consent form from you then.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A summary of the final report of this research will be sent to you by mail.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Richard Smith. Tel: 921 9999 ext 7935 or e-mail richard.smith@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?***Researcher Contact Details:***

Denise Heald, E-mail: cdheald@xtra.co.nz or on mobile 021 103 5001

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

For personal safety reasons, AUTEK does not allow researchers to provide home addresses or phone numbers. Dr. Richard Smith – Tel: 921 9999 ext 7935 or e-mail richard.smith@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th November, 2005 AUTEK Reference number 05/216

Appendix C

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Title of Project: **The Journey Towards Employment for Chinese Early Childhood Student Teachers: A Case Study in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

Project Supervisor: Dr Richard Smith – Postgraduate Programme Leader PhD, BA (Hons), GCert.HE

Researcher: Denise Heald

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated December, 2005).

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped and transcribed.

I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

I agree to take part in this research.

I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research:

tick one: Yes No

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th November 2005 AUTEK Reference number AUTEK Reference number 05/216

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Why did you choose New Zealand as a study destination?

What were your impressions of work opportunities in New Zealand before you arrived here?

How did you find out about information about work opportunities in New Zealand?

Why did you choose to do a course in early childhood education?

When did you start thinking about finding work in early childhood education?

What do you know about getting work in early childhood centres?

Tell me about the process for being eligible for a work permit in New Zealand.

What have you done so far to try and get a job in a centre?

What jobs have you applied for?

What interviews have you been to?

Tell me about the responses you have received so far.

Tell me about your interview experiences.

How do you feel about your experiences so far?

What do you think about early childhood employers?

Appendix E

Journal Article

Heald, D.J. (2006). In support of culturally competent care: Beyond tokenism. *Early Education, 40*, 20-24.

The need to embrace cultural diversity has been recognised by early childhood educators in Aotearoa/New Zealand and forms a fundamental part of the overall early childhood philosophy. This philosophy aims to foster inclusiveness through an anti-bias curriculum and can be evidenced in both of the early childhood education principal documents: *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum and *Quality in Action*, which provides practical examples of how the mandatory *Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs)* may be implemented in practice (Ministry of Education, hereafter MoE 1996; 1998). Both of these publications honour the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi as the foundation document of Aotearoa/New Zealand as a bi-cultural nation and the inclusive aspects of *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs* stem from this premise. However, Chan (2006) points out that ‘early childhood centres are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic’ (p. 34) and Gunn (2002) asserts that there is an expectation by the New Zealand Government that early childhood services will ‘actively contribute to countering racism’ (p. 27). The Ministry of Education (1996) acknowledges in *Te Whāriki* that migrants to New Zealand bring ‘diverse beliefs about child rearing practices, kinship roles, obligations, codes of behaviour, and what kinds of knowledge are valuable’ (p.18). Furthermore, it is noted in *Te Whāriki* that ‘The early childhood curriculum supports the cultural identity of all children, affirms and celebrates cultural differences and aims to help children gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures (p. 18).

Within this document there are several references to cultural diversity. In the strand of Mana reo - Communication it is stated that children should have opportunities to ‘experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures’ (MoE, 1996, p.16). In the strand of Mana Tangata - Contribution it is stated that ‘children are encouraged to learn with and alongside others’ (MoE, 1996, p.16), and in the strand of Mana Whenua – Belonging: ‘children and their families experience an environment where they know they have a place’ (MoE, 1996, p.15). Furthermore, in this strand, it is suggested that ‘the programme provides opportunities for conversations with toddlers that affirm their identity and self-knowledge (MoE, 1996, p. 59). In the strand of Mana Tangata - Contribution it is stated that children should ‘experience an environment where there are equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity or background’ (MoE, 1996, p. 66).

Te Whāriki also provides examples of the types of experiences, which can help children meet desired learning outcomes. For example, in the strand of Mana Tangata - Contribution it is stated that 'each child's culture is included in the programme through song, language, pictures, playthings and dance' (MoE, 1996, p. 67). It is also suggested that the programme provide opportunities to discuss bias with young children. It is stated that 'Children's growing capacities for empathy are fostered by reading or telling stories about other people' (MoE, 1996, p. 71). Fostering empathy and respect for others is strongly linked to the notion of culturally competent care which is discussed in more detail below.

Culturally Competent Care

Within the discourse of early childhood education the concept of inclusive practice is sometimes described as culturally competent care. This perspective supports the view that to work effectively with people from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, it is important to be aware and respectful of the values, beliefs, traditions, customs and parenting styles of those who are involved in the care of young children (Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Obegi & Ritblatt, 2005).

Research suggests that culturally salient care provides children with a sense of security, belonging, and personal history (Garcia & Furuto, 2001; Education Review Office, 2004). In addition, Klein and Deborah (2001) found that learning outcomes for children are enhanced when cultural connections to their home environments are made and where their cultural expectations are acknowledged.

In the 2004 Education Review Office (ERO) research report, it was found that most early childhood services recognised the need to make some effort towards encompassing cultural diversity within the centre. However, in the Education Review Office's report (2004), it indicated that centres seem to approach cultural diversity on three levels from a 'surface acknowledgement of the language... food and art' to 'a slightly deeper level of responsiveness' and then to a higher level that shows 'deep knowledge of other cultures' (p. 8). Overall, the ERO (2004) maintains that centres provide largely 'token' representation of other cultures (p. 9). This is largely congruent with Cullen and Bevan-Brown's (1999) findings. They note in their study that teacher's responses to the ways in which the child's culture is taken into account in the centre curriculum were non-specific. Many referred to *Te Whāriki* as the rationale for their belief that they acknowledged cultural diversity in their practice. However, Cullen (2003) explains that there was little evidence to show that this rhetoric matched their teaching practice.

Chan (2006) reports that some early childhood educators believe that they treat all children the same regardless of their cultural or ethnic group. She suggests that these teachers 'assume that all children go through universal stages, have similar needs, and will all reach their fullest

potential if these standardised needs are met' (p. 34). Chan (2006) maintains that denying racial difference actually perpetuates the marginalisation of subordinated groups.

The ERO (2004) suggests that there is still a need for 'considerable improvement' in this area of supporting cultural diversity in early childhood centres in Aotearoa/New Zealand (p.1). However, they do not suggest how this might be achieved and I believe that endeavouring to understand the intricacies of a culture other than one's own is a complex undertaking. How can a culture be truly known, understood and incorporated into teaching practice unless we are of that culture? This is supported by Ritchie (2001) who questions the appropriateness of people from a dominant culture presuming to offer 'expertise' in someone else's culture (p. 142).

Cullen's (2003) research and the ERO (2004) report both found that there is a need to move beyond the tokenism found in the 'visible artefacts and rituals' (p. 277) that may present the *illusion* of cultural diversity. However, Cullen (2003) suggests that centres need to 'strengthen their collaborative relationships with communities'. Furthermore, she believes that teachers need to 're-evaluate traditional routines and practices that do not mesh well with community understandings' (p. 278). In order to do this, I believe that educators need to also re-evaluate how they initiate and maintain partnerships with parents from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds and this concept is supported by Chan (2006) who suggests that 'a genuine parent-teacher partnership is required to help Chinese migrant children to develop to their fullest potential' (p. 34). I believe that this statement is broader than one 'ethnic' group and applies to all children and their families from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Effective Parent-Teacher Partnerships

The concept of parent-teacher partnership is another strong aspect of New Zealand's early childhood philosophy and this is acknowledged in both *Te Whāriki* and the *DOPs*. (MoE, 1996; 1998). It is stated in *Te Whāriki* that 'the wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum' (MoE, 1996, p.14), and it specifies in the *DOPs* that early childhood services should 'work in partnership with parents/whanau to promote and extend the learning and development of each child who attends or receives the service' (MoE, 1998, p. 6). In addition to this, other literature also supports the notion that teacher-parent partnerships have an influence on children's learning and development outcomes. When children observe friendly and warm interactions between their parents and their teachers they are more likely to expect these interactions themselves (Powell, 1998).

It has been suggested that early childhood teachers need to consciously build relationships between themselves and immigrant parents (Sims and Hutchins 2001; Chan, 2006). Further to this, Siraj-Blatchford and Clark (2000) propose that early childhood practitioners need to take

responsibility for getting to know the families of the children they care for as people with a life history, which effects their every day actions. They go on to state that there is an expectation of early childhood centres that parents will be proactive in intervening in their child's education and when parents appear to take no interest in their child's progress, Siraj-Blatchford and Clark (2000) believe that some centres may 'abdicate responsibility themselves, seeing the parental attitudes as the problem feature' (p. 101). It would be interesting to investigate if this is something that occurs in centres in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Karen Guo (2004a) writes from the perspective of a Chinese immigrant parent and a New Zealand researcher. She provides an explanation as to why 'Asian' parents in particular may seem to avoid contact with early childhood teachers. Guo (2004a) maintains that minority ethnic parents in particular, often put their trust in professionals. They believe that the 'experts' (p.101) know best and are acting in the best interest of their child; therefore, they do not need to intervene in the educational process and work in partnership with their children's teachers. Guo (2004a) goes on to explain that in 'Asian' countries teachers stand for authority and all educational issues are the province of schools. Therefore, when 'Asian' parents have little or no contact with teachers, this is often based on respect and the concept of 'saving face'.

Nevertheless, research suggests that cultural differences between teachers and parents may present barriers and hamper successful learning outcomes for children. These barriers may include: differences in attitudes to education; differences in beliefs about child development; and differences in understanding language and communication (Huang, 1993; Lee, 1995; Ebbeck and Glover, 1998; File, 2001; Lee and Manning 2001).

Guo's (2004b) research in Aotearoa/New Zealand, found that both 'Asian' parents and centre staff had reservations about establishing effective partnerships, although some parents did concede that they thought it was necessary to work with teachers. Educators' perceived difficulties centred on language barriers and confusion regarding 'Asian' parenting practices. However, Strum (1997) suggests that some teachers may feel overwhelmed when working with families from diverse cultures which further limits their ability to understand differences. Again it would be interesting to find out if this was the case in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Facilitating Smooth Transitions for Migrant Children

Margaret Sims and Teresa Hutchins (2001) believe that the transition from home to childcare setting can be a difficult process for young children to undertake. They maintain that this process can impact on young children's development either positively or adversely, depending on how the transition is facilitated. They state that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are particularly vulnerable during this process. Further to this, Merry

(2004) asserts that the transition process is important to children's sense of self and believes that children's sense of identity is central to a child's ability to cope in a new and potentially stressful situation. She states that 'knowing who you are, your strengths and limitations, and having developed relationships that include trust and reliance during those times of insecurity seems to increase the likelihood of a positive experience' (p. 25).

Lee (1995) suggests that teachers from the dominant culture need to adopt strategies for supporting children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. However, Strum (1997) and Merry (2004) both found in their research that teachers felt that they were already overloaded and that there was a lack of time especially in planning strategies for a smooth transition. However, there are negative consequences for young children who do not experience smooth transitions and this is outlined below.

The Consequences of Negative Transitions

As immigrants move from their own familiar cultural environment into another culture, their value systems, behaviour patterns and attitudes may change, due to the assimilation and accommodation process of entering a new cultural field (Lee, 1995). Whereas this is not unique to New Zealand, nor is it limited to non-English speaking migrants, it is potentially a stressful time for the immigrant child, particularly those children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Igoa (1995) describes the *typical* reaction from immigrant children when first confronted with a new cultural situation. She states that often the child withdraws into themselves and makes no attempt to socialize and she refers to this as the 'silent stage' (p.38). Igoa (1995) found from her research that often children long to join in with others, but their emotions and fears hold them back.

Tabors and Snow (1994) do not entirely agree with the concept of the 'silent stage'. They prefer to call this period the 'non-verbal period' (p.107). They suggest that although the immigrant child may have stopped *talking* during this settling period this does not necessarily mean that they have stopped *communicating*. They believe that these children engage in various forms of nonverbal communication and found that children would cry when distressed to attract the attention of an adult and mime and point until their request was understood. However, Tabors and Snow (1994) point out that there are social consequences to persisting with these strategies. They found that English speaking children either ignored or treated the second language learners like babies and suggest that for second language learners to become 'social equals', they need to begin to 'crack the linguistic code' (p.109). One of the ways that teachers can assist in this process is by becoming language models for children.

Language Models

Sylvia Sanchez (2006) maintains that:

All young children deserve to hear a clear message: that their language has a significant place at home, in the early care setting and in the larger society... They do not need to sacrifice their home language and culture as they gain skills and knowledge in another language (p. 5).

Chan (2006) suggests that children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds are 'frequently at risk of being verbally overlooked and socially isolated' (p. 36). She points out that in *Te Whāriki* it is stated that children 'develop confidence that their first language is valued' (MoE, 1996, p. 76). However, Chan (2006) asks the question 'when Chinese children are allowed to use their first language at the centre, will there be teachers who understand their first language to help them develop working theories?' (p. 36). Chan (2006) believes that this could negatively impact on Chinese children's development. She argues that if Chinese children use native language private speech, monolingual teachers will be unable understand and scaffold them.

Other research suggests that both the home language and English should be promoted side by side in order to maintain the home language as well as to be able to function successfully in the new culture. Maintaining the home language is seen to be significant to an individual's self-identity, cultural heritage and also in assisting in becoming competent in an additional language. Clark (2000) notes that there is little benefit and potential harm in introducing a second language at a young age unless both languages are maintained and promoted as equally valuable and important. She asserts that a stimulating and rich linguistic environment will support language development and comments that young children will become bilingual when there is a real need to communicate in two languages.

However, Guo (2004a) reports that Asian parents who have immigrated to New Zealand are often anxious for their children to speak English because they associate this with success. Yet, Clark (2000) believes that promoting only English to immigrant children, gives the impression that different languages and cultures are not valued.

A contrary perspective was provided by the participants of the recent 'Curriculum Forum' hosted by AUT University and I share these ideas. From the collective wisdom of the participants it was suggested that teachers could possibly foster a sense of belonging for children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds by making available resources that immigrant children would be familiar with. These included familiar clothing and items from home for use in the sociodramatic play area; pictures and books that featured characters and stories that immigrant children would be familiar with; music from other countries was also

suggested as well as food. One participant suggested using sign language and pictures to convey basic needs such as going to the toilet and sleeping. It was also suggested that the parents provide photos of themselves and other family members for the child to look at and hold on to. Whereas all of these suggestions are congruent with the strands and goals of *Te Whāriki*, they could still be categorised as ‘tokenistic’ and a ‘surface acknowledgement’ as described previously in the ERO report (2004) and by Cullen (2003).

In order to move beyond tokenistic gestures and surface acknowledgement of other cultures Sanchez (2006) suggests that there is a need for children to ‘see themselves reflected in the staff that cares for them’ (p. 5). She explains that early childhood centres need to employ adults who are linguistically and culturally representative of the children who attend the centre. This idea has been adopted by some Australian early childhood centres and Sims and Hutchins (2001) explain the advantages of this approach to cultural diversity which include:

- interpreting;
- bridging the gap between parents and centre staff by providing cultural understandings; and
- facilitating smooth transitions from home to school for young children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as transitions within the centre.

Employing linguistic and culturally diverse teachers would also provide a means of incorporating cultural diversity into a centre’s philosophy in a practical way.

I suggest that centres that are enrolling children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds should consider employing culturally diverse relief teachers. These teachers often have a wealth of experience from working in a variety of early childhood centres and have the capacity to contribute to centres in a meaningful way. In particular bi-lingual relief teachers are able to facilitate smooth transitions for immigrant children and their families as well as provide cultural understandings for centre staff thereby fostering a higher level of culturally diverse consciousness that goes well beyond basic tokenism.

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