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## INTERCULTURAL COURSE LEARNING SATISFACTIONS AFFECT ON ACCULTURATION ATTITUDES

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## ABSTRACT

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While there are many reports on international students struggling to adapt overseas while on study abroad programmes, there is little information that considers whether intercultural course learning satisfaction affects acculturation attitudes which can impact adaptation into the dominant culture. The research aims to provide both theoretical information and practical insight into intercultural influences to intercultural course learning satisfaction and the development of acculturation attitudes that in turn can impact course learning performance. Using a qualitative phenomenological research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted on Erasmus Mundus students in the social science disciplines from two Finnish universities in separate regions. The results of the study suggest that students tended to generate new support expectations following challenging encounters which led to dissatisfaction in their course experience and orientation into the region. These experiences were shown to influence stereotyping and superficial judgements of individuals and organisational factors relevant to everyday living and studying, influencing intercultural relationships important for psychological well-being that impacts intercultural course learning satisfaction and the local settling process. A further finding suggests that the motivation to actively apply acculturation strategies was generally neglected for several reasons including a perceived lack of need, future plans, and time and effort considerations relative to study demands. These findings present impeding characteristics to the integrated acculturation attitudes of international students which are thought to influence satisfaction and performance levels. The study considers that a culturally synergised constructive alignment teaching strategy inclusive of non-essentialist intercultural curriculum content is warranted for future multicultural classes.

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# **1. Introduction**

Research on psychological acculturation in the context of international students indicates that integration factors can play an important role in course learning satisfaction as well as, or with impact towards academic performance (c.f. Leung, 2001). One significant feature within this relationship between acculturating and course learning satisfaction is that of intercultural interaction and the ability to form social networks. The ramifications through successful intercultural communications are thought to provide essential support enabling students to be better equipped to manage with some of the course learning and acculturating challenges that face them.

An international student's acculturative attitudes from the causal offset of their intercultural course learning satisfaction [ICLS] has so far received little attention despite its academic significance. This questions the origin of international ICLS, performance, and settlement from the opposite angle to that of current acculturation literature, and in result addresses some common misleading internationalisation rhetoric, and outlooks towards international students.

## **1.1. Research Problem**

The sequenced process of adaptation that international students face is rarely reported from the off-set of course learning environments, presenting a void in understanding ICLS and performance in relation to student acculturation attitudes. Transitional issues associated with international study must be considered appropriately to students' needs, and look beneath and beyond common reasoning that acculturation systematically shapes ones ICLS, and/or success.

Numerous studies show students' satisfaction levels socially and academically are heavily dependent on the learning environment (Fischer, 2007; Zhou & Todman, 2008), and such experiences are shaped by endless moderating factors from campus size, to ones ethnicity (Bandura, 1997; Zhou & Todman, 2008). These experiences are resultantly transferred into new thoughts and behaviours which decide upon ones attitudes and applications to a variety of tasks such as learning, whilst triggering new responses from the surrounding environment (Shimanoff, 1980; Swanson, Frankel & Sagan, 2005; Gabb, 2006; Gill, 2007; Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010).

Intercultural networks within multicultural environments are detrimental to international students ICLS, offering social ties suitable for support, development, and settlement for instance (Althen, 1996; Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 2000; Ward, Leong & Low, 2004; Swanson et al. 2005; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Fischer, 2007; ICUnet.AG, 2010), yet commonly get reported in research as complex, and often defective (Le Roux, 2001; Fischer, 2007; Simmons, Wittig, & Grant, 2010; Ward & Masgoret, 2004 cited in Gareis, 2012). This raises questions to the intercultural competencies of students, and staff (Garis, 2012), and thus impacts settlement and the capacity to integrate (cf. Berry, 1998; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008), insinuating a continuous carousel interaction between ICLS and acculturating attitudes.

To address the ICLS, Zhou et al (2008) suggest *culture synergy* as one possible strategy advocating international students and host-native teachers meet half-way in their learning and teaching methods, since full integration and assimilation is not always possible or constructive. The concept however struggles in a multicultural setting, requiring elaborate differentiation, whereas without a synergised learning structure, the diversity in students evokes barriers to learning and interacting in class (Zhou et al. 2008). Such experiences help determine ones morale, self-efficacy, and mental state, thus impacting the level of success in ones perceived overall experience and potential level of academic output (c.f. Bandura, 1997; Fischer, 2007; Gareis, 2012).

There is need for a non-essentialist study of acculturation attitudes from the off-set of intercultural course learning processes considering the sociocultural and psychological implications that may moderate acculturating attitudes, or even precede them. In applying Berry's (1997) and Ward and Rana-Deuba's (1999) acculturation constructs simultaneous to research on learning distress (Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Mann, 2005, 2008), a framework gaging psychological and sociological moderators (Zhou et al. 2008) becomes more learning-centric rather than culture-centric, and can begin to fill this gap.

Insight into intercultural competencies and multicultural classroom dynamics which potentially influence acculturating attitudes and ICLS (thus performance) adds an acculturating lens onto multicultural pedagogical considerations. Stakeholders must be clear of the interlinked influences of such dynamics when implementing curriculum and orientation, while paying attention to development of intercultural competencies in international students. With fierce competition for international students already, institutions must be competitive and contentious regarding their own, and collective national image. Furthermore, controlled and measureable competencies must be in



place to enhance satisfaction, quality, employability, and communication; all Erasmus Mundus promises and objectives (cf. ICUnet.ag, 2010).

## **Empirical Context**

Research building on multicultural classroom issues is sparse (cf. Le Roux, 2001; Riding, 2005; Gabb, 2006), and its direct (and indirect) relationship with settlement, adjustment, and in direct encompassment of these elements, acculturation is in immediate need of non-essentialist attention. In addition, many international-study researches explore bicultural settings, and are often set in Anglophone countries. Finland is unique historically, geographically, and economically, with unique Finnish language, a changing attitude to multiculturalism (Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002), plus is part of a maturing European internationalised movement. Expectations and motivations will consequently differ from other studies, while multicultural groups can be studied from an external perspective, within a novel environment and education system.

Therefore, a qualitative social psychology study attempts to fill these gaps by looking at whether ICLS from two different courses - one at the University of Jyväskylä and the other at the University of Helsinki - influences acculturating attitudes that impact adaption into the dominant culture. (cf. ICUnet.ag, 2010). Soft-applied studies for scholarship supported students, the level of the degree, and location elements help channel and assess the necessary criteria, whilst not being infringed on by typical moderators that may detract from the objectives' intended depths.

To understand the intercultural processes in multicultural formal educational settings and their effect on unidirectional acculturation attitudes, the research question [RQ] states:

RQ. How does intercultural course learning satisfaction affect international students' acculturation attitudes?

Four associated sub-questions navigate the present study in accordance to the overall aim.

SQ1. How is intercultural course learning satisfaction formed?

SQ2. What is the experienced intercultural course learning satisfaction?

SQ3. How have intercultural course learning interactions been experienced?

SQ4. How is Finnish culture interpreted through course learning experiences?

## 1.2. Significance of Study

The thesis serves of particular interest to university managers, teaching faculty, internationalisation coordinators, and student services personnel. Those within a planning and facilitating system for international students on all levels should attend to the theory and evidence presented in this paper, of which serves great importance to the institution, the community, and the welfare of *all* students on campus.

The resonance of international student satisfaction, success, and integration serves additional interest to enterprise managers nationally and globally, as well as students how have experienced, or who are open to international study.

Home-based students, cultural and educational researchers, and teachers of all backgrounds, round off the obvious interest groups who can, and perhaps should attend to such reading as this thesis. Educational diversity, multicultural societies, and pedagogic are overwhelmed with mounting social and psychological evidence, yet too often research can lead from the blade of Occam's razor, and thus we must remain contentious and intricate to theory, seeking new ideas and evidence.

## 1.3. Terms and Definitions

The following terms are briefly defined for the reader to familiarise themselves with for the reading of the thesis. The rest of the paper will elaborate on these concepts and articulate within and around them.

### **Acculturation Attitudes**

Acculturation is defined in the present study as “culture change that results from continuous, first hand contact between two distinct cultural groups” (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936 cited in Berry, 1988, p. 41). This studies focus is unidirectional from the international students' perspectives. The themes within the scope of acculturation processes that receive primary focus are those of expectations, motivations, social support, stress and coping, and societal attitudes.

Berry (1988, 1997) additionally states four acculturation strategies; *assimilation*, *integration*, *separation* and *segregation*, and *marginalisation*. These terms refer to the levels of

unification with the new culture. Assimilation refers to the full transfer from one's origin cultural identity to the hosts, whereas integration refers to a partial transfer where they maintain features of their cultural origin. Separation differs to seclusion in the sense that one can choose not to embrace the new culture and maintain previous cultural traits (separation), whilst seclusion refers to the perceived attitudes preventing integration or assimilation from the host culture itself. Finally, marginalisation refers to neither embracing one's original cultural traits nor the host nation's dominant cultural traits (Berry, 1997).

## **Culture**

Culture is defined in this study as a collective group of shared roles, beliefs, habits, actions and/or artefacts, shared by an easily identifiable group of people (Schaller & Crandall, 2004). Therefore, the dominant host culture will represent a generalised group of identities, that being predominantly of Finnish citizenship, similar behavioural norms, communication such as language, and various other such shared attributes.

*Sub-groups* will represent segmented divides, in particular multicultural cohorts of students. Each individual in this context functions in the role of a student, in the same institution under the same institutional constrictions and expectations. The common goals of learning, as well as the common language of instruction highlight some of the further shared aspects, and are dependant and coexistent within the dominant culture. A *creative culture* (Berry, 1997) refers to a unique developed culture that is not seen in either the host's dominant culture, or the migrant's culture, in this instance pertaining to international student groups.

## **Intercultural Course Learning Satisfaction [ICLS]/Experiences**

Wadsworth, Hecht and Jung (2008, p.66) say students high in educational satisfaction also experience communicational satisfaction with classmates and teachers. Student satisfaction (Mann, 2008) and educational satisfaction (Wadsworth et al. 2008) are however broad concepts, and extend wide of the immediate learning domain, and in the latter, beyond the students themselves.

*Intercultural course learning experiences* instead focuses on the individuals' formal intercultural classroom experiences that influence their level of satisfaction, thus, 'intercultural course learning satisfaction'.

## **Intercultural Dynamics**

The dimension of student dynamics entails how students of multicultural backgrounds interact inside and outside of direct classroom learning experiences with fellow students and university staff (cf. Lantolf, 2000). The present study employs student dynamics with a student-student focus, although includes university staff and course faculty members within the scope of the ICLS framework.

*Intercultural competencies* within this paper will pertain to “one’s skill in facilitating successful intercultural communication outcomes in terms of satisfaction and other positive assessments of the interaction and the interaction partner” (Kim, 2005 cited in Jandt, 2007).

### **1.4. Research Limitations**

A naturalistic phenomenological case study imminently corroborates the context-heavy nature of research in the social sciences. The thesis focuses precisely on intercultural course learning dynamics to address possible contradiction to quasi-universal acceptance of culture dominant factors to student settlement and success on internationalised placements.

However, delimiting aspects of the thesis are noted. Sample size is one such issue. Seven interviews were conducted overall, with four from the University of Jyväskylä, and three from the University of Helsinki. Due to the specific criteria navigating the research, sample pools were extremely limited and small in size. Nevertheless, although a representative outcome is not sought after, a larger pool of data is obviously invaluable and ideal, impacting the level of findings, reach, and research reliability.

Additionally, psychological studies gather common critique in their susceptibility to infinite moderating components. Personality (Ward et al. 2004; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005; Hofstede, 2007), socialisation/enculturation (Narvaez & Hill, 2010), culture-fit/match explanations (cf. Ward et al. 2004), and campus size (Fischer, 2007) represent just a few of the dimensions weighing into precognitive, metacognitive, conscious, or unconscious influence. Although a phenomenological approach collects ones overt conveyance, it is normally restricted to conscious observations. Some of these factors are outside of administrative control, or too abstract for a combined holistic psychoanalytical profile of any kind. The selective critiqued framework of moderators provides the scope, though all inferences are to be contextualised by the attentive reader.

An additional note on delimitations cautions the ethnocentric, male dominated and westernised prevalence in research, leading to translational error, and weak interpretations to response styles as well as other such factors (Hofstede, 2007). Ideally, joint research would restrict such issues; however the author takes note of such contaminants, and within an intercultural scope, the objectives of the thesis are valid, and contextually asserted.

## **1.5. Thesis Structure**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Following the introduction, the conceptual framework is designed through the critique of selected studies' core concepts. Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework provides the base for the ICLS framework. Contemporary acculturation models (Berry, 1988, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) then look at instigative, moderating, and post acculturative psychological processes. The reader is then guided through the design process using associated secondary literature, accompanying rationale from the amalgamated conceptualisation of these core concepts.

The third chapter describes the methodological components and research structure. All contextual themes are discussed thoroughly in relation to the specificity of the sample groups and their unique characteristics and representation within a phenomenological analysis approach. The rationale behind the selection of methodological instruments, sample specifications, and interview components and structure are all outlined here.

The empirical data and analysis follows. The phenomenological analytical approach employed for the research is explained in relation to the research questions and data collection methods. The data is then interpreted and analysed, before being summarised under three main findings; student judgements and evaluations; student expectations; and student motivations. Implications and some recommendations conclude the paper, and include the examination of the educational concepts of culture synergy concept (Zhou et al. 2008) and constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007) in considering strategies to improve ICLS and cross-cultural transition.

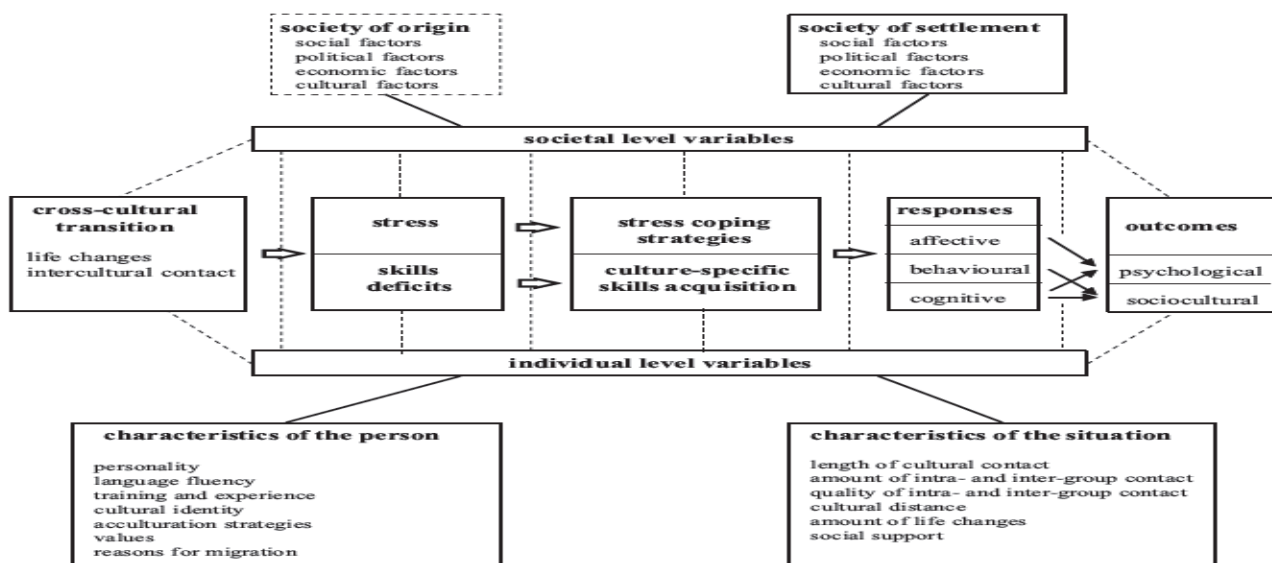
## 2. Conceptual Framework

The framework development is systematically walked through within this chapter, presenting the initial acculturation-dominant hypotheses from literature sources, and leading on to an alternate ICLS view of conventional acculturation processes. The framework draws from Zhou et al (2008) adapted acculturation process model and ABC framework in synthesis with constructs from Berry (1997), Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999), and Mann (2008). The frameworks development is illustrated through figures and tables showing the reconfiguration of the acculturation process, followed by a summary and disassembling of core constructs before aligned synthesis organises and completes the focal themes guiding the analysis.

### 2.1. Acculturation Attitude Formation

First, to understand the development of acculturation attitudes, acculturation models identified within societal adaptation and psychological adjustment frameworks are necessary. Zhou et al (2008, p.69) display an adapted model representing the complex moderating nature of acculturation processes, and apply an affective, behavioural, and cognitive framework [ABC]. This framework tool synthesises culture-related stress and coping, culture learning, and social identification theories in order to better understand such processes (see fig. 1).

**Figure 1** Acculturation process



Source: Zhou et al (2008, p.69) The acculturation process (adapted from Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001).

Acculturation processes can impact ICLS and academic success (Leung, 2001; Kang, 2006; Cemalcilar & Fabo, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008; Zhou et al. 2008), meaning for the international student, acculturation processes are an imperative transitional feature. ICLS factors preceding acculturation attitudes consequently take on a greater significance.

The migrant's motivation to make meaningful adjustments is dependent on the success of their stay (Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010). Without motivation, cultural intelligence development hinders, opening the door to communicational failures (Earley & Ang, 2004; Kim, 2005, cited in Jandt, 2007). However, adjusting to others' needs is also a personality and cognitive factor argues Dervin (2006, cited in Virkama, 2010). From a contemporary anthropologist's perspective, Dervin says we already possess these competencies, but fail to strategically employ them in the correct contexts possibly due to 'culture-set' thinking.

Acculturation attitude acquisition and processing is both situational and character dependant, and whether from a culturalist perspective or otherwise, is an attitude that can be moderated through education and provision by institutional leaders. Although intervening in some factors is difficult, such as prejudice perception (cf. Sadowsky & Plake, 1992; Gabb, 2006; Pieterse, Carter, Evans & Walter, 2010), Gabb (2006) says where possible, teachers must control environments where international students show signs of distress. Attending to these issues with education, such as cultural studies is encouraged by higher education lecturers says Vaccarino (2009), and should alleviate too much cultural focus, and educate all on the common factors one is likely to encounter.

Whether ICLS affects acculturation attitudes may then depend in part on what course learning experiences one obtains in relation to the development of intercultural proficiencies.

### **ABC Framework**

The ABC framework incorporates various intercultural theories such as social support, locus of control (cf. Leung, 2001), and expectations (Zhou et al. 2008, p. 64). Three theories encompass and simplify these concepts in formulating the basis of intercultural contact; Stress and coping, culture learning, and social identification (ibid). The ABC theory achieves comprehensiveness, accounting for behaviours which are proactive, situational, and contextual, however, Zhou et al (2008) confess its complexity and difficulty in assessing individual elements from figure 1.

The framework provides an important basis for understanding not only cultural adaptation, but social adaptation in intercultural settings, and is used by Zhou and colleagues to explore the

onset of culture shock in relation to learning. The sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment factors which effect intercultural adaptation govern the moderators within figure 1 under the ABC concepts, offering a broad look at mediating factors into experiential adaptation equations (see table 1).

**Table 1** The contemporary theories of intercultural contact

Theory	Theoretical origin	Conceptual framework	Theoretical premise	Factors affecting adjustment	Intervention guidelines
Stress and Coping (Affect)	Social psychology – stress, appraisal and coping (Lazarus & Folkman 1984); life events (Holmes and Rahe 1967)	Cross-cultural travellers need to develop coping strategies to deal with stress	Life changes are inherently stressful	Adjustment factors involving both personal (e.g. life change, personality) and situational (e.g. social support)	Training people to develop stress-management skills
Culture Learning (Behaviour)	Social and experimental psychology – social skills and interpersonal behaviour (Argyle 1969)	Cross-cultural travellers need to learn culturally relevant social skills to survive and thrive in their new settings	Social interaction is a mutually organised and skilled performance	Culture-specific variables such as: knowledge about a new culture, language or communication competence, cultural distance	Preparation, orientation and culture learning, especially behavioural-based social skill training
Social Identification (Cognition)	Ethnic, cross-cultural and social psychology – self (Deaux 1996; Social Identity Theory, e.g. Phinney 1990)	Cross-cultural transition may involve changes in cultural identity and inter-group relations	Identity is a fundamental issue for the cross-cultural travellers	Cognitive variables such as: knowledge of the host culture, mutual attitude between hosts and sojourners, cultural similarity, cultural identity	Enhancing self-esteem, overcoming barriers to inter-group harmony, emphasising inter-group similarities

Source: Zhou et al (2008).

The three frameworks within the ABC theory are interconnected, and equally impact on sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustments, ascertaining that moderating factors within the acculturation process model also overlap between theories. The ABC framework is adopted to develop synergised thematic concepts to understand ICLS and the affects towards acculturation attitudes.

An array of individual categories is offered by the ABC framework and model, however, its complexity accumulates from the interaction of multiple factors and the assessment of individual categories (Zhou et al. 2008). For the present study, the ABC framework compresses these categories into the three contemporary ABC theories, and assembles categories into simplified themes within the research scope. For example, *culture distance* might pertain to social identification attitudes towards other cultures, although additionally reside in culture learning behaviour, and stress and coping strategies (e.g. co-cultural groups). The culture distance theme is subsequently included, but is not a focal analytical theme. A *coping strategies* theme however relates directly to the stress and coping element within the ABC framework, and can thus incorporate other factors (e.g. culture distance) more distinctively, bringing together overlapping factors.



## **Intercultural Adaptation**

Through intercultural interaction, a better overall adaptation (including educational satisfaction), and thus a healthier state of well-being is expected (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou et al. 2008). Integration's pure effect on such factors however remains contentious. What is agreed is that relative sociocultural and psychological moderating entities function as significant determining factors in a bicultural acculturation experience and level of integration.

Berry (1997) described acculturation models as probabilistic, with moderating factors able to influence the process at any stage, and at different strength. In relation, Zhou and Todman (2008) and Griffiths et al (2004) argue that educational factors are, above all else, the most significant factors students face upon entry and thereafter, and that learning shock can damage ones confidence, intercultural relations, and physical and mental state of well-being. Furthermore, Mann (2005, 2008) marks out the social influences education forges towards ones attitude in general, corresponding with findings that intercultural social skills support ones psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation (Ward et al. 2004; Deardorff, 2010; Garis, 2012).

The cultural appropriateness of Berry's (1997) four-way acculturation framework is one area contended by Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999), who employ a comparative home-and-host 21-item acculturation index within a psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation context. Also attending to the individual role aside of cultural infliction is Ward et al (2004) for instance, who compare a culture-fit theory to the 'big five' personality dimensions (neuroticism, introversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) to understand the distinctions between personality and cultural roles in adaptation.

Interactions between ICLS and acculturation attitudes in figure 1 display educational moderators within broken down societal and individual level variables such as cultural factors and reasons for migration (Berry, 1997). The potency of this moderating ICLS element, or indeed its instigative relationship requires attention in relation to sociocultural and psychological responses leading to acculturative attitudes

## **2.2. The ICLS and Acculturation Attitude Relationship**

The relationship between ICLS and acculturation attitudes is rich and diverse, and is disseminated throughout the paper to adhere to its relevant context and use. The following section overviews some of the direct, and indirect entities that influence this relationship.

### **Psychological Adjustment**

International students are thought to have higher levels of stress in general compared to native students due to new language needs, cultural differences, and requiring close proximal effective support networks, affecting the way migrants feel, their way of life, eating habits, sleep patterns, and meeting new people for example (Robotham & Julian, 2006).

Various automated behaviours documented in literature relating to migrant issues including withdrawal, seclusion, and discrimination, are emotionally triggered. The feeling of loneliness and anxiety, and the diminishment of self-esteem are reported to effect performance results in individuals, and amongst groups (Daly, Caughlin & Stafford, 1997; McCroskey, 1997), whereas seclusion can bare intolerance on the separated individual and on society (Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010).

Anxieties for example are often featured motivations for withdrawals from communication, which in turn can prime positive or negative social attitudes. Loneliness is another factor that is found to increase ones likelihood to reduce social communication, thus heightening the level of perceived and experienced loneliness (Brown & Holloway, 2008). As a result of such emotional distress, low levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Leung, 2001), irrational ‘needs’ beliefs, and negative sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment are more likely (cf. Zhou et al. 2008), leaving the migrant dissatisfied, achieving less, and unmotivated to integrate.

Links between mood and cognition do not always prove reliable since positive and negative emotional triggers deliver varying responses not always in sync with connotations of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ (Eich & Forgas, 2003). Also, some individuals are conditioned to adapt to difficulties more readily, whereas others might be more inclined to direct blame elsewhere due to socialised systems that encourage mentalities carrying an external locus of control (Leung, 2001). However, many studies conclude that morale generally impacts performance output (e.g. McCoy, 2002; Zhao et al. 2005; Gottfredson et al. 2008; Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010).

Secondary literature offers an array of intelligible cultural and psychological information to cast theory and findings onto recurrent transitional themes within the ICLS and acculturation attitude framework. Characteristics of the person, and the situation detail how and why mentalities arise in intercultural learning domains, and in acculturation. Social inertia predictably prevents integration in either aspect, although sub groups of creative cultures (Berry, 1997) can also be detrimental to intercultural competencies in navigating positive acculturation attitudes and successful academic integration. To suppress damaging experiences, more integrated campus initiatives between host and migrant students are recommended (Hawkins, 2010; Gareis, 2012), and synergised intercultural learning structures are promoted to aid transition for learners, and facilitate an interactive learning environment (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Zhou et al. 2008), and an profitable interactive cultural encounter for host and guest.

These psychological and sociocultural stressors invariably correspond to student learning experiences, impacting also on academic development. (Fischer, 2007). These issues can be conceived from various aspects of student life, including campus size, location of campus (urban or rural), and so on. Ethnicity (Fischer, 2007), the physical environment (Zhang & Sternberg, 2005), disabilities (Mann, 2008), emotional intelligence (Traoré, 2008), and numerous other factors impact ones ICLS.

### **Learning Adaptation**

Learning inherently relies on ones interaction with the environment (Abelson, 1981; Bandura, 1997; Zhang & Sternberg, 2005), therefore, how one interprets their environment and all of its detail determines how one thinks and reflects about it (Swanson et al. 2005; Bowler, Annan & Mentis, 2007; Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010). This leads to new metacognitive organising of traits such as motivation and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Earley & Ang, 2003), determining the individuals' strategies and attitudes. For the migrant facing new and unpredictable challenges, these strategies and attitudes work as both a reaction to the environment, but also a substantial contributor to an ever changing environment (Abelson, 1981; Lantolf, 2000; Bowler et al. 2007).

ICLS can range from extremely enriching, to negative extremes contributing to ones self-destruction to their mental well-being (Griffiths et al. 2004; Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010). However, with well-being being a significant factor within a sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment framework, there is a discrepancy concerning patterns that break the logic that, for example, a negative state, could translate into positive ICLS (Zhou et al. 2008).

## **Integration Attitudes**

Ali (2008) suggests such attitudes are more related to social influences and situational experiences rather than to a reaction to the host culture. His research focuses on second generation Muslims living in the United States of America, and gives special attention to the relativity of peer group influences, which is a lacking feature in Berry's (1988, 1997) models for instance.

Ali's (2008) study saw that first and second generation interaction between co-cultural individuals moderated the direction of one's acculturation attitude. Ali (2008) employs the term 'de-acculturation' to denote those making successful transitions away from mainstream norms, values and beliefs, whilst living within the dominant culture. De-acculturation, unlike Berry's (1988) separation strategy, considers the diversity of society and its cultural heritage, and suggests that migrants can acculturate less and less due their cultures inclusion into contemporary 'culture' through generations of migration and influence, whilst still achieving positive settlement into society.

Group socialisation from co-cultural peer groups is an influencing factor often greater than family relationships in terms of integration according to Ali (2008). Co-cultural networks are generally found to influence acculturation attitudes (cf. Teichler, 2004; Zhou & Todman, 2008), and although Ali (2008) constricts his findings to co-cultures and cultural roots, peer conformity is a relevant issue in understanding the development of international students' acculturation attitudes from intercultural dynamics within the course learning environment.

## **Intercultural Interaction**

Social influence (cf. Harton & Bourgeois, 2004, pp. 41-42) is thus a significant factor in the acculturation attitude equation. In regards to ICLS, it is not just the success of the learning that is important, but the dynamics through which it came. Indeed, learning is expected to be enhanced in collegiate environments anyway (Le Roux, 2001; Zhao et al. 2005), while social support is equally useful in assisting with learning transitions as it is for other factors relating to ones psychological state (Griffiths et al. 2004; Mann, 2008).

Successful intercultural communication not only fosters important support networks, but leads to knowledge transfers, broadening ones perspectives on subject related information, cultural characteristics, working styles, and many other such observable entities (Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 2000). In tandem, one's mental schema is reshaped, altering communicational output, and mutually reconfiguring social development (Ward et al. 2004; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006). However, Zhao et

al (2005), Fischer (2007) and Ali (2008) all note that social support networks on and off campus may dictate additional relationships, and lead to conformity of behaviours and attitudes. The nature of social influence could consequently inhibit ICLS, intercultural competency, and acculturative attitudes should conformed traits be negative, or contain counterproductive features. Thus, even though multicultural conflict and misunderstandings are likely (Simmons et al. 2010), even without this, transition may depend on ones social networks.

The ICLS relationship with acculturation attitudes is typologised in figure 2 through a synthesis of secondary literature presenting an acculturation dominant process. Each quadrant in figure 2 typifies evidence based outcomes of causal factors to this relationship. Quadrant 1 shows for example that positive ICLS and positive acculturation attitudes are assumed as part of a satisfactory all-encompassing acculturation experience (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou et al. 2008), rather than through, or equal to, other confounding moderators such as ICLS.

In relation to the developing framework, this typology presents common culture-centric theory regarding cross-cultural transition and ICLS. It does this with ICLS as an effect from acculturation, or at best as a moderating feature to ones cross-cultural transition and ABC within an acculturation process. The typology thus serves to highlight what literature has not explained relating to quadrant 3, and therefore guides the framework with what evidence already exists, and what is missing.

The list marked in Roman numerals marks an alternative view of this relationship. As an example, the third sequence displays a sequence unexplained by Zhou et al (2008) whereby a positive academic transition may not result from positive settlement. Zhao et al (2005) suggest that coping with the academic factors may impact the adaptation into the host culture, although this relationship remains unclear in the case that negative acculturation attitudes, or negative acculturation experiences, can occur despite positive ICLS.

**Figure 2** Secondary literature based typology: ICLS and acculturation attitudes

		ICLS		
		<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	
Acculturation Attitude	<i>Positive</i>	Acculturation induced (1)	Learner induced (2)	I. ) Acculturation attitudes → ABC → Acculturation attitudes  II. ) Acculturation attitudes → ABC → ICLS
	<i>Negative</i>	? (3)	Acculturation induced (4)	III. ) ICLS → ABC → Acculturation attitudes (?)  IV. ) ICLS → ABC → ICLS

Source: ICLS influenced by acculturation attitude and experience (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou et al. 2008).

It is agreed across literature that acculturation attitudes are developed over time, and are situational and contextual, constantly being influenced by the environment (Weaver, 1996; Berry, 1997; DiMaggio, 1997; Zhou et al. 2008; Kimbro, 2009; Molinsky, 2010). The extent of positive or negative ICLS and acculturation attitudes therefore constantly shift, whereas the contextual elements surrounding each individual arrange the ABC responses to whatever trigger they are exposed to (Kimbo, 2009), from whichever order they occur. This circuit notions a reaction to the ABC element itself, since sociocultural theory and transformative learning arouse new environmental triggers and new schemas (Lantolf, 2000; Mezirow, 1991 cited in Gill, 2007).

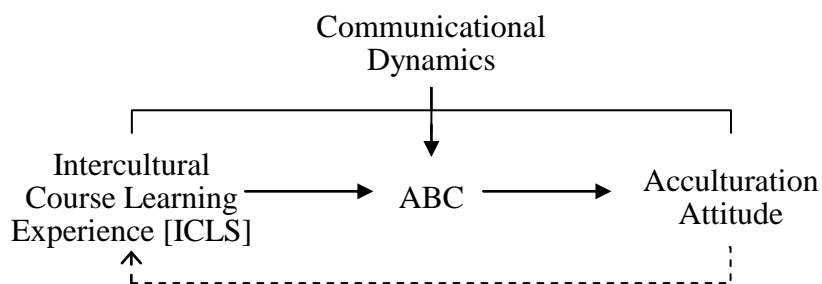
The typology therefore highlights some unobserved areas in the relationship between ICLS and acculturation attitudes. Pedagogically and culturally, international students face a multitude of unique challenges, yet the governance of culture in researching cross-cultural experiences may be contributing to a narrowed fallacy.

One salient significant factor throughout cross-cultural literature is intercultural communication, ascertaining that openness to interaction produces integrative potential related to psychological well-being (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ward et al. 2004; Mann, 2005; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005; Gottfredson, Panter, Daye, Allen, Deo & Wightman, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008; Dearnorff, 2010; Gareis, 2012). This applies to acculturation assimilation, and class integration (Mann, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008), both ramifications of the other since well-being entities dictate

factors such as openness (Swanson et al. 2005; Gill, 2007). Furthermore, Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) and Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel (2004) postulate the impact low learning satisfaction has on social connectiveness and well-being, negating the overriding responsibility of cultural transition.

A circuitry relationship appears between ICLS and acculturation attitudes based on the psychological impacts each omit. ICLS for example not only impacts present satisfaction and behaviours, but also future decisions and feelings (Mann, 2008), however it also inflicts psychological adjustments which alter everyday decisions not study related, such as socialising and self-efficacy (cf. Bandura, 1997). The same is true of acculturation processes, whereby delayed responses (1997), and academic underachievement are examples deriving from psychological and sociocultural change (Leung, 2001; Kang, 2006; Cemalcilar & Fabo, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008; Zhou et al. 2008). Figure 3 illustrates this circuitry relationship.

**Figure 3** Circuitry ICLS and acculturation attitude relationship



Source: Social ICLS (Mann, 2008) circuitry relationship to acculturation attitudes through an ABC (Zhou et al. 2008) analysis.

### 2.3. ICLS Framework

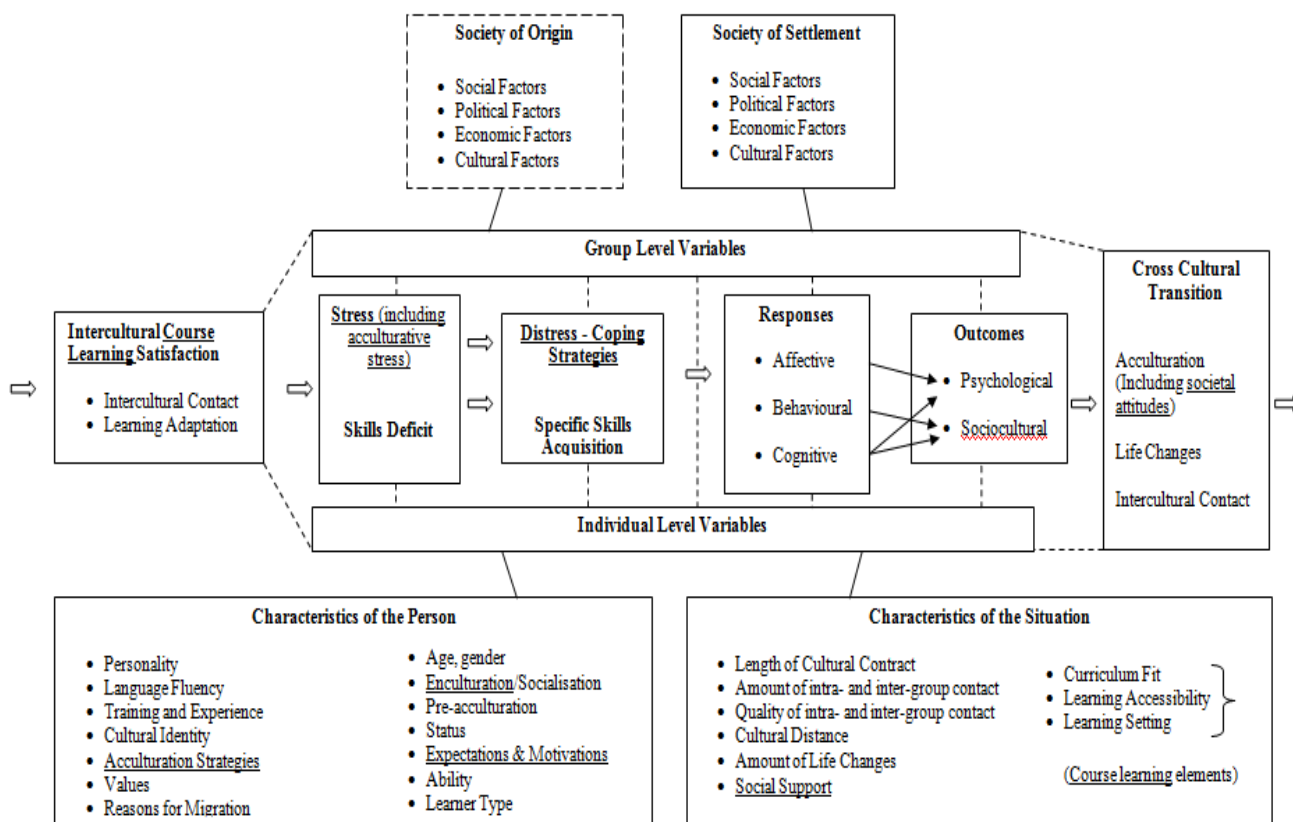
Zhou et al (2008) adapted acculturation process model provides a structural look at the process and moderating context on an individual or groups acculturation process.

In order to incorporate the ICLS feature from the offset of the cross-cultural transition process, the model is reconfigured without interference to the core structural elements. The education context, a component of society of settlement and society of origin cultural and social themes, thus becomes the leading contextual theme, addressing specifically ICLS.

Figure 4 reconfigures the acculturation process in order to depict the ICLS formula through the ABC framework. An increase of micro categories results from the inclusion of items from associated literature, and in relating aspects of methodological significance such as demographics.

The reconfigured model displays the process of transition for which the international student will inevitably need to make sociocultural adaptations and psychological adjustments, such as developing intercultural social skills, and dealing with emotional life changes. Affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses will ultimately channel ones experiences towards new sociocultural and psychological responses, thus moderating ones developed acculturation attitudes (see fig. 4).

**Figure 4** Reconfigured ICLS model



Source: Adapted from Zhou et al (2008, p.69). The acculturation process (adapted from Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001), and Berry (1997, p.15) A framework for acculturation research.

The arrows at the either end of the central sequence hold two purposes. Firstly, the model is a carousel, ongoing, and influential to its instigative offset. Secondly, the model focuses on a single moderating element of many, rather than staging a factor as purely deterministic, non-interactional, and stagnant.

The underlined categories illustrate the categories amalgamated further on in the framework development at the end of this chapter. Although these are individual elements, these categories are



synergised into broadened themes to incorporate other categories where other categories may not be able to do so. Importantly, the themes cover a breadth of the incorporated ABC constructs, including expectations (Feather, 1982 cited in Zhou et al. 2008) and social support for example, covering the comprehensive theories within the ABC framework.

The refined themes ultimately take shape in appendix A. *Expectations* and *motivations* for example assess cultural, social, political, and economical factors (Berry, p.22), which is a recurrent theme across the selected literature and found under the society of origin category in figure 4. This group level variable is applied in the Zhou et al (2008) model to understand the reasons for leaving, and migrating, but also crosses over at the micro-level in assessing motivations to learn for instance. The theme also broadly encompasses several other micro-categories including language fluency, values, and also inter or intra group contact elements.

Themes which are all encompassing, that is, are strongly embedded within each separate definition, provide the first column of themes in appendix A. The second column holds such separated themes as *social support*. Here for example, the social support theme within the *characteristics of the situation* category is a coherent theme across the frameworks brought together in table 3 further on, and can access information about support needs and choices from a ICLS context in relation to integration patterns (Ward et al. 2004; Mann, 2008). Social support is mainly seen as a stress and coping feature despite an obvious transverse, and directly relates to the quantity and quality of time in intergroup and intragroup contact for example, thus broadening as a leading theme within the frameworks simplification.

The forth column in appendix A provides broken down definitions from the core frameworks and the broad literature review in order to make sense of the themes, and aid interpretation as well as interview guidance. For instance, within the scope of *social support*, *confidence* is a prevalent term throughout literature (Bandura, 1997; Ward et al. 2004; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Zhao, Kuh & Carini, 2005; Mann, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008), thus explaining and channelling the focus of this broadened theme during data collection and analysis to understand from the ICLS framework how, in relation, acculturation attitudes are forming.

## **ICLS**

The ICLS theme, located at the beginning of the centre row in figure 4, encompasses features of intercultural contact and learning adaptation which address the social and course learning environment based on student experience elements raised by Mann (2008). The

multicultural class environment presents the coming together of different cultures in the ABC framework, which may lead to the formation of new cultures (Berry, 1988), and the intercultural influences towards one's culture-learning motivations and developed acculturation attitudes via psychological and sociocultural responses.

### **Stress and Skill Deficits, and Distress Coping Strategies and Specific Skill Acquisition**

Zhou et al (2008) reframe the usage of 'culture shock', instead bringing attention to contact induced stress and subsequent intercultural skill deficits. 'Distress' has replaced 'stress' for the new configuration to specify what types of stress coping experiences are being dealt with. These elements are equally elicited within a multicultural course learning environment on route to ABC responses, and are important factors in interpreting relation to acculturation attitudes. Such stressors and deficits also increase understanding to acculturative stress and acculturative and coping strategies, and are integrated under these headings for analysis. The strategies, according to Zhou et al (2008), should lead to psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation through ABC responses from initial intercultural experiences.

### **Responses and Outcomes**

Psychological adjustments and sociocultural adaptations are made in response to ABC factors deriving from initial adaptation including intercultural experiences. For example, one's cognitive [C] response to their social identification status might navigate their coping behaviour and impact their confidence when approaching new or similar situations (Zhou et al. 2008). Thus, the ABC element provides an analytical tool in understanding outcomes from ICLS and in relation to acculturation attitudes, as well as assisting the data analysis in qualitatively analysing the accounts of interviewees and comparing other moderating potencies relating to the studies of Zhou et al (2008), Berry (1997), and Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999).

### **Cross-cultural Transition**

The cross-cultural transition feature can bring dramatic life changes through intercultural contact (Zhou et al. 2008). Cross-cultural transition harvests from any cultural encounter including pre-acculturative initiation, however for the purposes of the present paper, it relates in accordance to acculturation with the host culture and societal attitudes formed, thus as an outcome to ABC responses from ICLS.

Societal attitudes are however modified by numerous micro-categories, including pre-acculturative views, values, culture-distance, and other such factors. Therefore, questions are designed to be open and encompassing of such elements within several broader themes. For example, asking about the importance of learning the native language directly addresses the societal attitudes theme, yet it also crosses over to understand motivations and acculturative strategies. Alternatively, asking about motivations to study in Finland for example may reside under the motivation and expectation themes, yet provides an insight into pre-acculturative attitudes and values in relation to societal attitudes.

### **Group Level Variables**

Society of origin and society of settlement come under Zhou et al (2008) and Berry (1997) group level variables, and contain host and origin factors assembling political contexts, economic climates, social features, and cultural factors in order to provide contextual awareness to exchanged environments and comparative effects (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Open questions such as motivations to come and changed ways of living encourage comparative narratives in order to understand anything from educational values (Kumar & Maehr, 2007), to push and pull factors (Berry, 1997), and are located within their relevant theme. For the most part, group level comparatives come under the broadened cultural distance theme with the papers methodology.

### **Individual Level Variables**

Modifications to Zhou et al (2008) characteristics of the person and characteristics of the situation sections include demographics, pre-acculturation, status, expectations and motivations, ability, (cf. Berry, 1997, p.15) and course learning category features; learner type (Mann, 2008), curriculum fit (Biggs & Tang, 2007), learning accessibility, and learning setting (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Mann, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008; Zhou & Todman, 2008).

Each element can contribute in contextualising the data analysis, for example gender has been found to effect intercultural interaction (McNamara & Harris, 1997), so are relevant to the study's findings. Language skills, values, and reasons for migration for example are extracted through broader categories such as motivations and expectations in the data collection. In figure 4, these micro-elements however remain separate as Zhou et al (2008) originally displayed, detailing the intricacy of each category.

## 2.4. Synergised Core Literature Concepts

Contributing to the reconfigured ICLS model and ICLS framework originating from Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework are core concepts from Berry (1997) and Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999). Each author's research concepts are similar, and derive from one another's research, however are articulated and researched with deviations applicable to the preferences of the present study.

Mann (2008) presents a student experience focus, which is incorporated into the model to detail the ICLS feature. The details of each author's core concepts are discussed and broken down in this section to outline the frameworks that each study worked within, and from which themes these moderators relate to. These themes are then aligned, and amalgamated into new themes for data collection. This brief overview of relevant concepts additionally merits inclusion on the grounds of clarity, providing a transition into the systematic development of the synergised concepts and complete framework at the end of the chapter.

### **ABC Theoretical Concept (Zhou et al. 2008)**

The ABC framework approaches acculturation testing from three common domains: stress and coping, being an affective aspect [A]; cultural learning, being a behavioural aspect [B]; and social identification, being a cognitive element [C].

The ABC framework is adopted for the present study's methodology alongside societal and individualised items prominent in frameworks by Berry (1988, 1997) and Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999). The three part framework contributes to the understanding of intercultural transitions, and corresponds to the moderators in the adapted acculturation model in figure 1. These moderators within this framework influence ones transition, and are compressed in the present study to address the research question using an adapted ABC construct.

The ABC concept also provides a useful tool for interviewing since it categorises analysis of what one feels, how one behaves and what information one mentally processes. For example, affect, behavioural impact, and cognition, are expressed through answering one base question in the present studies interview, which asked *who have been the most important people to you during your time at [university]?*

*after a while it is not very good for my life and my studies [A], so I change a little bit. I have become more involved in the seminar and the discussion [C]. I tried to voice my opinion [B]*

(EM07: 253)

The first phase of the paragraph illustrates recognition of the need to cope with a challenging and stressful situation. This is the *affective* stage whereby transitional transformation occurs. The perceptions of required change then evoke new behaviours, but also illustrate a reflective consideration of what converging behaviours must seemingly be matched and altered in order to equal the norms of those around them. This is *cognisant* processing. Lastly, a further behavioural change is noted, with the migrant adopting perceivably relevant and necessary skills required to cope and be successful under the new or different environmental demands.

### **Acculturation Strategies (Berry, 1988, 1997)**

Berry (1988, 1997) divides acculturation into four groups: assimilation, integration, separation/segregation, and marginalisation. Assimilation is where the migrant joins the new dominant host culture, releasing previous cultural connections from their society of origin. Integration refers to the migrant maintaining cultural values from both cultures (origin and new host culture), and can integrate sufficiently without fully assimilating. Separation places the migrant outside of the new host culture due to personal cultural barriers, whereas segregation is external with the host culture making integration or assimilation difficult for the migrant, seeming to reject him/her as a member of their culture. Finally, marginalisation is where the migrant is neither a member of one culture nor the other (ibid).

Berry (1997) notes the importance of the society of settlements contribution to ones attitudes towards acculturation. The society of settlement can contribute to segregating migrants, but can also function as a support feature. Co-cultural societies, shared religious communities, and creative multicultural groups themselves can function as fragmented acquaintances for which transition and settlement are attuned with (ibid).

Stereotyping and self-fulfilling labelling factors can embed attitudes in host and international students, supporting a divide where interaction becomes difficult and/or unrequited (cf. Le Roux, 2001; Wadsworth et al. 2008). In the present study however, interaction is proactive in some cases when other international students are perceived to be ‘in the same boat’, suggesting reactive assimilation to international student groups.

Each strategy is impacted by moderating factors before and during acculturation, including education. How precisely ICLS affects acculturation attitudes is the focus of interest, and therefore requisites course-learning moderators besides the group and individual level factors outlined by Berry (1997, p.15).

## **Acculturation Index (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999)**

Emphasis on the difference between sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment drives Ward and Rana-Deuba's (1999) cultural transition study. It is stated for instance that sociocultural issues weaken throughout time - such as language levels increasing and knowledge of the culture improves, whereas psychological adaptation - including personality elements and life changes - are more spontaneous and built up with multiple factors (ibid).

A 21-item list [acculturation list] that is themed according to important factors that impact one's acculturation process, tests one's value changes between their culture of origin and the culture of settlement. Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) assist this with Wilson and Ward's (2010) sociocultural adaptation scale and Zung's (1965) psychological depression scale to measure social cultural behaviours and states of mind respectively.

The comparatives between origin and host culture in the acculturation index however can become contaminated by co-cultures (Claremont, 2008; Traoré, 2008) or creative cultures (Berry, 1997), as well as stereotyping and self-fulfilling labelling elements (cf. Le Roux, 2001; Wadsworth et al. 2008). These formations can alter the interaction with the host environment and understanding of it, and could lead to inaccurate perceptions of experiences which the interpreter must be take into consideration (Vaccarino, 2009).

*I think this is because the Finnish culture. They like to be really formal and all this sort of stuff. Sometimes you don't feel like asking something because you might perhaps bother the person*

(EM06: 82)

Here for example, a negative experience is associated with the host country's culture. The same interviewee also described high levels of dissatisfaction with the course overall, and the 'system' that governed it, despite enjoying a positive experience in the same institution on a different course a year prior. Although the participant had some Finnish friends, therefore including authentic interaction with the labelled Finnish culture, the rest of the sample group displayed very similar attitudes, and conformed expectations of Finnish education which relates to possible sub-group influences and context related stereotyping (Le Roux, 2001; Zhao et al. 2005).

## **Learning Experiences (Mann, 2008)**

Educational inclusiveness and social inclusiveness form two dominant frames within Mann's (2008) learning experience research. Predominantly researched from indigenous student accounts, the work benefits the present study's methodology with person-specified learning encounters, rather than a culturally focused analysis.

Mann's (2008) work comes under the groupings of student experiences; engaging experiences; and alienating experiences. Various sub-components listed include a range of causal, situational and outcome specific entities, including students holding multiple identities, carrying disabilities or disorders, random life/world events, and teaching and learning style preferences.

The analysis of multiple student accounts adopts a quasi-ABC (Zhou et al. 2008) type outlook, seeing how ones reacts, changes, copes and so on. Mann (2008) postulates the extremely powerful stimulus to ones way of thinking, identity and behaviour the learning environment possesses (Mann, 2001, 2005, 2008), reiterating how learning situations can lead to strong inflictions on ones physical and mental health and well-being. This psychological rationale of cause and effect is the fabric of this papers research objective, and exemplifies and supports the significance of intercultural communication, ICLS, and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 1997).

Table 2 summarises the core constructs within the studies of Zhou et al (2008), Berry (1988, 1997), Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999), and Mann (2008), as well as their consideration and contribution towards the framework itself. For example, Zhou et al (2008) ABC theory is applied in the present framework, as well as the acculturation process model's (ibid) contribution to the thematic concepts which are aligned and amalgamated in table 3 and table 4, completing the systematic framework construction.

**Table 2** Summarised conceptual framework constructs

Author(s)	Concept	Core Components	Framework Application
Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman (2008)	ABC theory	Stress and coping; culture learning; and social identification	Affective [A], behavioural [B], and cognitive [C] to analyse response to change and/or new experiences.  Moderators adapted and compressed into broader themes through ABC framework (table 3 and 4). Reconfigured ICLS circuitry sequence adjustment to ICLS model.
Berry (1988, 1997)	Group and individual level moderators	Assimilation and integration lead to better adaptation and adjustment.	Moderators adapted and compressed into themes, and moderating categories included into reconfigured ICLS model attending to other confounding moderators.
Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999); Ward, Leong, and Low (2004)  Methodological additions (Zung, 1965; Wilson & Ward, 2010)	Comparative group and individual level moderators	General adaptation skills, including personality.  Psychological, sociocultural, and comparative questioning.	Comparative moderators within empirical context compressed into themes (table 3 and 4).  Method guidance and adaptation for interview structure and delivery.
Mann (2008)	Student experiences	Social application and learning challenges	Learning satisfaction themes included in detail at the first stage of the adapted acculturation attitude process.

The salient categories from Mann’s (2008) student experiences research are extracted, aligned and compressed in conjunction with Zhou et al (2008), Berry (1988, 1997) and Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) acculturation categories for a consistent qualitative analytical tool. For example, Mann (2008) discusses the psychological adjustments student’s experience throughout their educational journey, impacting on their social lives, learning environment, and learning outcomes. Zhou et al (2008), Berry (1997), and Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) similarly address the psychological adjustments and behavioural effects various transitional and cognitive responses will have on the migrant, acknowledging educational moderators also.

Categories are aligned to the ABC theoretical concepts. Repeated categories are compressed into single themes, which are additionally broadened to incorporate associated factors from the ABC framework (Zhou et al. 2008). Rather than to create entirely new themes, amalgamated categories factor into wider reaching concepts to channel recurrent ABC factors, and attend to interrelated moderating categories within the broadened theme.



**Table 3** Aligned categories from core secondary literature

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Zhou et al (2008)</b>	<b>Berry (1988, 1997)</b>	<b>Ward &amp; Rana-Deuba (1999)</b>	<b>Mann (2008)</b>
ABC. Self-efficacy. Course learning.	‘ABC’. Adaptation. Adjustment.	Behaviour.	Sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adjustment.	Adjustment. Adaption to social setting. Learning experience.
Pre-Acculturation. Expectations and Motivations	Prior factors.	Pre-acculturation. Motivation and expectations.	Previous experiences. Education	Educational background. Motivations.
Social change; social support; social behaviour. Distance (staff and classmates); Differences and Similarities. Equality.	Social changes. Amount of contact.	Social support.	Differences and – similarities.	Being different. Relationships. Contact and - relationship with staff.
Physical. Political. Biological. Cultural change.	Culture shock.	Cultural. Health consequences. Biological. Physical. Political.	Cultural. Location. Finances.	Culture shock. Communication styles.
Acculturative stress. Acculturative strategies. Coping strategies. Host language and culture. Societal attitudes.	Stress and coping. Culture learning. Longitudinal acculturation.	Acculturative stress and coping strategies. Societal attitudes. Length of stay.	Language proficiency. Societal views. Length of stay.	Peer support. Interaction opportunities.
Identity. Enculturation.	Identity.	Identity. Personality.	Self-identity. Personality.	Identity.
Cultural distance.	Culture synergy. Culture shock.	Culture distance.		Learning shock. Confusion.

Each theme functions within the ABC theoretical framework, sometimes on all levels. The bridging of compressed themes in the first column in table 3 allows these themes to be reduced further. For example, social change and social behaviour are associated to ones sociocultural adaptation, and are interlinked with societal attitudes, social support, acculturation strategies and so on. Themes that incorporate social change and social behaviours freely and naturally for instance within an open ABC frame are amalgamated into these attached themes.

Categories unavoidably interchange across themes partly due to context, yet successfully allowing extractions of multiple themes during open-ended interviewing. All categories in table 3 are amalgamated and compressed into a single set of themes ready for refinement to the present thesis’s scope prior to conducting a pilot interview on four international students. Details of the pilot testing are summarised within the methodology chapter.

Table 4 presents the resulting amalgamated themes in detail. An open-mind to participants' experience diversity and meaning systems meant that the themes from table 3 did not receive further narrowing down until post-piloting. Additionally, the narrative nature of open semi-structured interviewing, although directional, does not entirely restrict the prominence of removed factors, which is also an important factor for phenomenological analysis.

Broadened themes containing attached categories are coded for ease of reference, and those adopted without coding represent prevalent dimensions in and around *all* other themes transferred into the interview design (see table 3).

**Table 4** Unified ICLS framework themes

Adopted Theme	Description
Cultural changes	Differences in new cultures compared to familiar cultures. This could encompass diet changes, language changes etc. These changes can be noticed, not necessarily applied.
Social changes	Differences in social aspects of life. This could include meeting new people, living in a specific area and following new societal rules.
Cultural distance	Refers to how close one perceives their cultural norms to be with another culture.
Expectations [Ex]	Refers to ones expectations of various aspects such as teaching and university student support. Although expectations per se are an existent component of most experiences, this theme focuses mainly of support matters to gain insight into first impressions upon entry to the country, region and institution.
Motivation [M]	Why one chose to come to Finland, the particular university and course, why at this moment in time and so on. This feature is important in understanding expectations and their migrating motives in relationship to their attitudes. This feature is thus extracted through the questioning of other themes listed.
Enculturation [En]	Motivation to learn and motivation to adapt from their familiar schema.
Social support [SS]	What social relationships had supportive influence on the individual.
Social behaviour	Refers to an individual's perceived behavior in social situations, and the individuals' perception of the social behavior of others. This theme is compressed within several other themes such as societal attitudes, coping strategies and cultural distance.
Host language & culture	Aspects related to an individual's attitudes and experiences with the host language, and perceived salient norms of the host culture or sub culture. This theme is compressed within other themes such as cultural distance, acculturation strategies and societal attitudes.
Acculturative stress [CS]	Refers to types of stress one may feel as an international student in Finland, or in the coming together of other different cultures.
Acculturation strategies [CL]	Refers to how one manages the planning, dealing with, and reactions to acculturating.
Coping strategies [C]	How one copes with learning experience difficulties and other difficulties such as isolation.

Societal attitudes [At]	Refers to ones view of their local societies, and attitudes towards micro or macro-level features of either.
Course Learning [L]	Refers to an individual's course learning experiences.

Removed Theme	Description & Reason for Removal
Self-efficacy	Ones levels of confidence in their ability to do any specific task, and to which level they can do it.
	This themed factor is incorporated in other themes, and extracted through interview questions.
Distance: Teachers and class	How individual feels about teacher status and relationship, and how one feels about class status and relationship.
	This theme is integrated amongst other questions in the interview.
Pre-acculturation	Previous experiences with host culture, similar cultures to host culture, or different cultures other than one's own. The preparation of acculturating skills can also be included under this theme, like learning or knowing the host language.
	Although important, this feature expanded the depth of the study too much with the methodological instruments applied. Additionally, it serves more to explain <i>why</i> individuals differ, whereas the study focuses more on the <i>how</i> experiences materialize and differ. This aspect is used in the structured pre-interview questions to consider specific factors such as language proficiency and previous experiences abroad.
Biological; Health Consequences	Refers to changes in diet, illnesses contracted or prevalent in host country and all health related issues.
	Finland is a country that does not warn of any health pandemics. Changes in diet, although important, were not a reoccurring theme in all reviewed literature. It was mentioned only once in the pilot interviews and heavily related to financial issues with that participant.
Equality	Refers to how the individual feels about their equality in course class and society.
	This theme is partially extracted within the interview questions. Not all areas of equality can be measured without specific focus on equality, like most factors.
Differences & similarities	Perceived differences and similarities in cultural aspects such as manners, rules, speech and fashion. Differences and similarities also in the area of settlement, teaching styles, curriculum and various other observable differences.
	This theme is used in several acculturation studies, but did not suit the method instruments due to its depth and demand of the interviewee alongside other lines of questioning required for the studies purposes. Although not directly questioned, pilot participants often stated differences between one case and another, though not always their home country, and rarely similarities. This is important since it implies that expectations and cultural attitudes change from experience to experience, and that individuals do not always base their standards and outlook from their home country or culture, but from another set of standards and norms.
Physical	Refers to the physical surroundings. Whether the location of settlement is urban or rural, the levels of pollution, the population level and diversity, the weather and humidity and architecture, all contribute to the theme of physical aspects.
	This feature received little mention in the pilot studies. However, most participants had spent some time in the previous 2 years in Europe, including Scandinavia/Nordic regions. However the issue is deemed not to require direct questioning within the present study since students will have all spent approximately one semester in the region of Finland already, whilst placing a greater emphasis on the intercultural learning environment, rather than

	external factors. The interview does however leave this feature open for mention should it be perceived and reflected upon by the interviewee.
Political	Refers to the political context in which things operate. This could be an assimilating national culture, or institutional culture, or could be the curriculum which governs the demands, etiquette and attitudes of students in a learning environment. Teaching staff feature in this aspect as contributors to the political context which somebody is placed. The role of the individual also contributes, since societal or organizational cultures might determine the ability to integrate or assimilate, as well as the behavioral mechanisms required to function to some degree.
	This theme is loosely represented in most of the interview questions. It is relevant to see how individuals see the macro-level features of their experience, especially in an educational institution context. However, it is the micro-level features contextualized by the macro-level features that are sought after in the present study. The removal of this element was required to achieve more direct questioning related to the studies area of exploration.
Identity	Refers to how one defines their role. This might be as a parent, spouse and student for example. Also, how they see their role within that identity. This feature is addressed in the pre-interview questions that students' filled out, and expected to feature throughout students' responses within relevant narratives.
	This theme can emanate through social identity comparisons (between culture of origin and new host culture), including cultural identity, national identity and personal identity. Identity features are expected to arise in the interviews, and are useful in considering identity gaps, or ones individuality within certain roles – though are not elaborately concentrated on in the present research, and work as a periphery feature.

The subsequent interview layout carries additional features. The first is a structured set of ten pre-interview questions which provide context to each account. Micro categories such as gender (cf. Franck, 2002; Swanson et al. 2005), age (cf. Babbie, 2006), and previous experiences abroad (cf. Berry, 1997; Earley & Ang, 2003) are significant details, and serve as a foundation to further analysis.

Individuals' perceptions of other classmates' ICLS and acculturation attitudes provides an additional theme through the ICLS framework. Qualitative feedback draws introspective experiences that are not in consensus with external perceptions (Gillham, 2000; Dunning, Heath & Suls, 2004). Although participant perspectives of others' extract useful views of differences and similarities for instance, it can also be suggestive of intercultural dynamics and awareness, as well as personal characteristics (Gabb, 2006; Mann, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008).

This is important for several reasons besides methodological considerations. Firstly, it accesses a dynamical environment other than only clustered personal accounts, which is important to consider influences, environments, and applications to such accounts. Secondly, should one be unsuccessful in their acculturating attempts, yet feel positive in their intercultural experiences, some clarity can be shed.

## 2.5. Analytical Framework

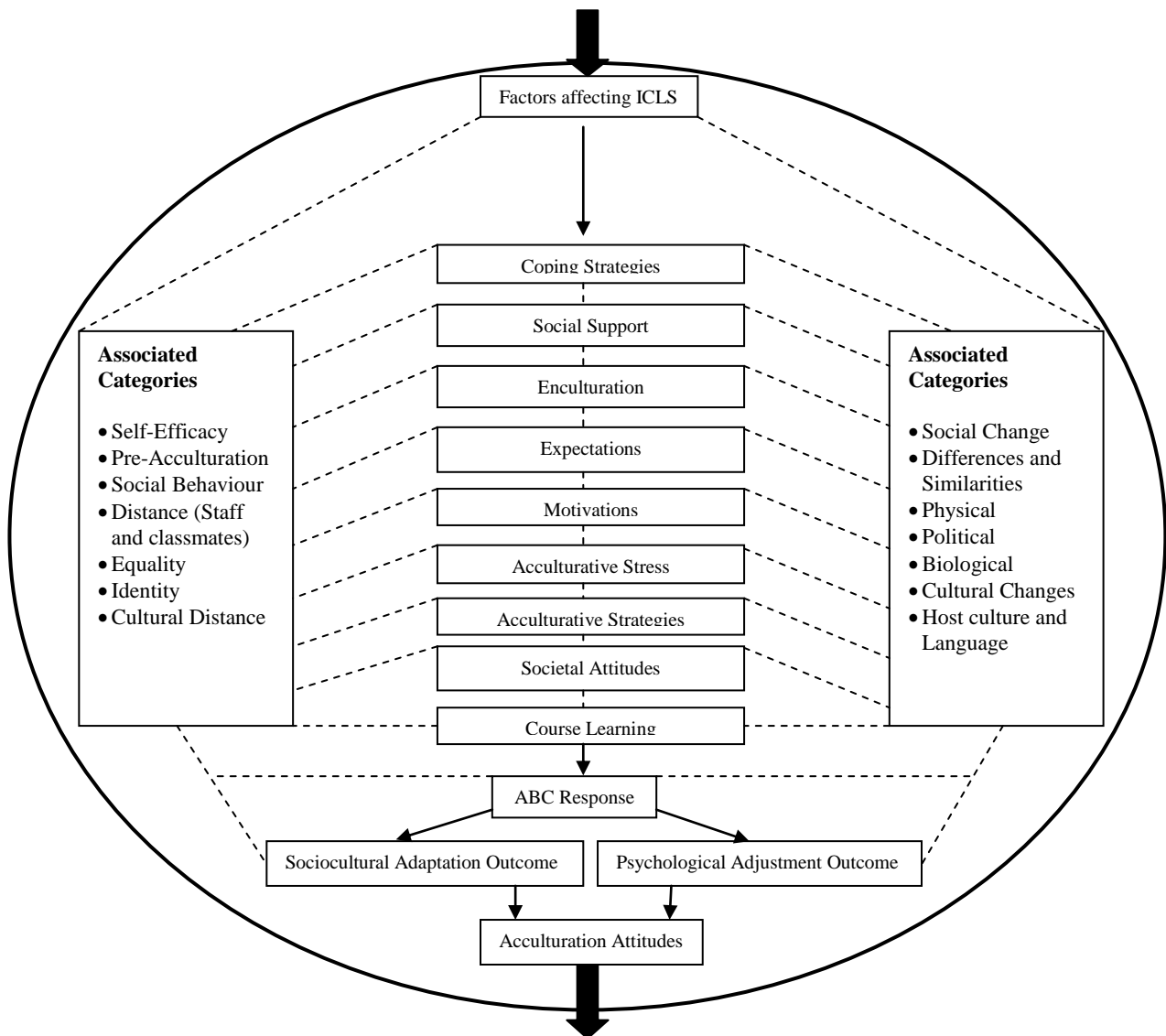
An analytical framework is completed applying the ABC theoretical model to direct the related themes. The amalgamated broadened themes incorporative of attached categories interact directly within a stress and coping, culture learning, and social identification framework. Each theme and its divisions relate to factors affecting ones ICLS as well as how ones ICLS influence affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses guiding sociocultural adaptation and psychological responses in cross-cultural transition, thus acculturation attitudes.

The framework can be illustrated by simplifying figure 4 into a contained ABC framework, outlining the relationships depicted by a circle. Themes interact with one another as well as affecting the ABC elements, sociocultural adaptation, and psychological adjustment. As with Zhou et al (2008) acculturation process (see fig.2), the framework is fully interactive, rather than sequenced or reactive, displayed with connective lines between interactions. In continuation of Zhou et al (2008) structure, the themes and methodology is inclusive of characteristics of the individual and the situation, rather than only the individual, increasing the educational focus, but also the situational nature of experience per se (Molinsky, 2010).

The selected themes explained in table 4 interlink with attached categories, although interaction is free and inclusive within the data analysis. For example, although self-efficacy might directly correlate with coping strategies, social support and other associated themes, it is an important element in its own right. Despite their assembly within the Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework, confidence and self-efficacy theories for example may account for one leaving their society of origin with high or low self-esteem, therefore potentially disguising self-efficacy's relation to themes such as coping strategies in the context of ICLS (Heine & Lehman, 2004).

Finally, the analytical framework includes arrows at either end of the cycle as in figure 4 to display the interconnected, and circuitry process of ABC factors. The continuous cycle develops constantly through interacting or independent stimulus, thus from ones acculturation attitudes formulated through this process, ICLS is likely to be affected (cf. Berry 1988, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba 1999; Fischer, 2007; Zhou et al. 2008).

**Figure 5** ICLS analytical framework



Source: ICLS Analytical framework adopting Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework and incorporating concepts from Berry (1997), Ward and Rana-Deuba, and Mann (2008).

### **3. Methodological Features**

The methodological features chapter addresses recommendations to outline the relevant contextual features, interview structure, analysis methods, and validity and reliability issues in consideration of discussed theoretical elements, as well as attending to notable methodological cautions and phenomenological conceptions.

#### **Empirical Base**

The thesis explores the views of two international sample groups from two Finnish university cohorts studying on scholarship funded master degrees. Responses are assessed applying an initial phenomenological reduction method (Hycner, 1985), pertaining to the selection of observably significant individual experiences unexplained by theoretical objectivities.

How acculturation attitudes are affected by ICLS first requires understanding into how ICLS is formed (SQ1) and what this experience is to the individual (SQ2). This forms the base of the studies exploratory analysis. Specifically, social integration has been identified as a significant factor in learning and settlement transition, and therefore places impetus on social communicational dynamics. The methodology integrates SQ3 (*How have intercultural course learning interactions been experienced?*) into open-ended questioning considerate to the diverse intercultural possibilities, support networks, and other such factors. The sociocultural adaptations and psychological adjustments that react to transformative experiences may moderate acculturative attitudes in various ways such as states of confidence, motivation and so on. How Finnish culture is interpreted through course learning experiences (SQ4) is of specific relevance here, rounding off the empirical base by exploring cultural and societal attitudes in relation to acculturative attitudes contributed by ICLS factors.

#### **3.1. Phenomenological Analysis**

Although the subjectivity of the phenomenological approach can be criticised, it is the reductive subjectivity of personal reflective accounts which is deemed of value, since it illustrates individualised worldviews and contributes towards greater objectivity through the means of

comprehensive findings which can supplement accurate and reliable representation of the phenomenon (Hycner, 1985). Additionally, since participants come from different cultures, exhibit different response styles (Shimanoff, 1980; Salkind, 2009), and other such diversities, other methodological instruments such as a latent content analysis, risk assembling data homogeneously and at a surface level compared to deep reductive analysis that is not illusive to important differences between individual student contexts, cohort contexts, and situational issues for example.

Thematically constructed moderators from the ICLS framework provide broadened themes for which contexts can be emphasised throughout. However, interpretation of context and experience is limited by several aspects accruing from the controlled samples. Language for example requires participants to use the English language to articulate their experiences, whilst it is also conveyed uniquely to a single researcher of a different nationality, culture, and language background to that of the interviewee (Hycner, 1985; Hofstede, 2007).

Open semi-structured questioning is correspondingly designed to allow interviewees degrees of freedom in their answers so as not to eliminate the possibility of individually important meanings and contexts attributable to that individual. It is equally important for the interviewer to incorporate repetition and clarification unobtrusively in order to attend to communicative translation through consistent answering and clear descriptions (Babbie, 2006).

Amalgamated themes from the ICLS framework structure the interviewing. Each case is then analysed applying the ABC theoretical concept, extracting meaningful passages in relation to the research question (Zhou et al. 2008). Affective, behavioural, and cognitive processes permeate throughout ones overall mental processing, yet provide an important tool in understanding sociocultural and psychological processing within the multicultural environment.

Hycner (1985) does however caution that due to the nature of phenomenological analysis, researchers vary in their research structure and interpretation of data, however, he notes differences should not be fully indistinguishable or non-replicable. Each theme in the present study is reviewed several times to avoid clustering similar cases possessing perceivably different intended meanings, and contextually depicted within the report. This process merited reviewing recordings, transcripts, and transcript extracts consistently during the analysis to ensure a more reliable research procedure.



### 3.2. Data Considerations

Close proximal interviewing (i.e. face-to-face) and distance interviewing methods were applied in the present study. Six face-to-face interviews overall were conducted in Jyväskylä (four) and Helsinki (two), and one online as a video call using the Skype™ software application. The video-call restricted the ability to analyse paralanguages clearly, as well as body language and other such communicational features. This additionally reduced the immediacy of having a present interpersonal discussion that seemingly proved beneficial in earlier interviews for allowing participants to progressively express themselves more openly during the course of the interview.

Gillham (2005) discusses the error of combining face-to-face interviewing with distance interviewing, concluding that when this is done, analysis can no longer discuss them in unison. Internet-based interviews are additionally shown to sometimes induce less responsibility from the interviewee (Thorne, 1999 cited in Lantolf, 2000) who may display more freedom due to a protective distance, leading to behavioural shifts.

However, these examples have their own contexts and psychologies, and although may inhibit, have the capacity to also enrich data. In the prior example, a potential behavioural shift does not necessarily represent a more or less credible or honest representation of a ‘truth’, thus, no stance on a hypothetical value can be asserted scaling positive or negative effects without knowing what the interviewees responses would have shown using different methods of data collection. Furthermore, each account is analysed reductively and exclusively, not strictly compared nor comparable to other cases in the study.

One feature risking bias was observable from the distance interviewee, whereby they spoke in first-person plural frequently, plus suggested sought appraisal on completion of the interview (cf. Shimanoff, 1980). Such continuous use of first person pronouns compromise the intrinsic nature of response, and might fall into conformity categories (e.g. pluralistic ignorance), or labelling and social identity categories (DiMaggio, 1997; Babbie, 2006), whereby individuals fulfil a role of accordance with what they feel is expected of them, or is regarded highly.

Therefore, in sum, data should only be presented as an accurate representation of the interview per se, not as a ‘reality’ in itself (Hycner, 1985; Schostak, 2006).

Babbie (2006) and Gillham (2006) assert the notion that what one says typically differs to the behaviour they exhibit, a component relevant to most social science research. Further issues

such as boredom, background of the respondent, feeling towards interviewer, dishonesty for any reason and discomfort, may also all contribute in influencing the data collected (Babbie, 2006; Salkind, 2009).

Audio recordings and anonymization in the present study for example did result in several participants displaying discomfort concerning the confidentiality of their responses and the distribution of the audio recordings. Similarly, *socially acceptable* responses (Salkind, 2009) were interpreted in several responses where interviewees showed signs of answering ‘correctly’. Statement contradictions were also sometimes observable. For example:

*I don't really feel that ostracised or different to anybody, in fact, it can sometimes be a drive or a motivation by "okay, as much as they see me differently (...) if this is how you perceive as someone from my part of the world (...) then so be it.*

(EM03: 276)

*Is that enough (laughs) because it will me more like complaining otherwise.*

(EM07: 214)

These comments provide explicit examples of contradicting speech (EM03: 276) and conditioned responses to a perceived better style of answering (EM07:214). It is however the case that all communicative processes contain countless potentially meaningful passages which incorporate brief cognitive contemplations prior to choice articulation of thought, which might include behaviours such as hesitation, pausing, or repositioning of reflection for example (Shimanoff, 1980). Additionally, explicit examples of conscientious responses should be cautious of over-analysis, when it is possible, for example, that the respondent was merely reflecting on their answers, or acknowledging their own response style within the frame of a particular question.

Finally, Hofstede (2007) discusses other methodological issues relevant to the present study. Cross-cultural analysis is one aspect of attention where it is advised that results should not be generalised at any level. Regions for instance display different cultural traits to one another, and people are independent carriers of altered social characteristics –be it cultural or not (Camilleri, 1986). How one perceives one’s own culture, or another’s, represents ‘culture’ homogeneously, which ignores cultural diversity, and also the concept of culturality (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006; Virkama, 2010).

For instance, almost half of the overall sample is of an Asian origin, and although secondary literature is supportive in offering theory towards experiential realities and how this might influence the phenomenon, it cannot meet the context of the individuals or their contexts. Any Asian

generalisation would thus be significantly unfounded and lacking vital context if a theory were to account of an objective reality per se (Hofstede, 2007).

### 3.3. Ethical Considerations

One ethical issue from the thesis's interview asks interviewees about their perceptions of classmates' experiences. Salkind (2009) identifies this as a risk to participants' feedback due to feelings of discomfort deriving from perceived harm some questions may induce, or the intrusion against one's moral values or beliefs.

Several students in the present study displayed concerns regarding confidentiality and anonymity within the context of questioning interviewees about other classmate's experiences.

*In the beginning, we were, (laughter). Whatever you're recording, who else is going to access this information?*

(EM01: 342)

*Yes. At least two of them. But I cannot talk for them. I can only talk for me.*

(EM06: 269)

Prior to interviews, participants were electronically sent two forms to fill out, one comprising of an overview of the study, the interview procedure, ethical precautions concerning confidentiality, anonymity, transcript availability, and freedom on participation within the interview process. These consent forms were sent out several weeks before interviews commenced, and addressed such matters in writing for each of the seven participants to read through, query, and sign at any time prior to the interview.

The issue of discomfort in speaking about other classmates is an aspect assigned to individual attitudes, which could not beforehand be accurately predicted for any individual of any culture, background, or personality. Prior consideration of these issues ensured interview questions were worded to explore students' unique perceptions indirectly or any reference in order to reduce uncomfortable questioning, although as noted, this was not always completely successful. This strategy was incidentally not so necessary in the pilot studies, where more direct approaches were welcomed in most cases. This may have been for any number of reasons such as pilot interviewees

knowing the interviewer, volunteering with disguised agendas, or aiming to meet the perceived expectations of the interview (Babbie, 2006).

Further ethical precautions were taken to ensure quiet and private settings were provided for interviewing and that contact details were supplied to all participants. Additionally, relevant faculty from the chosen populations were initially contacted and informed concerning the research in regards to obtaining permission to access student contact details. Finally, students were informed prior to interviewing, and asked on the day for permission to tape-record the interview for transcription purposes in line with ethical considerations.

### 3.4. Sample Factors

Numerous confounding elements alter the dimension of any study and any population. To declare clear sample factors in view of their importance to the case study is to add present context to the experiential *case* (Gillham, 2000).

#### Course Type

Different behavioural classifications often typologise the modern learner, even more so those from different cultures (cf. Hall & Hall, 1996; Earley & Ang, 2003; Biggs & Tang, 2007; Boekaerts & Hijzen, 2007). These categories attempt to understand the learner, and theorise the learner experience, however, the experiential nature of each account is imbedded in varying environmental factors, such as course type. Many studies are shown to be taken from applied-oriented curriculums such as business and language (Sowden, 2003; Currie, 2007), whilst other multicultural studies inevitably contrast in discipline, level, and other such compositions. These factors purport structural, pedagogical, and requisitioned differences, thus varying the learner's context and the learner's characteristics (Mann, 2008).

As well as *hard-applied* oriented samples lacking in cross-cultural literature, *soft-applied* course samples are selected for the thesis in response to participation rates from the population, allowing also consistency from supportive literature in understanding the experience.

A psychology course at the University of Jyväskylä provides a sample of four students from a population of seven while an Economics programme at the University of Helsinki provides the second sample of three students from a population of four. Incidentally, group sizes were small due to some students choosing to study in alternative institutions.

Didactical teaching approaches are more likely than hands-on application on both courses, and restrict both communities and their intercultural dynamics to this context, adding a conditioned scope for findings to be construed more reliably.

## **Maturity**

Master degree students bring with them past higher educational experiences, and all that these experiences entail. The age of the student is significant to one's behaviour (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985) for example, potentially impacting one's identity (Wadsworth et al. 2008) and adaptation and adjustment (Leung, 2001). However, Griffiths et al (2004) also notes that for some, returning to formal education after a break away from this lifestyle might further induce learning shock.

In contrast to some studies, including Robertson et al (2000), this study additionally attempts to minimize the probability of serious financial determinants in order to concentrate more on psychological and sociocultural entities absent of financial issues. Scholarship funded students from Erasmus Mundas programmes should in theory have lesser difficulties financially, and although economical issues are important factors effecting acculturation attitudes (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Robertson et al. 2000; Mann, 2008), they are correspondingly an omitted feature from the interview design.

## **Geography**

Finland provides an environment where bilingual and multilingual migrants are unlikely to be able to speak the language since it exists culturally only in Finland, although some areas also still speak the Swedish language.

The Finnish natural environment additionally provides unique features. The weather is notoriously cold and snow-filled for around half the year, whilst the summers can be extremely warm, although situated at the fringes of the higher education study calendar.

Finally, Finland holds a predominantly Christian population of over 5 ½ million people inclusive of Finnish and migrant believers (University of Helsinki, 2011).

## **Population Contexts**

Both the contexts of Jyväskylä and Helsinki bring various differences and limitations to the thesis. Lucid differences are numerous, such as geographical locations - which impact natural

factors such as weather and landscape - , history, languages (Swedish speaking population predominantly reside in Helsinki region), architecture, and business. These factors bind the regional environment and cultures, including what population compositions live and work in the region, what activities take place, immigration levels, and so on.

Population composition and sub-culture densities in each region may or may not be helpful to some international students' integration. Helsinki for example is a cosmopolitan city, and could be more welcoming to certain groups of migrants in part due to existing co-cultural communities. Other regional differences range from features such as public transport, to regional aesthetical qualities.

Berry (1988, 1997) and Zhou et al (2008) acculturation models incorporate these deep environmental structures, establishing that different structures will collide with one's enculturation and present psychological response to a new experience (Bonnes & Bonaiuto, 2002), affecting unique sociocultural and psychological attitudes. These collisions reassert personal moderators inflicting on one's experience of their environment, including gender differences (Franck, 2002). Such contextual features are included in a pre-interview form for the thesis, which is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

Size, rank, and faculty of the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Helsinki provide a further population context, influencing which students are likely to enrol, and subsequently campus environments (Zhao et al. 2005; Fischer 2007). University policy, campus layout, student housing, and other such factors add to an increasingly holistic contextual perspective, which is an invariably uncontrollable moderator overall in terms of real depth. Although the thesis's focuses leads from ICLS, these factors found within the social, political, economical, and cultural themes, do alter the experiential context once more.

The pull-factor of the university in this example helps contextualise each cohort (Teichler, 2004) alongside other factors such as incentives, interests, and competencies. Each composition of students ultimately differs for multiple reasons, making the phenomenological analysis well suited for such research.

## **Host Contact**

The nationality of faculty, leisure and community groups, and living arrangements each bring different intercultural capacities between migrant and host natives. Both sample groups declared ample possibilities and support to interact with Finnish students during their stay in

Finland. Interviewees from the University of Jyväskylä group studied with three Finnish students on their programme and were also taught basic culture studies. The University of Helsinki interviewees each required mandatory language classes to support their overall transition and experience.

Attitudes formed in part from these interactions provides useful insight to how one evaluates their ICLS in relation to both having contact with Finnish natives, how important this is deemed (rather than potentially having no contact and making perceptions based on this), and how this might represent “Finnish” to each interviewee.

### **3.5. Interview Construction**

In order to provide a more representative and solid interview and contextual basis, several stages were systematically organised.

#### **Pre-Pilot Initiative**

Two initiatives were constructed to build a suitable interview plan incorporating core themes from the selected literatures (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Mann, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008).

The first initiative was in the form of a question sent via e-mail to a cohort of second year international scholarship funded Erasmus Mundus students. For convenience, the author was a member of this cohort. The statement read:

*A short story about an Erasmus Mundus in Higher Education in-class programme experience you had, which impacted you in some way and influenced how you thought or behaved outside of class. (...) So, how an in-class experience influenced your behaviour out of class.*

The question was conducted to superficially identify common themes addressed by students, and difficulties with the question itself. Four students replied to the question out of thirteen students contacted.

Themes raised from responses addressed the importance of practising the English language, interaction apprehension in class from fear of professors and other classmates, and also culture shock. Some responses spoke of liberating experiences which led to perceived personal independence, academic and cultural competence, plus important friendships.

Since the question was direct and general, many themes were naturally excluded. It was the objective foremost to check these themes alongside the ICLS framework and other supporting literature in relation to the research question. Furthermore, it provided an illustration of dominant issues that may merit consideration within the ICLS framework and interview should they exist outside of it.

### **Pilot Interview**

The second phase of the interview construction was done through pilot interviews (Gillham, 2000; Gillham, 2005; Babbie, 2006). Four students of the same cohort as the first initiative participated. The cohort held the same factor requirements as required for the interviews on students from Jyväskylä and Helsinki (i.e. soft-applied scholarship funded Erasmus Mundas programme, multicultural group together for at least one semester, and low to nil count of Finnish students on programme) making them ideal for planning purposes. One volunteer participant had already replied to the e-mail question, resulting in a total of seven separate responses to the pre-interview planning initiatives.

The pilot phase helped reduce the number of themes extracted from the core literatures, whilst ensuring more direct and useful questioning strategies. Each account provided insightful information relating to one's overall intercultural experience, and additionally provided interesting information deviant to some directed themes. One case for example mentioned how weak internet connection had caused significant distress during their stay in Finland since communication played an important part in their life in being able to stay in touch with friends and relatives, and adapting to the course requirements, discourse, and remaining up-to-date on academic issues.

Another case expressed future planning, and consequently save their scholarship money in order to fund VISAs, accommodation, post master course costs, and other prospective costs. This also meant that the student would not focus on social interactions in class, since this may detract from such plans. These features were not explicit in secondary literature and somewhat surprising.

Common themes identified from the pilot interviews included becoming more Westernised, learning about ones-self, living in student premises with other international students, and class competitiveness. These accounts aided editing the interview structure in alignment with core literature categories and Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework. For example, some questions were initially too broad, while others were too narrow. By opening up some questions allowed more



individuality and reflection from interviewees, whilst narrowing down some of the more general questions helped reduce the ambiguity and digression of responses.

Lastly, theoretical consideration and alignment was also enriched in regards to understanding the students experience in relation to the research question.

### **Supporting Features**

A structured set of ten pre-interview questions were issued in order to add context before interviewing and case analysis. These questioned ones age, nationality, ethnicity, language proficiencies, religion, marital status, children, living alone or with others during course programme, period of time spent in Finland and region of university, higher educational background, and previous (before arriving in Finland) significant (more than 1 month for education, business, living etc) experiences abroad.

Within the interview itself, each question is carefully designed applying Zhou et al (2008) ABC response concepts in order to correspond case analysis according to affective (stress and coping), behavioural (culture learning) and cognitive (social identification) aspects of one's experiences and their sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment (ibid).

### **Student Samples**

Fifteen Erasmus Mundus courses were identified in Finland, meeting the initial criteria for scholarship funded master level international students who had spent at least one semester together on a course with minimal to nil Finnish students.

Course coordinators were contacted initially enquiring about the groups and the possibility to invite students for an interview. Of the coordinators that replied, four courses met these specifications. One was group was removed due to a low quantity population, and a further course was removed from the study due to insufficient numbers of volunteer interviewees. Two courses were finally selected, increasing the number of participants and also allowing for contextual differences aforementioned. By featuring two distinct courses in separate regions with unique cohort mixtures, a fairer representation of multicultural case studies might be acquired.

The group of four students from the University of Jyväskylä contained three male students originating from Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, and one female originating from South America. Students were aged between 25 years old and 37 years old, and had been in Finland for between 5 and 7 months. Students all lived alone in Finland, and were all bilingual or multilingual.

The sample included one parent, and one student who had not spent more than one month living, studying, or working abroad before. The students shared 3 different religions (thus values) between them, and degrees from different disciplinary fields.

The group of three students from the University of Helsinki contained two male students originating from North America, one in the Anglo region, and one in the Latin region. One female student also participated via a video call, and originated from East Asia. Students were aged between 24 years old and 26 years old, and had been in Finland between 6 months and 1 year. One student lived with a partner, and one student was monolingual while the other two students were multilingual. Students had all spent time living, working, or studying abroad before for more than one month. The students did not all disclose their religious beliefs, and held different degrees including one whom held a master degree.

The overall composition is in close balance of international students in proportion to Finnish national figures. Although the phenomenological case study is individual rather than group oriented, the intercultural dimension to the framework adds relevance to the composition of the cohorts, and coheres to theoretical insight into student and group experiences (cf. CIMO a, 2011).

### **3.6. Reliability and Validity**

The validity of the phenomenological analysis is reliant on several aspects including the appropriate and replicable measures of the chosen constructs, and also a degree of internal validity consideration.

While the phenomenological analysis has the potential to tap into the unknown, the framework is formulated through the synthesis of several acculturation frameworks, in particular Zhou et al (2008) who studied the sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment of Asian students into British, and multicultural classes.

The synthesised and reconfigured ICLS framework refines and adjusts Zhou et al (2008) acculturation process model in order to analyse ICLS as an observable moderator leading to cross-cultural transition. This is done without interference to moderators, analytical rationale, or dimensions such as longitudinal, multi-contaminants, and probabilistic characteristics. Whilst the model is mildly moderated appropriately to coordinate the ICLS feature, it possesses its original

functionality, although adapted into a qualitative project, thus immediately necessitating broken down condensed themes.

As suggested by Hycner (1985), the study's findings extracted through interpretations of each case, is validated through sending a summarised scope to all interviewees in order to receive feedback concerning their satisfaction with the author's overall analysis.

The contextual containments of the framework supports that replicable findings should vary depending on aspects such as country of settlement, participant pool, institution, and so on (Berry, 1997), shedding light on the phenomenon from multiple environments. However, cases using the phenomenological approach are to be interpreted individually, and although an assembly of experiential themes can be observed and analysed, they all occur within one's personal unique contexts. These hard-to-reach areas of deep analysis with a small sample can both focus and draw out positive data, assisting these contexts, and accordingly, supports validity (Hycner, 1985).

## 4. Empirical Analysis

The themes and constructs derived from the ICLS analytical framework are here analysed in conjunction with supportive literature in accordance with each accounts interpretation and meaning. A compiled summary concludes the chapter leading to the papers findings.

### 4.1. Data Analysis

The selected focal themes and the attached categories within each themes scope function within the ABC framework, pertaining to stress and coping, culture learning, and social identity theories. The reconfigured ICLS model (see fig. 4) presents group level and individual level moderating factors from within these theories presented by Zhou et al (2008), which effect ones cross-cultural transition through affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses leading to sociocultural adaptations and psychological adjustments, potentially leading to a poor physical and mental state of well-being (ibid). The amalgamated themes adjust to the ICLS specification, and are simplified through the alignment and amalgamation process to create manageable themes and their associated factors related to the models moderators.

The selected themes are individually analysed within the Zhou et al (2008) ABC framework, and are as follows:

- Expectations [Ex]
- Motivations [M]
- Enculturation [En]
- Social support [SS]
- Societal attitudes [At]
- Acculturation strategies [CL]
- Acculturative stress [CS]
- Coping strategies [C]
- Course Learning [L]

Some associated themes not included in this list but in appendix A for example, such as *cultural distance*, are all encompassing themes, not separate or partially aligned themes, so feature throughout questioning and analysis naturally.

Limited excerpts can lose sight of the overall experience a student experiences and describes (Mann, 2008). In account of this, each participant was provided with the summarised findings in order to acknowledge discrepancies and representational issues. Of the seven participants, four replied, each satisfied with the summary bar one discrepancy.

The summary consisted of eight points: generated situational expectations; early character, regional, and organisational judgements; minimal motivation to culture-learn; weak social classroom relationships; important friendships formed with other international students not on their course; and course learning experiences leading to associations with Finnish culture impacting satisfaction of country, region and the attending educational institution.

One interviewee disagreed that situational events led to expectations of assisted resolution from university personnel, instead noting this to be occasional, and expectations were to also assist independent resolution, in which the author concurs.

## **Expectations and Motivations**

Migration is often understood from the initial clauses of motivation, and expectations (Zhou et al. 2008). In accordance, individuals often behave correspondingly to these expectations (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992, cited in Zhou et al. 2008; Molinsky, 2010).

Distress is evoked when expectations are not met or understood by others (Zhou et al. 2008), potentially impacting class relationships, interaction, and personal development (Le Roux, 2001; Mann, 2005; Claremont, 2008; Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008; Zhou & Todman, 2008). Expectations thus play an important role in ICLS and in forming acculturation attitudes, explaining where specific outlooks derive. Expectations enforce comparisons - what is deemed good and bad and how satisfied we ultimately feel as a result of an experience.

### *University Expectations.*

*I would say that the support that has been given to us as international students is superb (...). In fact they picked us from wherever we arrived at the airports, the train stations, and they give us the accommodation. Some of were lucky and got a survival kit with some things you could start with; cups and folks and so on. I would say it was very beneficial.*

(EM01: 4)

*This University is providing us all (emphasis) the basic necessities*

(EM04: 20)

*Except for finding housing (...) anything else I kind of had to figure out on my own.*

(EM05:22)

*I think the support is enough, but not so satisfactory, because I discuss with my friends that some of the support is like, not very helpful, like, sometimes it's unorganised and a little bit chaos compared with the support provided by the (London higher education institution).*

(EM07:7)

Initial migrant entry phases are assumed to take place under heightened degrees of distress (Leung, 2001; Molinsky, 2010). Support expectations prepare students for their university and regional induction, and correspond to their diversely perceived needs, although it is common that unmet expectations might be too great, unrealistic, or situational (Molinsky, 2010).

For some students in the above accounts, the lack of support time and information provided for university and regional induction were examples cited by students in regards to failed expectations of support facilitation. Other students did however show satisfaction and gratitude in regards to their overall induction. One such case was from an African participant. Some evidence suggests that African-born individuals show more conscientiousness, possibly accumulated from their specific background settings (McCrae & Terracciano, 2005), which offers in part, some speculative cultural rationale.

Should expectations be met, satisfaction increases, leading to improved confidence and performance (Eich & Forgas, 2003; Bowler et al, 2007). This is precisely one pivotal component for which mobility initiatives strive for; to be the benefactor of another's 'brain drain' (Hawkins, 2010), installing confidence, sustainable import, and other such enhancing features.

*Faculty Support.*

*when you go back to Africa you find that the lecturer is teaching around 100 students! So he doesn't have enough time for each of them, but when you come here we are few, so we get more support from our lecturers, our professors, in class, through e-mails, and even you can make an appointment, you sit down with the professor.*

(EM01: 41)

*I would say maybe sometimes they are very busy. I think the general staff for our faculty is smaller compared to the...(…) ...my problem is if I have a problem on Monday, and you tell me you can see me on Thursday*

(EM01: 50)

*Without her I would have been completely lost.*

(EM05: 101)

*“can I go see you that time, that day?” and they say “whoa, I have like free space in like, two weeks from now” (...) it is not really good because then you say “what’s the point, in two weeks from now I will forget what I want to ask*

(EM06: 57)

*always like discouraging you, and couldn’t provide you so much help*

(EM07: 23)

ICLS is partially understood through the distance between faculty and students (Mann, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008). ABC factors aid contextualisation of emanation and severity of stress from these encounters in relation to cross-cultural transition (Berry, 1988; Zhou et al. 2008). Dependency exerted on faculty for example is thought to be a result of communicational barriers and course learning insecurities emerging further via weak student relationships (Gabb, 2006). Despite this, opposite proximity is expected, with students deemed unlikely to share their problems with teaching staff (Zhou & Todman, 2008), potentially impacting ICLS (McCoy, 2002) and other framework moderators impacting ABC shifts.

Some of the above accounts convey disharmony in student attitudes. Extracts EM01: 50 and EM06: 57 for instance imply moments where immediate support is perceivably needed and expected, yet is not provided. Interviewee EM06 for example references negative faculty experiences frequently throughout his interview, implying a negative course learning experience, and ultimately an unsatisfactory experience of Finland and the respective university. What one expects in a ‘good teacher’ then, according to their individual definition, may define ones interaction and learning quality via elements including respect (Vaccarino, 2009), and may also instigate teaching barriers for faculty (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

**Enculturation.** *Attitudes and experiences of personal change.*

*It did affect my confidence. It is like saying that I thought I knew something, but I don't know anything (...) But as time goes on and you start learning the system, how things are done, your confidence is restored back. But at the beginning! (laughter) you lose your confidence*

(EM01: 207)

*They are still not receptive to anyone who looks different or is different, (...) if you're not receptive, then why should I bother?*

(EM03: 294)

*she told me "now, you can also like make us get a bit adapted to you and it's not only you that is changing" and this was important to me, and I felt better because I could be more myself*

(EM02: 192)

*after a while it is not very good for my life and my studies, so I change a little bit. I have become more involved in the seminar and the discussion. I tried to voice my opinion*

(EM07: 253)

Migrant enculturation – the trade-off or shift of learnt cultural skills – in part requires a conscious willing to reconstruct mental schemas. Pre-aculturative attitudes and skills develop through their society of origin culture, and equally coordinate ones affective, behavioural, and cognitive interaction in the society of settlement including ones trade-off of cultural skill sets.

In direct relation to migrant enculturation is sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment. Each conscious and unconscious change through inheriting host cultural traits brings a transformative experience to the migrant (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Leung, 2001; Ward et al. 2004; Narvaez & Hill, 2010). International students' notice these changes over, or after a prolonged period of time after incurring difficulties early on. Brown and Holloway (2008) for example contest U-curve (cf. Molinsky, 2010) explanations whereby excitement precedes culture shock prior to enlightenment or disengagement. Distress and anxiety are, it is argued, most likely to overwhelm the migrant at first until enculturation.

Additionally, intercultural identification changes may depend on intercultural competencies (Earley & Ang, 2003), and how one thinks about themselves and others. Social, political, and historical issues for example often mar intercultural interaction (Abdallah-Pretcielle, 2006; Joseph, 2008). An ascending mount of contextual features resultantly precedes misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication, conflict and other such matters



(Earley & Ang, 2003; Weaver, 2006), leading to judgements void of cultural awareness and empathy to arise, greatly effecting intercultural dynamics in the form of erroneous judgements and communicational anxiety (Althen,1996; Hall & Hall, 1996; Weaver, 1996; Gabb, 2006; Claremont, 2008; Pieterse et al. 2010).

It is rightly contested that many of these ‘cues’ are misinformed labels that ignore individuality in favour of universality. In opposition to these generalisations, Abdallah-Pretcielle (2006) enforces the term ‘culturality’ for a non-essentialist view of culture, whereby culture is constantly dissected, carried and released by individuals, constantly fusing, transforming and at the same time globalising.

Intercultural communication in the classroom and wider society is most successful with developed empathy and openness largely absent of confident abidance to cultural judgements (Abdallah-Pretcielle, 2006). Yet, negative intercultural interaction are likely to have mutual adverse social effects (Brown & Holloway, 2008), whereas negative judgements may operate in the same way, both with, and without sufficient interaction.

Accounts from EM01 and EM07 convey behavioural breakthroughs whereby realisation of required change occurs in order for them to benefit academically, mentally, and socially. Other participants however displayed a clear lack of willingness to approach or accept differences, thus a resistance to change and ultimately feeling detached from dominant Finnish culture.

### **Social Support**

*when you come to class, the conversations are not all that long; they are short. “how was your weekend?” “how was your coursework?” you stop at that, things concerning studies. You don’t go into details of families, how you feel, how is your mum.*

(EM01: 116)

*“wow I didn’t know you were feeling so homesick” when I talked to them, “oh, so bad, oh we should do something”, so we tried to do some things together cos all of them, no, three of them are Finnish, the rest is all from other countries, so we’re all in the same boat*

(EM02: 82)

*especially in the non-English speaking country, when you have difficulties, then your friends are always there, supporting for you, giving you a hand in your first year here (...)**we have more problems than the other student*

(EM07: 86)

*you find that people are ganging up, smaller groups are being formed*

(EM01: 350)

*she will disseminate, which I didn't see in the rest, where is still this things like "oh no, this information I can will only disseminate to whom I am close with"*

(EM03: 197)

*I also have friends who are Finnish, so if I have any problems, I can always have them help me with it*

(EM05: 189)

Social support, a characteristic of the situation, is a feature of psychological adjustment (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou et al. 2008) which delivers with it confidence, feeling of respect, and openness to collaborate and engage (Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Mann, 2008). Intercultural communication is essential for building new support links (Ward et al. 2004), as well as fostering successful learning and learning satisfaction (Mann, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008).

In turn, preferred social support networks may also derive from, and influence ones cross-cultural transition application. Cultural distance through co-culture trust is a common feature of this (Berry, 1997; Harton & Bourgeois, 2004; Zhou & Todman, 2008; Bourke, 2010; Simmons et al. 2010; Garis, 2012). Should an international students' country of origin provide cultural similarities to that of the host's culture, adaptation is expected to be more successful than those from more distinct cultural backgrounds (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Leung, 2001; Earley & Ang, 2003; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Zhou et al. 2008). Subsequently, transition is less stressful, leading to improved self-efficacy and well-being (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Regardless of this, Zhou & Todman (2008) show those co-cultural networks can also inhibit the cultural learning process and settlement into the dominant host culture (cf. Ali, 2008), asserting caution to this strategy.

One participant commented "it's like everyone is for himself and everyone is for herself" (EM01: 131), suggesting distance to individualistic cultural features, as well as detailing within the interview attachment to similar cultures and gratitude towards faculty support.

Adjusted and adapted skill deficits align from such accounts in relation to the framework, however, the steady transformative enculturation is reinforced, as well as highlighting significant cultural factors bound in literature such as individualistic/collectivist

values (Leung, 2001; Boekaerts & Hijzen, 2007) which also transfers onto *characteristics of the person* aspects such as personality (Ward et al. 2004; Hofstede, 2007), each contributing to ICLS and formulated acculturation attitudes.

Interactional skills vary across individuals and cultures (Claremont, 2008) with individuals perceiving cultural differences differently according to their intrinsic logic. International students mainly focus on *differences*, however synergies can be built when *similarities* are identified, such as being “in the same boat” (EM02: 82). Social support can then be more readily established once commonalities and communicational satisfaction are experienced (Wadsworth et al. 2008).

The *social support* extracts provides some variation of how others are recognised as similar or different, and what impact these superficial assessments have on the perceiver’s attitude. EM03 (line, 197) remarked on “...the rest”, a group of others who performed perceivably exclusive social behaviours discouraging social interaction and bonding. For others, friendships with Finnish natives assisted their difficulties in setting up banking (EM05: 189), whereas others relied on classmates during times of distress (EM02: 82), something common among all interviewees.

### **Acculturative Stress**

Berry (1997) defines acculturative stress as the alternative to culture shock; more suitable in that it does not imply necessary cultural infliction nor does it necessitate that a negative shock has occurred. A further reason coherent to Zhou et al (2008) inclusion of *stress*, *stress deficits*, and *stress and coping*, is that of the intercultural nature of acculturative experiences and their psychological affects during transitional processes. These intercultural experiences provide telling depictions of the role class relationships play.

*We have always had those stereotypes that say that a black man is not supposed to have equal rights to study, the black man is not supposed to have equal rights to be at the university. So when the society is closed, you remember those sayings*

(EM01: 170)

*during Christmas, I spent the whole week without speaking to anyone. My classmates, most of them have travelled back to their homes, and in my neighbourhood everyone was indoors, and even the people you meet you ..., sometimes you say hi, and the person is surprised "who is this guy saying hi to me?". So the system is kind of (pause) it's like everyone is for himself and everyone is for herself. They don't mind about (pause, and stops sentence). So that brings that element of missing home. Because when you compare some situations to your home you sometimes say "I wish I was home".*

(EM01: 128)

*Sometimes you just say "oh, it's just a nice country or just quiet or just beautiful" but when you speak to these people, your friends, family, people who share the same, or what to know "hey, what's happening over there?" you start to reiterate what is happening or your experience, and at the same time I think it elevates some of what you think is negativity*

(EM03:236)

*I think this is because the Finnish culture. They like to be really formal and all this sort of stuff. Sometimes you don't feel like asking something because you might perhaps bother the person*

(EM06: 82)

*I think it somehow affects your performance in the University, you know, like the culture here in the city.*

(EM06: 95)

## **Acculturation Strategies**

*I came one month before my master began to do this Finnish course in the summer so I could settle in the city and learn some Finnish and it was really good because when my classes began I was already settled in the city so I could focus on my classes (...) but then the classes began and then it was like more cloudy and then I started, and maybe after two weeks I was kind of really homesick*

(EM02: 48)

*my cousins brother, he is also living in Helsinki, and when I came here newly, and he told me many many things*

(EM04: 126)

*luckily we have one class, the interaction, cultural interaction skills, and it created a very good impact on all of us*

(EM04: 155)

*everyone is speaking English, so if I am planning to live here longer, then maybe I am needing to have good contact with Finnish (...) but if I don't want, I don't have (emphasis) to make so many contact with Finnish people*

(EM04: 234)

*I am speaking English in public, and they are constantly staring at me (...) it still makes me uncomfortable. With the younger people I definitely feel more belonging. (...) if I didn't have a basic understanding I would be completely lost*

(EM05: 197)

*Finnish give me a lot of confidence (...) By learning Finnish, you can learn the culture deeper. I love Finnish and it has opened my mind.*

(EM07: 173)

### **Coping Strategies**

*international students because their challenges are similar to mine, so whenever they see me they are also happy to see me, and when I see them I am also happy too*

(EM01: 217)

*technology internet, MSN, SKYPE, so I do regularly (...) that would be a balance for me to keep me going*

(EM03:217)

*I think it is not really easy to make, mix with the locals, but it is easy on the other hand to interact with all the foreigners*

(EM06: 105)

Social omission through perceiving one's self as an identified out-group member can lead to low levels of integration (Fischer, 2007), while perceived class and campus climates tend to influence what interaction is emitted thereafter through one's interpreted social identity (Chavous, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000 cited in Pieterse et al. 2010, p.256-258). This suggests that in some cases, acculturative strategies and coping strategies for individuals with a low sense of belonging may not always be socially oriented to deal with skill deficits (Fischer, 2007). Host cultural learning is thus stunted in some cases via mono-cultural ties, formal relationships and other such avenues of social engagement (Fischer, 2007; Bourke, 2010; Pieterse et al. 2010).

Participant EM06 (82) conveys a sociocultural adaptation issue for which the intercultural course learning experience plays an important role in their impression of the host

countries culture. Such apprehensions impede optimum communicational efficiency, and imply society of settlement inhibitors (Berry, 1997; Zhou et al. 2008). Thus, trust appears lost as new judgements are formed to presume cultural homogeneity to the host. Should one form relationships off-campus, or ‘in the same boat’, attitude formations tend to become more confirmative and wide-spreading (Fischer, 2007), whereas low social connections per se also leads to a poor campus experience, thus a higher probability of low ICLS (Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010).

Some participants however did comment on positive class relationships, whilst some remarked on having host culture and language courses, yet each case was not always satisfied with their intercultural course learning experience partly due to issues including course content, lack of supervision, and induction/orientation aspects. Opportunities for engagement with host students was also seen as restricted in some cases (cf. Fischer 2007; Claremont 2008), adding to feelings of isolation.

This demonstrates that in some cases, social support may not necessitate positive ICLS, and that culture-learning initiatives may not always develop beyond separated in-group *creative cultures*. For some cases, such as participant EM04, a displayed lack of motivation to culture-learn, despite identifying the profitability of such skill acquisition, are influenced in some part from negative impressions which potentially transmit to predict satisfaction levels in other coeval experiences.

It is also considered that some individuals may arrive in Finland already possessing low self-esteem, and therefore struggle not exclusively due to perceivable contexts (Heine & Lehman, 2004).

### **Societal Attitudes**

*the learning environment becomes very conducive to them. Because, for example, a Finnish person would prefer interacting with an American than an African*

(EM01: 398)

*everybody felt a bit difficult because he has a really (...) always thinks he is right (...) people that did say that could be difficult (...) I also talk to another friend and he is from Estonia, and he said “oh, I know some Finnish, old, like older people who are like this”*

*(I) think Finnish people who went to some exchange period they are a bit different, they are more social and more talkative (...) they don’t even look so much like Finnish*

(EM02: 157)

*Scandinavian countries, it's always been importantly known as efficient, forerunners in almost everything (...) you can say that very efficient, but not to the extent like super efficient (...) So when we come here and we experience if there's some discrepancy, we are more forgiving*

(EM03: 69)

*The content of the subject for me was also not fitting of what I was expecting, so that gives another setback to me (...) I just put it as maybe this is how the Finnish work*

(EM03: 95)

*here everybody speaks English language, but they're not willing to give work to English*

(EM04: 197)

Zhou et al (2008) and Ward and Rana-Deuba's (1999) origin and settlement societal transition moderators consist of societal attitudes formed from a pre-aculturative phase, affecting ones behavioural characteristics (Zhou et al. 2008), thus inflicting upon transitional skill deficits/acquisitions.

In one extract, a participant prescribes “(the) *Finnish*”, as some generalised entity, where for by situational experiences for many interviewees potentially become representative of culture per se. Erroneous judgements thus arise, forging cognitive short-cuts through the situational circumstances bound with contextual and limited information (Dunning et al. 2004).

Acculturative separation and segregation (Berry, 1997; Zhou et al. 2008) can include feelings of difference, perceived prejudice, and cultural distance from the migrant, making creative cultures, formal bonds, and co-culture social clusters for example more imminent (Berry, 1997). Despite this, intellectual, cultural, and personal challenges are typically found to lead to positive learning outcomes and long-term effects through one's overseas experiences (Furnham, 1997; Mann, 2008) irrespective of socially acculturative interaction (Finnish culture in this case) being minimal in each account, with focus predominantly on differences rather than similarities; something important for intercultural skill development (Vaccarino, 2009).

Felt segregation from the host, as well as rejected long-term gains of the Finnish language and ‘culture’, seems to facilitate separated tendencies in most cases. Settlement is correlated with academic achievement, prestige circuits, knowledge transfer, cultural tolerance, and individual well-being to name a few (cf. Berry 1988, 1997; Ward & Rana-

Deuba 1999; Zhou et al. 2008; The European Higher Education Area 1999; European Commission 2010), yet the interview data does not suggest such arrangements, an issue commonly addressed in other papers (cf. Le Roux, 2001; Hawkins, 2010; Simmons et al. 2010; Garleis, 2012).

While most participants display a lack of motivation to culture learn, how relative these attitudes are through ICLS is not clear in from this category alone. For some, personal and situational characteristics modify ones impressions of Finnish culture, whilst others attend mainly to group level features such as comparing cultural stereotypes with their experience. What is interesting is the interviewees accounts of their feelings as a migrant and also a fellow international student, and how their account brings these identities together.

**Course Learning: Others.**

*sometimes people are willing to tell, but sometimes people don't. People are not willing to tell. It is their own choice because they are independent citizens of independent country, so they can tell us or they can't. I don't think it is creating much difficulty in the class, really*

(EM04: 332)

*being a classmate we tend to share information and all that, you could see two different styles of writing, or information presented, of course one would be better than the other, but they obtain the same score (...) the two persons who was also comparing wasn't happy*

(EM03: 353)

*For me, as a person from Africa, I have appreciated the services and support and everything. But (...) people (...) from Europe, (...) America, (...) some of them are comparing the system here to back home.*

(EM01: 93)

*I don't think it's really had an affect where they can't cope because all of them have been very able to make it through whatever difficulties they've had, but I think it definitely affects stress levels, and kind of, their view of being here in Finland because it's disappointing they don't have the proper supervision they needed*

(EM05: 326)

Circumstantial components are vital in gaining understanding into behavioural entities. For example, extrinsic stimulus dictates different possibilities, whereas external perceptions can help understand an internal one (Dunning et al. 2004).



Interviewees from one institution displayed similarities in their reflections. Negative accounts of supervision problems, disorganised course structure, and course content were amongst these issues raised. Each case conveyed very low ICLS, with one case speaking predominantly in first person plural (*we*) suggesting conformed attitudes through close relationships, possibly biasing the sample (cf. Zhao et al. 2005).

Several cases did however exhibit high ICLS, asserting a sense of achievement from their new knowledge gains and working in a multicultural setting.

*I am really rejoicing and looking forward to the day that I graduate and take whatever content had been offered back to my country*

(EM01: 278)

*I think exchange of knowledge and knowing more about culture, it has always been more rewarding for me. And of course in turn it is increasing my knowledge as well.*

(EM04: 317)

Negative connotations towards classmates may relate in part to studies on ethnicity for example. Non-white students on largely white campuses tend to demonstrate high reactivity due to perceived prejudice, and have lower integration rates (Fischer, 2007; Bourke, 2010; Pieterse et al. 2010). However, contrary to acculturation theory regarding academic success, formal bonds developed in place of informal friendships can lead to higher grades, and thus potentially reasonable ICLS for some (Fischer, 2007).

Although most interviewees assumed some challenges to be mutual with classmates, cultural distance tended to literally depict less mutuality, abandoning relation to those experiencing sometimes similar personal challenges. Early and Ang (2003) label this cultural intelligence, whereby, like intercultural communication, social, emotional, and cultural empathies are required and developed. Whilst cultural skills develop over time, such outlooks may immediately psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation in relation to class relationships and acculturating.

#### **Course Learning.** *Classroom Intercultural Communication.*

*it was hard to argue when you're not understanding everything (...) we were closer and if I don't understand I can say "what?" and it's easier than in class like you keep saying "what did you say?" or something.*

(EM02: 387)

*but it was a course about international organisations and they were very much critical of (country of origin) and being (nationality) I kind of got offended, rather than say anything*

(EM05: 355)

*we learnt some group things and how to deal with different situations and how to give good feedbacks, and not being rude but saying what you need to say and all the group dynamics also (...) always talking about something, like a bit more intimate*

(EM02: 254)

*I might fear to ask the professor a question because if I ask a question what will 'A' say? 'A' might be saying "if that was a question, you don't understand, that is simple, you shouldn't ask" you see? But if I know what 'A' thinks, then it will even help me know which type of questions I should ask*

(EM01: 322)

*Getting to know if the professor wants us to write an assignment, what style are you using, are you using APA system or? Yeah. So it was a struggle. And my classmates, of course, I didn't know them so well, so I couldn't ask them, so it was like surviving on your own.*

(EM01: 198)

*It is like the English I am speaking is (laughter) not right, the right English, so it affects your confidence and brings you down*

(EM01: 379)

Intercultural contact congregates the typical student learning experience through the nature of social learning theorem. These interactions can also lead to support, understanding, and intellectual empowerment for example (cf. Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 2000; Mann, 2008) in any learning environment including one that is multicultural. These communicative encounters for some are the most important intercultural experiences they will face, and tests their intercultural skill deficits within the same frame as their overall transition to the host environment.

Communicational anxieties, confusion, and confidence diminishment according to Mann (2008) are typical learner difficulties that derive from numerous factors including failed expectations and communication failure. From fear, self-fulfilled prophecies can manifest (Babbie, 2006), inhibiting transformative progression. Learning styles are just one learning factor that may harvest some discomfort for some students, depending on their educational background. Gilbert (2000) found that Asian students studying overseas for example, often faced difficult transitions in order to adjust their learning style successfully before they regained their confidence and could achieve academic success. Educational origin thus places

students at vastly different entry levels, one element of learning shock (Giffiths et al. 2004; Mann, 2008).

It could be perceived that culture-learning may sometimes be superficially cultivated through stereotyping or misunderstandings, leading to psychological adjustments or sociocultural adaptations that are misrepresented, or indeed neglected due to such aver judgments. Some accounts convey perceived confinement to one's particular circumstances, whereas other individual accounts portray more openness to change and understanding, attributes widely considered crucial to successfully acculturate should one chose (Ward et al. 2004; Gottfredson et al. 2008; Deardorff, 2010), despite recognition that intercultural skills may develop long after the experience (Berry, 1997; Navaerz & Hill, 2010).

Interestingly, what was evident in the participant accounts was that communication was not mentioned as an active coping strategy when faced with challenging situations. This might help in understanding the link between ICLS and further behaviours, in this case being ones acculturation attitude.

#### **4.2. Summary of Analysis**

It appears that when situational problems arose for some international students, expectations of university support measures manifested, often leading to dissatisfaction. Conversely, each account took into consideration an expected 'shock' due to transitional unfamiliarity, though total independence was sometimes perceived as something quite negative in part from one's neglected needs.

This entry support was understandably detrimental to international students' first impressions. For some, this impression appeared to set the tone for their overall experience to date, although the paper notes caution to confabulated (psychological) accounts - discussed more in the limitations section.

Cultural labelling of one's self and others offered some interesting interpretations. Through attributing certain needs or norms to ones character, and providing cultural stereotypes to other groups, two participants appeared more presumptuous in receiving prejudice or external stereotyping. A separationist mode of behaviour thus typified their Scandinavian transitional interaction, although when interviewees were asked about their reasons for coming to Finland, course opportunities were cited each time and absent of

sociocultural benefits in all but one account [EM07]. This subsequently does not ensure an ICLS and acculturation attitude link, but more an ABC outcome derived from attitude per se. This could be representative of introversion or extroversion personality traits, although in this respect seclusion is more familiar and desirable for some personalities, so should not necessarily impact acculturation attitudes.

*Similarities* discussed were academically oriented for some interviewees, such as supervision agendas or coursework, which seemed to correspond with a negative impression of Finland, or general satisfaction with their experience as a whole. Since satisfaction is related to learning success (Guolla, 1999 cited in Swanson et al. 2005), this is an important factor for all agents involved. Also of interest is the bonds formed with external international students from the same institution but not from their own direct course. This raises questions for future research, but it is a curious feature since differences with Finnish culture per se, and other international students on the same course were pronounced in most cases, yet multicultural rapport elsewhere perceivably faced fewer complications for the individual.

Cultural intelligence, intercultural competencies, or mere social intelligence for some was elicited through internalised schemas, suggesting social (and/or cultural) cues may have lacked important aspects such as empathy. Where some cases described successful experiences, it was consequently assumed that others shared similar experiences and attitudes. Such examples however cannot solely be attributed to intercultural competence without understanding the individual's personality make-up first (Ward et al. 2004). It could also be interpreted that for those sharing negative experiences, conformed ABC elements and personal accounts may operate as a coping strategy (Zhao et al. 2005).

The ICUnet.AG's (2010) reports that international students typically integrate with more enthusiasm in the first year of joint Erasmus Mundas programmes before the students gradually dedicate most of their time to thesis work and other examinations, rather than time spent in cross-cultural transition. Yet, with learning shock considered to be more potent than culture shock (Gilbert, 2000), erroneous judgements upon entry may severely weaken important settlement phases for some students, thus impacting upon the rest of their overseas experience.

For some, hindering relationships with faculty may have led to the diminishment of trust and respect, leading to potential decline in performance level (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Once satisfaction levels are low, ones social lifestyle may also be affected (Fischer, 2007; Mann, 2008). This again is not necessarily a 'cultural' issue, yet should one mentally function under such cultural scrutiny, then this is expected to greatly influence ones ABC outcomes.

## 5. Conclusions

How ICLS affects acculturation attitudes required the understanding of what ICLS was, how it was formed, and how did intercultural interactions function. As well as this, acculturative aspects of cross-cultural transition were necessary for analysis, as well as identifying how the culture of settlement was perceived through course learning experiences.

Amalgamated themes within an ABC framework (Zhou et al. 2008) tackle the essences of the research question. The ICLS and acculturation attitudinal concepts however are complex and unpredictable within the thematic domain, soliciting some interesting findings.

### 5.1. Findings

Analysis of the case studies found that cultural factors were often, at different frequencies amongst cases, attributed to one's behaviour and attitude. In turn, this was found to sometimes channel one's motivation or societal attitudes for instance, in that cultural distances were given personal significance. What is intriguing here is that contact with native Finnish students was minimal in each case due to the methodological stipulations, personal choices, and other aforementioned circumstances; yet, despite bi-directional social acculturation being markedly limited, cultural distance between the culture of settlement and one's possessed culture of origin appeared to shift in some accounts according to isolated incidents.

This chapter discusses the findings interpreted from the data analysis with support and linkage to secondary sources.

### Experiential Judgments

*Judgements* and evaluations were made quite early on in the experience of living and studying abroad in each case. For most students, differences were largely concluded as cultural differences, whether that was the Finnish education system, the Finnish society, classmates, or other. Traoré (2008) debates that such differences and conflicts are built from

highly charged emotions based on superficial inferences, rather than language or culture itself. Emotive accounts were conveyed in sections of some accounts, displaying strong reactions to specific circumstances, yet cultural comparisons were still often seen as a reason for the reaction, leading one to experience expectation deficits.

Unlike the typical diverse classroom found in any school, college, or university, cultural factors for some were asserted as more definitive and immovable forces, unknown, but providing immediate answers and reasons for specific behaviours or circumstances.

These hasty judgements could lead to unsuccessful adjustment according to Earley and Ang (2003), whereby they suggest that the most successful cultural adjustments come from those who are less judgemental in interpreting behaviours of host societies and features. This is the foundation of culture learning, and influences how attitudes are formed, interpreted, and managed insofar as one's own comforted ABC responses and personal development.

Therefore, erroneous judgements may not only impact one's sociocultural adaptation, but also intercultural relationships within the multicultural environment (Le Roux, 2001) which is shown in many accounts to contribute highly to one's psychological adjustment and well-being – an essential component to academic performance (Breen, 2001 cited in Mann, 2005).

Gabb (2006) points out that negative judgements can serve to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices, increasing pluralistic ignorance – the false estimation of personal differences (Merton, 1957 cited in DiMaggio, 1997), and therefore weaken intercultural competencies as a result of inaccurate self-concept, identity gaps, and lack of empathy (Bandura, 1997; Earley & Ang, 2003; Wadsworth et al. 2008).

Initial experiences of the university (e.g. faculty support, library induction) and socially (e.g. setting up bank accounts, making friendships) did appear to lead some to judgments of Finnish culture, impairing or encouraging sociocultural adaptation to the culture of settlement. Although the latter describes a single moment within a person's acculturative process, in reference to the ICLS model, the dynamical ICLS and acculturation attitude cycle is continuously vulnerable to contamination, effecting both ICLS and acculturation attitude processes all the time, but rarely in isolation.

Several observable implications can be noted from these experiential judgements. First, social relationships become potentially impaired, leading to acculturative stress and arbitrary acculturative strategies, impacting aspects such as social networking. Secondly, these experiences may translate into new social and cultural intelligences, potentially carrying through into international work settings while lacking adequate skill-sets, attitudes, or training (cf. Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002 cited in Gareis, 2012).

### **Manifestation of Expectations**

The data analysis found that *expectations* were uniquely situational in areas of some interviewee accounts, rather than deriving from previous experiences prior to arrival in Finland or the respective institute of study (Berry, 1997; Zhou et al. 2008), although expectations derived from cultural comparisons did also feature heavily in some participant's reflections.

Expectations are associated to mental constructs built from previous experiences, socialisation, and from social comparatives (cf. Berry, 1997; Le Roux, 2001; Zhou & Todman, 2008; Vaccarino, 2009). The findings however show that some students form expectations adjacent to circumstantial and contemporary issues relating to ICLS and social transitioning.

Zhou et al. (2008) and Furnham and Bochner (1986) consider acculturative stress or culture shock respectively, to permit coping strategies in order to defend oneself against unfamiliar surprises which one may not hold any information for. Thus, in order to adapt, new expectations must be associated and developed. This however risks increasing dissatisfaction when expectations are not met (Berry, 1997), and despite each interviewee being expectant of a challenging cultural transition, this feature still surfaced during difficult circumstances.

A further implication may be that relevant coping strategies become more burdensome due to a feeling of neglect when problems are not cooperatively solved, or, solved exclusively by those upholding the apparent power to do so, as noted from one participants feedback to the research scope of the overall analysis.

Robotham and Julian (2006) go further to suggest that should one require coping strategies due to any form of distress, some individuals may opt not to pursue this in apprehension of how others may judge this.



The judgements and situational expectations in some contexts suggest a lack of cultural intelligence, a term described by Earley and Ang (2003) as how one considers and behaves around people of different cultures. This implies the willingness to engage openly in the new challenges through learning and consideration of another culture. With little or no motivation to do so, expectations are expected to be low (Berry, 1997), however, expectations that are too high will also disappoint, and should ones acculturative attitudes become less motivated as a result, Schmitz (1994, cited in Berry, 1997) predicts further distress for the migrant.

### **Culture Learning Motivation**

A further finding was that of the *motivation* students displayed regarding culture learning. Several cases exhibited low motivation to culture learn, such as to learn the host cultures language, and to a lesser extent, meet with native citizens.

The length of one's stay was one mentioned factor contributing to low motivation, as well as one's intended future period of stay. As a *characteristic of the situation* in the ICLS model, this contextualises the migrant student, yet conflicts with assumptions that lower stress levels are omitted from higher education students due to the perceived traits of problem-solving, curiosity, open-mindedness, and other such attributes (Berry, 1997; Zhang & Sternberg, 2005). Indeed, it appears that such traits did not necessitate every individual's motivations to study abroad under these conditions, and that perhaps some students wish to receive 'culture', rather than exist proactively and mutually within it.

One case in particular struggled to adapt to the language of medium, and thus may have resultantly lacked the confidence or self-efficacy to embark on additional language learning (Mann, 2008). Indeed, the language of medium may in itself be an intercultural impediment to those who struggle with language components such as written academic English (Claremont, 2008).

An observation of low interaction between international and host students was considered to be due to priority towards completing thesis work, or the gradual loss of enthusiasm towards cultural learning over time (ICUnet.AG, 2010). Although these may be factors in some students' experiences, the present study indicates that these motivational attitudes are also formed through perceived *needs* to learn them. Since much of Finnish society was deemed to have a good understanding of the English language according to some

accounts, it was often considered unnecessary to learn the native language, since the costs to their other studies, time and efforts were too high.

The shyness of Finnish people was also articulated by some interviewees as an inhibiting factor to interaction, whereas some experienced international students as having more in common with themselves as well as having greater access to interaction. Another case mentioned the complexity of the Finnish language as a further reason for their decision not to attempt to learn the host language.

A bi-directional acculturation process is missing in some students' experiences, making interaction limited or difficult. This collides with internationalisation rhetoric for multicultural students to work cooperatively, building cultural tolerances, and intercultural competencies (The European Higher Education Area 1999; European Commission 2010).

It appears that international student communities lacking integration with the host students becomes partly compensated through relationships with other international students while the understanding of Finnish culture becomes a missed opportunity defined by superficial misconceptions in some cases.

The analysis found that some students whom had Finnish friends and colleagues also had overwhelmingly negative ICLS and were concerned about their academic performances. The amount of native influence is one factor here, and negative acculturation attitudes were still displayed. However, one case also described having a positive social life, and despite their societal attitudes being influenced by negative ICLS, could separate this from the dominant culture. In a separate example, Finnish interaction for one student was perceived to improve their social life, but however, not their ICLS.

Although the stress hypothesis indicates that emotional instability leads to impaired work performance and cognitive functioning for example (cf. Krypel & Henderson-King, 2010), it is equally the case that satisfaction and success are not parallel entities in all contexts.

## 5.2. How ICLS affects Acculturation Attitudes

Intercultural barriers elicited negative ICLS in some cases, not only from classmates, but from teaching staff. With social relations impaired through unsupportive course learning environments, acculturation attitudes could be seen to be influenced by what appears to be a representative of Finnish culture, just as interviewees might see themselves as representatives of their own countries and cultures.

However, a low motivation to culture-learn was explicit in individual cases, therefore signalling that ICLS may not influence one's acculturation attitude significantly. On the other hand, examples of course learning transition inhibited the motivation to culture learn for some due to existing transitional stresses, therefore influencing one's acculturation attitude.

Satisfaction with intercultural class relationships appeared to be decisive in some individuals' overall motivation to integrate. Cases which described negative ICLS, or weak peer relationships in class had similar experiences out of class, and in some cases struggled with the course content. Gottfredson et al (2008) attribute such behaviours to personality traits like openness, though theories in stress and coping (Zhou et al. 2008), social support (Pantelidou & Craig, 2006), and social influencing (Harton & Bourgeois, 2004) contest that well-being is increased and intercultural engagement is accelerated through forming satisfactory social relationships.

In challenging environments, social support might be actively pursued; however, this was not the case for some students. Some found this to be unsuccessful, altering their acculturative strategies and coping strategies to apparent individualistic schemas.

Finally, exposure to native students was considered by some individuals to prevent one's motivations and opportunity to culture-learn, displaying presumption that integration was partly restricted by the environments to which one was situated. The ICLS affect on acculturative attitudes therefore displays some clear relation, although pre-acculturative motivations appear to restrict proactive integration alongside other external transitional factors.

### 5.3. Significance of ICLS affects of Acculturation

The gap identified from the Zhou et al (2008) model, for whereby positive ICLS could still equate to negative acculturation, could thus be answered by inactive acculturative attitudes and strategies, or possibly inept intercultural competencies and confidence. Equally, researchers must be cautious concerning cultural perceptions. Acculturation moderators explore culture as an objective experience, yet cases in the present study suggest cultural thinking is ingrained and pre-empted, and experienced sometimes without contact. Cultural trade-off factors may then not be a significant factor in such acculturation attitude processes, which is missing from acculturation literature (Berry, 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zhou et al. 2008).

The Finnish case in itself provides new insight into international student transitional behaviours, since cases did not always match principles within the ABC framework. For example, although Zhou et al (2008) acknowledge the situational contexts such as *length of stay*, transitional stress is still expected to dictate consequential adjustment features, although these did not always appear relevant to acculturative transition in all cases. The same issue is found in different ways in other studies including Ali (2008).

The contributed associated literature summaries within the paper's conceptual chapter and analytical chapter offer legitimate non-essentialist and behavioural alternatives in this way. What is more, the study entails important findings regarding the foundations of cultural behaviours, such as judgements and expectations, which might create experienced 'culture' externally. This, the author feels, is an essential feature for future studies, since it contaminates cultural experiences considerably.

### 5.4. Discussion

Experiential judgements provide one's assessments of the world quickly and accurately according to one's socialised wisdom (Slife & Williams, 1995). In cross-cultural encounters, differences are dominant distinguishers within this assessment, rather than of attribution or familiarity (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992; Swanson et al. 2005; Traoré, 2008; Wadsworth et al. 2008; Vaccarino, 2009). Although Mann (2005) argues that we learn through differences, blind vicarious judgements from brief encounters are not conducive without intercultural skill and motivation.

The data shows that misrepresentation via judgements does influence some classroom relationships, psychological well-being, and attitudes influential towards acculturative experiences. These attitudes are contrived from those judgements, relating in some cases to perceived formal behaviours of Finnish professors, prejudice assumptions towards ethnic differences, and a perceived lack of care towards international students from Finnish educational organisers for example.

Piloting feedback revealed one student's ICLS was positive enough to encourage pursuing a longer stay in Finland and thus took up learning the language and meeting Finnish people to the detriment of socialising with classmates. Although not reflected in the samples, Boekaerts and Hijzen (2007) point that economic reasons might instigate motivations to leave and settle in another country more prosperous than one's own, a point articulated by the pilot interviewee. ICLS did though influence some participants' motivations to learn the culture and consider staying in the country, however, few reported positive relations.

Academic competitiveness for some outweighed social interest, leading to weakened classroom dynamics and relationships. A lack of tutor guidance and support was also mentioned, with representation of "Finnish" ways epitomising one's experience. These negative issues seem to distribute a unique cluster of expectations initiated from situational experiences, and in the learning context, provide an array of difficulties for students, from unclear standards and expectations, to communication apprehension.

The intercultural dynamics thus serve even more importance to ICLS, in that support, comprehension, and understanding relieve anxiety inside and outside of class (Ward et al. 2004). If the intercultural dynamics are fragmented or broken between one's peers and also the teacher, disengagement and de-motivation is at risk.

### **5.5. A Cultural Synergy Strategy**

Culture synergy converges the various course learning expectations so that adaptation is a mutual process between student and teacher (Zhou et al. 2008; Zhou & Todman, 2008). It is shown in this research that students' perceived needs are diverse, and since social relationships are fragmented and include miscommunication, much reliance is upon the instruction and organisation of the course.

In a multicultural context, cultural synergy is dependent on ‘good’ differentiated teaching and clear communication. Still, should the synergy lack inclusion for *all* needs, social learning functionality becomes essential should support be required and adequate engagement be productively managed. The lack of transparency in course organisation, supervision, and course work criteria in the case studies’ data exemplifies the necessity of this outlet in such circumstances, both in relation to ICLS and academic success, and psychological well-being (Ward et al. 2004; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Gareis, 2012). Furthermore, these intercultural skills are critical in working towards proficiencies proposed in initiatives like the Bologna process and Europe 2020.

Through ineffective intercultural communication, negative ICLS can lead to unsatisfied feelings towards Finnish society weakened due to a stressful lifestyle, and dampen cultural curiosity.

International mobility subsequently is hampered by ill-fated experiences subject to a lack of multiple transnational skills in interpersonal communication, settlement, and overcoming challenges individually and collectively. These are the skills obtained through overseas experiences, but the detail of these skills is far from impressive upon inspection. For a European community to excel, the very skills that are documented in mobility and migration policy need to be scrutinised further while understanding the elements that indiscriminately feature in ones learning in an overseas institution, learning amongst a blend of colliding cultures and the entities that are built within these dimensions.

To foster this, teaching interventions (e.g. speaking more slowly, adapted tutoring) and institutional level adaptations (e.g. course development, regular student meetings) can contribute to synergise the environment (Zhou & Todman, 2008). To foster intercultural gains and assist a successful communicative collegiate environment, a flexible multicultural synergy concept could contribute better to individuality and inclusion.

Synergising the multicultural learning environment [cultural synergy] (Zhou et al. 2008; Zhou & Todman, 2008) attempts reciprocal adaptation from all parties in order to harness diversity inclusively and satisfactorily. Reducing learning shock through transparency (Furnham, 1997), communication, and supporting flexible transition may improve the intercultural dynamics of the learning environment. Where some advocate culture learning to improve ICLS and settlement (Abdallah-Pretcille, 2006; Joseph, 2008), synergised strategies can potentially access individuals’ needs more precisely, thus improving one’s ICLS and corresponding well-being (Zhou et al. 2008).

Additionally, an outcome based learning approach, such as constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007), enforces individual assessment with reliance on critical thinking skills and problem-solving. This dilutes some confusion over expectations since one can meet the outcomes in novel ways, and in alignment to the learning process, can gauge a better curriculum transfer with each students host nations demands (Le Roux, 2001; Zhou & Todman, 2008). The concept also offers a platform to express individuality in competitive learning environments normally assessed on comparisons (Biggs & Tang, 2007), which can be conducive in knowledge transfer between students, and improve ICLS.

The culture synergy (Zhou et al. 2008; Zhou & Todman, 2008), and the constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007) offer practical solutions for multicultural environments, understanding the curriculum appropriateness, pedagogical details, learner styles, and the significance of smooth transition. Such a policy should also consider the clear measurable definition of intercultural competencies, and be designed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders such as international students.

### **5.6. Framework Suitability**

The ABC framework (Zhou et al. 2008) provided a comprehensive consideration of important intercultural themes essential for intercultural themed studies. A separate stress and coping framework or culture learning framework would not have suited the needs of the research concept. However, the framework itself is rich in detail and ABC factors interrelate heavily, making distinctive observations difficult to place. The ICLS slant on the framework and inclusion of amalgamated themes did simplify the framework considerably, however, concepts remained dispersed between individual macro and micro themes. Zhou et al (2008) acknowledge some of these flaws, although the ABC scheme itself achieves both appropriate consideration of important intercultural transitional theory, and themes suitably correspond to navigate research within these domains precisely.

The ICLS framework accrues the problem of parallel moderators within the acculturation process model, thus potentially influencing ones ICLS from the offset of the reconfigured sequence. The moderating potency of ICLS and other moderators therefore remains difficult to compare.

The sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment outcomes through ABC concepts provided a cohesive analysis of themes and other findings, and transfers well to the intercultural context of ICLS since it addresses a wealth of theory, and essential factors in human transitional factors that can function across concepts. These factors are consistently found to control ones transition, and thus proved satisfactory for the research purposes.

## 5.7. Recommendations

Internationalisation objectives boast to facilitate the production of effective intercultural competencies, transconnectivity, and reciprocal flows (Joseph, 2008), though it can be argued that effective competencies are difficult to holistically measure. Westernised construction may also be one impediment to such accuracy (Hofstede 2007; Deardorff 2010), whereas a reciprocal bi-directional relationship between host and migrant is in any case dubious (Joseph, 2008).

For intercultural skills to develop, it is first expected that the migrant employs an inquisitive, open and embracing mentality to opposite cultures with the ability to acclimatise to a new environment (Jandt, 2007; Deardorff, 2010). These issues relate to judgements and motivations found conveying cases of declination for embracing the Finnish culture and adjusting to diverse personalities in a classroom setting, which can impact ICLS and transitional resilience or apprehension through elements including social support and psychological adjustment for example.

Although Deardorff (2010) argues that intercultural competencies are an ongoing process not to be measured from a single study abroad experience, stakeholders in internationalisation must be cautious of the intercultural competencies picked up from international students (Jandt, 2007).

The present study shows individual attitudes to intercultural communication, and supports the suggestion that:

- 1) Employers seeking workers possessing effective *intercultural competencies* first require a specific and clear definition of the term first in order to understand what skills they are indeed seeking (Deardorff, 2010). Within higher education institutes, the conjoining of the specific aims relating to intercultural competencies and the strategies employed to achieve these should be more strongly correlated through a



specific and measurable definition of the term, and include differentiated teaching strategies in line with a cultural synergy concept proposed by Zhou et al (2008), and constructive alignment concept (Biggs & Tang, 2007), inclusive of differentiated practices built for the diverse learning needs, not solely culturally perceived dependencies from culture-set solutions.

Institutional internationalisation strategies inevitably vary, though will expect to benefit from interculturalism. This includes for example committed alumni generated by positive ICLS and integrated cultural belonging to that region; enhancement of institutional reputation from accurate advertisement of producing students skilled for global employment and citizenship; research and knowledge transfer links, and so on (cf. Joseph, 2008; Gareis, 2012).

What is more is that cultural intelligence is taken for granted as an obvious acquisition to such experiences, whereas Dervin (2006, cited in Virkama, 2010) argues that intercultural skills already exist within us, but we are consumed by cultural stereotyping and negligence to non-essentialist perspectives of culture.

- 2) Cultural educational content implemented into international programmes could be useful, though caution should be considered to how much cultural stereotyping already exists in international classrooms including evaluative judgements attributed towards “culture”. Non-essentialist content that broadens differences beyond traditional conceptions of culture, and which might work to individualise students rather than divide them into categories, could thus be a useful strategy. Correspondently, similarities rather than differences could be identified in order to synergise study activities, as well as further reduce non-conducive social barriers (Mann 2005; Vaccarino 2009).

Non-essentialist views of culture broaden the limitations culture is thought to induce on societies and people, making it difficult to grasp solid findings set within ‘culture’ parameters.

- 3) To further validate the results of the present study, mixed methods would allow a wider collection of data and variables to test for features not necessarily culture-bound, such as some economic factors or personality traits relevant to life experiences and emotions. This might allow the researcher to see in more depth *who* has been researched, and *what* has been researched before placing significance on multi-

cultures, quasi-cultures, or alternative factors. Additionally, observations of sample individuals and groups would ideally take place in longitudinal studies to identify these aspects more comprehensively.

Finally, the findings pose several questions. One is that Finnish natives were communicated as introverted, shy, and cold in some accounts, with active engagement with the Finns generally seldom. It would thus be interesting for other researchers to:

- 4) Explore to where opinions on natives were formed since interaction was isolated and minimal.

One pilot interviewee suggested that they had been forewarned about the Finnish stereotype regularly both abroad and by Finnish people themselves. It is speculative at best to suggest that these communicated stereotypes can become both self-fulfilled prophecies and naïve understanding of Finnish cultures. This study could bring fresh perspectives on how international students select and apply themselves in Finland and Finnish higher education institutes.

A final question relating to course intercultural dynamics, student social support, acculturative and coping strategies, and learning motivations and expectations, would be to inspect:

- 5) Why do some international students receive their social support from mainly outside of class relationships and with other fellow international students, despite cultural differences in class relationships perceivably one of several relationship barriers.

This could identify the nature of the course learning environments, such as competitiveness and the separation of work and social lives, found typically in professional sub-groups (Bitgood, 2002). It would be interesting to compare these to single nationality groups in equal contexts to see if the environments exhibit similar relational behaviours, and indeed if this is reflected upon ones ICLS, acculturation attitudes, and academic successes in itself.

## 5.8. Limitations

Several limitations aforementioned including response styles (Shimanoff, 1980; Salkind, 2009) and course incomparability reduce the universal depths of each account one can enter, and also removes the ability to cluster groups to make reliable group case studies.

The compression of themes established in the ICLS framework additionally reduces the wide-reaching scope needed to consider additional moderating and confounding factors in influencing ICLS and acculturation attitudes. Mixed methods would therefore be useful in extending and supporting the present study. For example, enculturation details could be refined to evoke details shedding light on what may enforce attitudes to one's character, whereas other moderators could receive quantitative intricacy in their assessment alongside rich qualitative exploration.

A small sample group restricted the occurrences of co-cultural relationships which might have been an important intercultural factor (Claremont, 2008). Larger sample groups could thus be explored in future studies, as well as including bi-directional acculturation attitudinal features to understand separation and segregation in accordance to international student experiences (Berry, 1997).

Furthermore, the results are limited to individuals on two international cohorts in regions of Finland. Institutional internationalisation strategies are not universal or consistent across courses, time, and so on. Indeed, this is one common scrutiny placed upon phenomenological research (Hycner, 1985), therefore within certain uncontrollable limitations, expanded and comparable quantitative factors would offer more reliable generalisabilities important for national and international observers.

Additionally, language of medium seems highly relevant in the present study in relation to acculturation attitudes and intercultural integration, and limits the study in the sense that for many students, possibly a third language (pertaining to the language of origin, language of instruction, and adoption of host language) would need to be learnt for ease of integration. Since the English language is universal, there is a deemed lack of need to use or learn the Finnish language, impacting transition, but also adding a contextual barrier to comparable studies, such as in English speaking countries.

## 5.9. Ideas for Future Research

The entire process of this research project has evoked an abundance of possibilities in developing more concise and precise understandings of individual elements. The culture debate posits that new cultural research must refine its attention to the finer fabrics of individual behaviours without attributing to heavily to static quantifiable units. A non-essentialist study not only provides a much needed contextual lens on data, but respects the communicational factors that mediate understanding of meaning systems universally. What is more, the relationship of culture within a migrant's experience may derive from conformational attention biases, where one is over reactive searched-for evidence.

A further understanding of the origination of cultural stereotyping from contained sub-groups is needed in cross-cultural studies. Within a course learning environment, does feeling welcome without restriction to acculturation (e.g. orientations, living conditions) lead to more positive views of the host culture? Similarly, do positive societal views of the host culture necessarily lead to proactive acculturative attitudes for international students?

Lastly, what can a cultural synergy concept contribute to academic achievement and settlement in multicultural classrooms?

The relations between satisfaction, success, and settlement go hand in hand, but many relations remain unclear. In continuing to improve the internationalisation of higher education, these are but a few possibilities.

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## APPENDIX A

### ICLS and Acculturation Attitudes: ABC Interview Template

<b>Cultural; Social behaviour; Host language &amp; culture; Cultural distance</b>	<b>Expectations; Motivation to come</b>	<p>Has being an international student in a [university] made studying difficult in any way?</p> <p><i>(bureaucracy; finding information easily; receiving help etc)</i></p>	<p>***How helpful has the University been in providing you the support needed to</p> <p>1) settle in [region] - did this meet your expectations of the university?</p> <p>2) settle into the university <i>(finding information, doing things, finding things etc)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>**Motivations</b> <i>(to study abroad, or in particular nation etc)</i></li> <li>• ABC – *others</li> </ul>	<p>***How supportive have teaching staff been during your studies in [region]? And administration?</p> <p>Do you think your classmates shared the same experiences as you?</p>
	<b>Enculturation → Motivation to learn, motivation to “learn-off” Social support</b>	<p>While studying in [region], do you feel you have changed:</p> <p>1) as a person 2) your way of living</p>	<p>***Have you interacted much with classmates? <i>(why was this?)</i></p> <p>Have you found interacting with some students in class more challenging than interacting with others?</p> <p><b>Who and How?</b></p> <p>How did this make you feel?</p> <p>How did you overcome these difficulties?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identity</b> <i>(different identities, cultural identity, way of living)</i></li> <li>• <b>**Social</b> <i>(important friends, local community involvement)</i></li> <li>• <b>Well-being</b> <i>(Stress, peace, confidence)</i></li> <li>• ABC – *others</li> <li>• <b>Confidence</b> <i>(did it have any effect on your confidence in interacting with other different cultures?)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Who have been the most important people to you during your time at [university]? <b>(In class. Out of class)</b> <b>(Why?)</b> <b>(Can you give examples of ‘HOW’ they helped?)</b></p> <p>Did these relationships influence your experience of staying in Finland/ (region)?</p> <p>Can you give some examples?</p>
	<b>Acculturative stress; Acculturation strategies; Coping strategies;</b>	<p>What has been the most stressful experience you can recall during your stay in [region]?</p> <p>Did you overcome this issue? – How?</p>	<p>***Do you ever feel alone in Finland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>As classmate (was class individualistic, or more collective/helpful/friendly?)</i></li> <li>• <i>Did you feel alone due to your Ethnic/cultural differences?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interpreting others</b> <i>(feeling at ease with other cultures and understanding their meanings)</i></li> <li>• <b>**Belonging, understood or out of place/different?</b></li> <li>• ABC – *others</li> </ul>	<p>Have you ever felt like you were not part of the [class] group?</p> <p>Would your experience in [region] have been better/worse if you had felt more/less part of the group?</p>

	<p><b>Societal attitudes</b></p> <p>In [region], how have you balanced your academic and social time?</p> <p><i>(How important is social time – how do you spend your social time?)</i></p> <p>How confident are you with your academic work at [university]?</p>	<p>***Has learning the Finnish language been important during your time in [region]?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Do you feel your other classmates shared similar attitudes as you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Level of difficulty</b> (<i>finding things and doing things</i>)</li> <li>• <b>**Integration with host-natives</b> (<i>Has an impact? Desired? Possible?</i>)</li> <li>• ABC –*others</li> </ul>	<p>Have you spent much time in the company of Finnish people? (How much time?) Who, why?</p> <p>Do you think it (learning language) has had an impact on you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in [region]?</li> <li>• Study related aspects</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Course Learning</b></p> <p>How motivated have you been in lectures?</p> <p>-And outside of lectures?</p>	<p>***In your opinion, do you think the lectures/classes met the needs of <b>all</b> the students in your class?</p> <p>Did the classes suit your <b>preferred</b> style of learning?</p> <p>And did they meet your needs?</p> <p>When you were not in class, did you attempt to deal with these problems? Does this affect how you feel towards you studies?</p> <p>And does it affect your mood while in [region]?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Level of engagement</b> (were lectures useful, were readings useful, feeling lost, tired, frustrated)</li> <li>• <b>**Confusion</b> (<i>not knowing expectations, <u>language/accents</u>, not understanding answers or that question was understood</i>)</li> <li>• <b>**Interaction/participation</b> (group work, questions, time talking)</li> <li>• ABC – *others</li> <li>• <b>Interpreting others, and others interpreting you</b></li> </ul>	<p>As an international student, what aspects of class learning have been the most difficult for you?</p> <p>-And the most rewarding? Do you feel this affects you mood in any way?</p> <p>Did some students' interaction in class have an effect on other students' interaction?</p>

\*'Others' example: How do you think your difficulties/experiences compare to other students in your class?

\*\*Key prompt outside of question frame

\*\*\* Preferred question

## APPENDIX B

Theme	Interviewee	Transcribed Extract	ABC Constructs	Context
L Ex	<i>EM01</i>	(1) when you go back to Africa you find that the lecturer is teaching around 100 students! So he doesn't have enough time for each of them, but when you come here we are few, so we get more support from our lecturers, our professors, in class, through e-mails, and even you can make an appointment, you sit down with the professor [41]  I would say maybe sometimes they are very busy. I think the general staff for our faculty is smaller compared to the...(.. ...my problem is if I have a problem on Monday, and you tell me you can see me on Thursday [50]	[B] Cultural learning  [A] Need of support	Support of University Faculty
	<i>EM02</i>	(2) I think that it's good like to settle, when the tutor helps (...)I think more to the learning stuff and, because he introduced me to the University and the city, then we had the orientation programme that explained us about the city and University and how it would work [8]  always asking how are we feeling, how is everything, but when everybody is there you just like, "I am fine" (laughs) [56]	[B] Cultural learning  [A] Trying to cope	Support from University to settle into region and University.  Faculty support
	<i>EM03</i>	(3) I ended up doing most of the things by myself [15]	[A] Coping	Support from University to settle into region and University.
	<i>EM04</i>	(4) whenever we have some problem we have easily approach to the professors [8] this University is providing us all (emphasis) the basic necessities [20]	[B] Interacting with faculty	Orientation
	<i>EM05</i>	(5) they did have classes you could go to that explained these things, but it was outside of the actual orientation, and at least outside the actual day and time everybody was actually there [15]  Except for finding housing (...)anything else I kind of had to figure out on my own. [22]	[A] Stress and coping	University orientation and settling into the region issues



	<i>EM06</i>	Without her I would have been completely lost. [101]  (6) we have really intensive days, like two days, full of activities from nine in the morning until seven, or six in the afternoon or something, but (emphasis) with no breaks at all (...)you cannot like pay attention all the time carefully [16]  everyone is trying to help you, or willing to help you [26]  “can I go see you that time, that day?” and they say “whoa, I have like free space in like, two weeks from now” (...)it is not really good because then you say “what’s the point, in two weeks from now I will forget what I want to ask [57]	[A] Social support  [A] Stress  [C] Attitude  [A] Stress	Supervisor support  Orientation  Faculty support  Expected support
	<i>EM07</i>	(7) I think the support is enough, but not so satisfactory, because I discuss with my friends that some of the support is like, not very helpful, like, sometimes it’s unorganised and a little bit chaos compared with the support provided by the (London higher education institution). [7]  always like discouraging you, and couldn’t provide you so much help [23]  they provide us with every kind of information on how to settle into the University itself [43]	[C] Comparisons to others  [A] Stress  [B] Useful information	Help from professors  Orientation
CS Ex	<i>EM01</i>	(1) For me, as a person from Africa, I have appreciated the services and support and everything. But (...) people (...) from Europe, (...) America, (...) some of them are comparing the system here to back home. [93]	[C] Comparison and appreciation	Others sharing similar experiences related to support
	<i>EM05</i>	(5) three people, two of which are from the same University, both saying two different things (...)I would classify it as a lack of organisation. When it comes to even settling into the school [48]	[C] Attitude towards others	
M CL	<i>EM01</i>	(1) when you come to class, the conversations are not all that long; they are short. “how was your weekend?” “how was your coursework?” you stop at that, things concerning studies. You don’t go into details of families, how you feel, how is your mum. [116]	[A] Adjustment [C] Cultural perceptions	Interacting with classmate

	<i>EM04</i>	<p>So for the classmates, it is more academic. It is more academic discussions that family discussions, social interaction discussions [119]</p> <p>(4) it is natural because (country of origin) and (similar culture) has always been a little bit in conflict [58]</p> <p>we have very good interaction with each other [147]</p> <p>luckily we have one class, the interaction, cultural interaction skills, and it created a very good impact on all of us [155]</p>	<p>[B] Interaction with similar culture</p> <p>[B] Social competency</p>	<p>Conflict with person of a similar culture</p> <p>Cultural communication course</p>
En SS CS CL	<i>EM01</i>	(1) during Christmas, I spent the whole week without speaking to anyone. My classmates, most of them have travelled back to their homes, and in my neighbourhood everyone was indoors, and even the people you meet you ..., sometimes you say hi, and the person is surprised “who is this guy saying hi to me?”. So the system is kind of (pause) it’s like everyone is for himself and everyone is for herself. They don’t mind about (pause, and stops sentence). So that brings that element of missing home. Because when you compare some situations to your home you sometimes say “I wish I was home”. [128]	[A] Stress [C] Attitudes to others	Feeling Alone
	<i>EM02</i>	(2) I came one month before my master began to do this Finnish course in the summer so I could settle in the city and learn some Finnish and it was really good because when my classes began I was already settled in the city so I could focus on my classes (...) but then the classes began and then it was like more cloudy and then I started, and maybe after two weeks I was kind of really homesick [48]	[A] Stress	
	<i>EM04</i>	(4) just before coming here I broke up with my girlfriend, ex-girlfriend (...)I also (...)finished my contract what I was working in Norway, so in the initial time, like first ten or fifteen days I think I felt it, a little bit alone [136]	[A] Stress	
	<i>EM06</i>	(6) particularly during November I think, beginning of December because we had really long and dark days basically [150]		
	<i>EM07</i>	(7) I think most of my classmates have similar feelings, especially in winter here because		

		of the weather, we were so, a little bit depressed (...) everyone is a little bit homesick during the winter period [163]		
SS CS CL C	<i>EM01</i>	(1) there is a church I attend (...) that has also played much of my spiritual life in (region). [155]	[A] Coping	Coping
	<i>EM02</i>	(2) I don't think it's bad for them. [329]	[C] Speculation	On other peoples experiences
	<i>EM07</i>	(7) sometimes I feel stressed then don't want to talk with your friends, just watch, be quiet, and then the loneliness becomes stronger and stronger and stronger, but that's just temporary because I would always love to talk with my friends, and once you talk with them the stress and loneliness will be really released and gone away. [149]	[A] Stress and coping [B] Interaction	Dealing with stress
Ex En CS CL At	<i>EM01</i>	(1) We have always had those stereotypes that say that a black man is not supposed to have equal rights to study, the black man is not supposed to have equal rights to be at the university. So when the society is closed, you remember those sayings [170]	[A] Stress [C] Attitudes of others	Societal attitudes
	<i>EM06</i>	(6) I think this is because the Finnish culture. They like to be really formal and all this sort of stuff. Sometimes you don't feel like asking something because you might perhaps bother the person [82]  I think it somehow affects your performance in the University, you know, like the culture here in the city. [95]	[B] Interaction barriers [C] Attitudes  [A] Distress	Finnish ways of behaving
M En SS CS CL C	<i>EM01</i>	(1) Friends that have come from Asia are more open than, their culture resembles that of Africa. Open minded. You call the other person you meet on the street your sister or brother, so with such people I have had some good comfort, and we share some good time with them [186]  international students because their challenges are similar to mine, so whenever they see me they are also happy to see me, and when I see them I am also happy too [217]	[B] Interaction [C] Attitudes towards others  [B] Cultural distance to Finnish	Social support
	<i>EM02</i>	(2) "wow I didn't know you were feeling so homesick" when I talked to them, "oh, so bad, oh we should do something", so we tried to do some things together cos all of them, no, three of them are Finnish, the rest is all from other countries, so we're all in the same	[A] Coping strategies [B] Associations	Classmate social support

		boat [82]		
	<i>EM03</i>	<p>he was really worried about his family and then we could see he was really bothered and then he told us what was happening, yeah and then we were trying to support him and talking, and then he called his family, but now it's better [103]</p> <p>(3) my course mate will not know as much because that it was I also prefer (...)plus being in the experience that I had, like settling in wasn't that..., so I didn't see the need to widen that circle [181]</p> <p>she will disseminate, which I didn't see in the rest, where is still this things like "oh no, this information I can will only disseminate to whom I am close with" [197]</p>	[B] Supporting others	Supporting others
	<i>EM04</i>	<p>technology internet, MSN, SKYPE, so I do regularly (...)that would be a balance for me to keep me going [217]</p> <p>(4) when I came here, she tried to sort out all (emphasis) the things, not only for me, but for everyone. [81]</p> <p>And most important, and most interesting thing is that he is also from (similar culture) [107]</p> <p>my cousins brother, he is also living in Helsinki, and when I came here newly, and he told me many many things [126]</p>	[A] Behavioural affect [B] Closed communication [C] Attitudes of identities [A] Coping [B] Support [C] Cultural similarity [B] Support from similar culture	Making friends Important classmates Outside of class social support Course coordinator Best friend (not on same course)
	<i>EM05</i>	(5) we have been helping each other through whatever difficulties we've had [144]	[B] Perceived social support	Classmates
	<i>EM07</i>	(7) especially in the non-English speaking country, when you have difficulties, then your friends are always there, supporting for you, giving you a hand in your first year here (...)we have more problems than the other student [86]	[A] Coping	
Ex At L	<i>EM01</i>	(1) Getting to know if the professor wants us to write an assignment, what style are you using, are you using APA system or? Yeah. So it was a struggle. And my classmates, of course, I didn't know them so well, so I couldn't ask them, so it was like surviving on your own. [198]	[A] Stress [B] Communicational barriers	Learning expectations

	<p><i>EM03</i></p> <p>(3) why is it that improvement or definitely they could have learned from before, what wasn't done well, based on feedbacks and then improve it so that you won't get such a, not so pleasant experience for some of us [39]</p> <p>Scandinavian countries, it's always been importantly known as efficient, forerunners in almost everything (...)you can say that very efficient, but not to the extent like super efficient (...)So when we come here and we experience if there's some discrepancy, we are more forgiving [69]</p> <p>search on Google scholar, and somebody who has written from this University have this standard, we just follow, and if it when we submit it gets a good grade, and good remarks, then maybe that will then be our (emphasis) standard. [363]</p>		<p>[C] Attitudes to other</p>	<p>University expectations</p> <p>Expectations were too high</p>
	<p><i>EM06</i></p> <p>(6) I did my undergrad exchange programme in the (former course programme), not the University of Helsinki, so, perhaps I was kind of bias and kind of expecting for the same thing [34]</p>		<p>[B] Communicational barriers</p>	<p>Grading issues</p>
	<p><i>EM07</i></p> <p>(7) we have to meet the requirements of two Universities, (London higher education institution) and the University of Helsinki, and their requirements a little bit clash with each other. [26]</p>		<p>[A] Unexpected stress</p> <p>[A] Stress from uncertainty</p>	<p>Motivations and expectations</p> <p>Joint degree conflicts</p>
En SS CS CL	<p><i>EM01</i></p> <p>(1) It did affect my confidence. It is like saying that I thought I knew something, but I don't know anything (...)But as time goes on and you start learning the system, how things are done, your confidence is restored back. But at the beginning! (laughter) you lose your confidence. [207]</p> <p>It is like the English I am speaking is (laughter) not right, the right English, so it affects your confidence and brings you down [379]</p>		<p>[A] Stress</p> <p>[A], [B] Communication failure</p> <p>[B] Learning new culturally relevant skills</p>	<p>Acceptance as a classmate</p> <p>Cultural barriers</p>
	<p><i>EM02</i></p> <p>(2) like the guy from Pakistan and the other from India, they have a different accent that sometimes is difficult to understand, and I don't know, a girl from Turkey it's sometimes too difficult to understand [378]</p>			

	<i>EM03</i>	<p>(3) I'd hope they'll be more from my country from my part of the world for me to enjoy some parts of the education benefits [267]</p> <p>I don't really feel that ostracised or different to anybody, in fact, it can sometimes be a drive or a motivation [270]</p> <p>They are still not receptive to anyone who looks different or is different, (...) if you're not receptive, then why should I bother? [294]</p>	<p>[A] Coping</p> <p>[C] Different identity</p> <p>[B] Communication and culture conflict</p>	Feeling different to Finnish
M En At CL CS	<p><i>EM01</i></p> <p><i>EM02</i></p> <p><i>EM03</i></p> <p><i>EM05</i></p> <p><i>EM06</i></p>	<p>(1) I've not met so many people in Finland (...) [215]</p> <p>(2) everybody felt a bit difficult because he has a really (...) always thinks he is right (...)people that did say that could be difficult [126]</p> <p>(3) it is also the relationship with other international students who was there that makes the stay better and makes it more positive. So, as much as the host plays a part, the international students plays a part [305]</p> <p>(5) part of me says that I love Finnish culture, and love the people of Finland because they are really nice people once you get past that cold exterior [111]</p> <p>but then you look at banks, or anything that's institutional, then it's very very difficult [121]</p> <p>I also have friends who are Finnish, so if I have any problems, I can always have them help me with it [189]</p> <p>(6) I think it is not really easy to make, mix with the locals, but it is easy on the other hand to interact with all the foreigners [105]</p>	<p>[B] Cultural learning of another culture</p> <p>[B] Interaction choices</p> <p>[C] Attitudes to new culture</p> <p>[A] Stress</p> <p>[B] Social support</p> <p>[B] Interaction choices</p> <p>[C] Attitudes to host natives</p>	<p>Interaction with Finnish people</p> <p>Finnish classmate</p> <p>Value of meeting Finnish</p> <p>Feeling towards Finnish</p>
L M At	<i>EM01</i>	(1) I was not motivated to learn the Finnish language because every Finn speaks English, you see? So if they can speak the language, why should I learn the Finnish language? [232]	[B] Cultural learning choices	Cultural learning

		no. Because when you go to the supermarket, and there is something you don't understand, still you ask in English and someone [247]		
		my closest friend is from Brazil, I will learn more about Brazil than Finland [359]	[B] Cultural learning	
		(2) I also talk to another friend and he is from Estonia, and he said "oh, I know some Finnish, old, like older people who are like this" [153]	[C] Attitudes to others	
		think Finnish people who went to some exchange period they are a bit different, they are more social and more talkative (...)they don't even look so much like Finnish [157]	[C] Speculations based on stereotypes	Stereotyping
	<i>EM02</i>	I feel more at home like I was in Russia this last week, and it was all like weird letters and everything and now I come here I already feel home and at the train station I can already understand what is written around [302]	[C] New identity	Feeling settled
		(3) Sometimes you just say "oh, it's just a nice country or just quiet or just beautiful" but when you speak to these people, your friends, family, people who share the same, or what to know "hey, what's happening over there?" you start to reiterate what is happening or your experience, and at the same time I think it elevates some of what you think is negativity [236]	[A] Stress	
	<i>EM03</i>	outside of Finland you don't really use the Finnish language, so maybe that is also an influencing factor to a lot of us, including myself, using it as often, and even till now, most of it you tend to just fall back on English and just order things in English [283]	[B] Communicational choices	Finnish language
		(4) here everybody speaks English language, but they're not willing to give work to English [197]	[A] Stress [C] Formed attitudes	Seeking employment or volunteer work
		I have more contact with international students than Finnish [226]	[B] Intentional learning	Living with international students
	<i>EM04</i>	everyone is speaking English, so if I am planning to live here longer, then maybe I am needing to have good contact with Finnish (...) but if I don't want, I don't have (emphasis) to make so many contact with Finnish people [234]	[B] Planned behaviours	

	<p><i>EM05</i></p> <p>(5) I am speaking English in public, and they are constantly staring at me (...) it still makes me uncomfortable. With the younger people I definitely feel more belonging [197]</p> <p>if I didn't have a basic understanding I would be completely lost [205]</p> <p><i>EM06</i></p> <p>(6) to the daily basis to communication with the locals, I think it is not really helpful [200]</p> <p>I know quite a few Finnish people, but you know they don't to like to talk to you in Finnish because they know that you don't like, that you don't speak Finnish, so, although you try to say something, they immediately switch to English, or even to other languages that they are like fluent. But now, you don't have the chance to practise with them either [220]</p> <p><i>EM07</i></p> <p>(7) I want to explore the Finnish culture here. That's my main motivation [54]</p> <p>you can ask about a lot of the problems of Finnish culture in her class and she is very typical Finnish, and she give us a lot of information about the Finnish culture and how to handle them, and how to like, make your life more enjoyable in Finland [116]</p> <p>Finnish give me a lot of confidence (...) By learning Finnish, you can learn the culture deeper. I love Finnish and it has opened my mind. [173]</p>	<p>[A] Stress</p> <p>[B] Communicational attitude</p> <p>[B] Behavioural barriers</p> <p>[B] Cultural learning</p> <p>[C] Attitude changes</p>	<p>Classroom inspirations</p> <p>Acceptance from the Finnish</p> <p>Finnish language</p> <p>Finnish people and Finnish language</p> <p>Motivations to study in Finland</p> <p>Finnish professor</p>
L M At	<p><i>EM01</i></p> <p>(1) My other classmates share the same attitude (...) and even my classmates who speak Finnish – you never hear them speak Finnish. They keep on speaking English [240]</p> <p><i>EM02</i></p> <p>(2) think they just did the first class, just because it was obligatory [315]</p> <p><i>EM04</i></p> <p>(4) our studies are in English, and everywhere we are speaking English, we don't need (emphasis) Finnish language, [210]</p>	<p>[B] Communicational perceptions</p>	<p>Others learning the Finnish culture</p> <p>Finnish language course</p>



	<i>EM05</i>	(5) for the actual need, it's not so crucial because they're not actually using [224]		Finnish language
Ex M L	<i>EM01</i>	(1) I am really rejoicing and looking forward to the day that I graduate and take whatever content had been offered back to my country (...) it has been a tremendous impact in my life. [278]	[C] New found confidence and personal development	Learning satisfaction
	<i>EM02</i>	(2) I felt like, unsupported I think because I wanted help to direct my research but they were always saying where not to go (...)I felt really anxious [221]  I kind of felt I couldn't really count on my supervisor [228]	[A] Stress	Thesis work
	<i>EM03</i>	(3) The content of the subject for me was also not fitting of what I was expecting, so that gives another setback to me (...)I just put it as maybe this is how the Finnish work [95]  what was been delivered, or what was promised that we would further delve into the psychology, we have yet to experience [321]	[C] Formed attitudes	Course content
	<i>EM06</i>	(6) BUT they have been helpful at all, but although, they promise you to help you, and they are really nice, but the result, the final outcome is not what you were expecting [253]  I can manage a lot on my own (emphasis), so I think it is a kinda of positive side that the University of Helsinki have taught me, either indirectly or directly [305]	[A] Stress  [C] Reflected formed attributes	Course expectations, promises and guidance
	<i>EM07</i>	(7) It's just like, exam only course. You didn't go to any classes, but you borrow the book and do the self study, then you go for the exam. [228]		Course importance
Ex L	<i>EM01</i>	(1) I really would like to have more group work assignments, because even we come to learn each other. The more we have group work, the more people open up. [303]	[B] Interaction motives	Preferred learning style
	<i>EM03</i>	(3) Quite didactic [328]		Unhappy with instruction
En CS	<i>EM01</i>	(1) I would be more comfortable in a class where I'm saying what's on my heart, and don't care what these people say [309]	[B] Communication barriers	Participation and interaction in classroom with peers and

CL L	<p><i>EM02</i></p> <p><i>EM05</i></p> <p><i>EM07</i></p>	<p>I might fear to ask the professor a question because if I ask a question what will ‘A’ say? ‘A’ might be saying “if that was a question, you don’t understand, that is simple, you shouldn’t ask” you see? But if I know what ‘A’ thinks, then it will even help me know which type of questions I should ask [322]</p> <p>When it comes to personal things, yes [331] you find that people are ganging up, smaller groups are being formed [350]</p> <p>That fear to open up still because these are members of another click [370]</p> <p>(2) we learnt some group things and how to deal with different situations and how to give good feedbacks, and not being rude but saying what you need to say and all the group dynamics also (...) always talking about something, like a bit more intimate [254]</p> <p>it was hard to argue when you’re not understanding everything (...) we were closer and if I don’t understand I can say “what?” and it’s easier than in class like you keep saying “what did you say?” or something. [387]</p> <p>(5) but it was a course about international organisations and they were very much critical of (country of origin) and being (nationality) I kind of got offended, rather than say anything [355]</p> <p>(7) after a while it is not very good for my life and my studies, so I change a little bit. I have become more involved in the seminar and the discussion. I tried to voice my opinion [253]</p>	<p>[B] Cultural distance [C] Attitudes of others</p> <p>[B] Cultural learning</p> <p>[A] Stressful experiences</p> <p>[B] Behavioural changes</p>	<p>professors</p> <p>Comfort in classroom</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Subject sensitivity</p> <p>On not interacting enough</p>
L	<i>EM01</i>	<p>(1) a person from Europe, central Europe and America, I don’t think they’ll have the challenges we people, other people face [391]</p> <p>the learning environment becomes very conducive to them. Because, for example, a Finnish person would prefer interacting with an American than an African [398]</p>	[C] Cultural differences and stereotypes	Perception of others’ learning satisfaction, participation and interaction

<i>EM02</i>	(2) everybody was feeling like "I don't know exactly what I'm doing but I'll do it anyway" [126]		[A] Uncertainty	Course work
<i>EM03</i>	(3) some of my course mates, they also do feel that, it's like, how come we don't feel we are getting this at this level, and at this level or this help [144]	being a classmate we tend to share information and all that, you could see two different styles of writing, or information presented, of course one would be better than the other, but they obtain the same score (...) the two persons who was also comparing wasn't happy [353]	[A] Uncertainty [C] Attitudes formed	Course satisfaction
<i>EM04</i>	(4) some students they don't bother to come to every lecture because they already know all the things [263]	sometimes people are willing to tell, but sometimes people don't. People are not willing to tell. It is their own choice because they are independent citizens of independent country, so they can tell us or they can't. I don't think it is creating much difficulty in the class, really [332]	[B] Communicational barriers	Course content not suitable for all  Other students participation and interaction
<i>EM05</i>	(5) like three of them have no supervision (...)trying to go on, doing their entire dissertation here basically by themselves [61]	a foreign student (...)she said that the organisation and the way that they help the students on that programme is even worse that it is on my programme. [66]  because once again the classes we are required to take clashed with the other courses that were suggested for them to take [276]  I don't think it's really had an affect where they can't cope because all of them have been very able to make it through whatever difficulties they've had, but I think it definitely affects stress levels, and kind of, their view of being here in Finland because it's disappointing they don't have the proper supervision they needed [326]	[A] Stress  [A] Stress and coping [C] Attitudes formed of Finland and University	University issues  Course organisation