“Getting it”:

Successful intercultural teaching practicum

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New Zealand’s population is becoming increasingly diverse, particularly with new arrivals from the Asian continent. With this, comes the increased need for early childhood education professionals to respond authentically to children and their families from minority ethnicities. One way to do so is to employ a wide range of culturally and ethnically diverse early childhood professionals to help respond to this diversity. However, a significant body of research has suggested that Asian-born early childhood student teachers may have difficulty during initial teacher education (ITE) in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially during the practicum component. Working within an educational context completely at odds with their own personal experience appears to place additional stress upon an already potentially-stressful situation. As a result, student teachers may struggle to meet required ITE learning outcomes for practicum.

This research investigates what makes for a successful practicum experience for both Asian-born student teachers and their supervising associate teachers. Using symbolic interactionist theoretical underpinnings, it explores the experiences of three Asian-born early childhood education student teachers and their associate teachers during one of the final practicums of the students’ teaching qualification. Interviews with each of the six participants were conducted prior to, and after, the practicum to determine their changing views of success. In addition, video-stimulated discussions occurred during the practicum to gain a deeper sense of what each participant viewed as successful practice.

The findings indicate that themes of mutual respect, professional identity development, student confidence, alignment of understanding around appropriate pedagogical practice, supervision in response to student need, English language competency, and sufficient time, are all seen to contribute to success in practicum. As a result of these findings, a conceptual model of success is proposed. It shows success involves more than simply passing the externally-imposed learning outcomes of the ITE institution. Instead, success is conceptualised as occurring along two continuum; formative and summative, and internally-experienced and externally-demonstrated. With this broader understanding of success in mind, a model of a successful intercultural practicum is proposed which incorporates the key
success themes. Subsequent implications for the length of practicum, support structures in place for Asian-born students and associate teachers, practicum assessment processes, and the focus of initial teacher education are discussed.
This thesis is dedicated to
Andrew, Benjamin, James and Luke Murray,
my husband and sons,
for your support, understanding and love
during the long hours I have not been with you.
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CHAPTER ONE:
AN INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICUM, CULTURE, AND SUCCESS

Every piece of research begins with an event, an impetus. This research journey is no different. In order to understand its origins, I want to share this incident from my life as an early childhood teacher. I came to early childhood education as a profession late in life, following the birth of my three children. I graduated from my teaching qualification at the end of 2004. By the time I became a fully registered teacher two years later, I began to accept student teachers to supervise on their practicum experiences.

At that time I considered myself a very good associate teacher. I was able to quickly assess where the student was in terms of their pedagogy. I then gently but firmly guided them onwards and upwards. Because I was working in a very multicultural kindergarten at the time, it was not unusual for us to have students who themselves had been born and raised outside of New Zealand so I considered myself well-versed in interacting respectfully with those with an ethnic background other than my own. However, my pride was rather abruptly shattered when I met Susie. She was a second year student, and had been born and raised in Malaysia. Doing what I had always done on our first day together in practicum, I spent time trying to get to know her and her background further, but I became concerned when she told me her previous associate teachers had all been racist. I was shocked at her declaration.

The placement went downhill rather quickly after that. From the beginning, Susie seemed to be reluctant to plan and work with children. She seemed to want me to tell her exactly what she should be doing, whereas I was waiting for her to demonstrate initiative. When she finally did plan and implement an activity, she was upset that the children had not followed her instructions correctly. Instead, they had run off to play with the resources she had provided. I spent a long time explaining how, even though her activity had not gone according to her plan, it was still very successful because the children worked with the resources in their own way. They had taken control of their own learning.
By the end of the placement, I think I was just as frustrated as Susie probably was. From my perspective, she just didn’t seem to ‘get it’. From her perspective, I suspect she thought I was just as racist as her previous associate teachers.

From that experience ten years ago, I began my own journey of discovery. Not long after this encounter I became an early childhood lecturer at a private initial teacher education (ITE) organisation. I had the opportunity in my new career to visit not one, but many, many other Susies in my new position as a visiting lecturer. Her story was reflected time and time again. Asian-born student teachers, who had been born and educated in their home countries, often seemed to have difficulties acclimatising to working in New Zealand early childhood centres. Their associate teachers felt frustrated and upset at not being able to guide their students to ‘get it’, and achieve practicum success. Practicums became times of great stress, high emotion, and frequent failure. Both student and associate teachers seemed to be negatively affected by their time together. As a result of my ongoing experiences in this area, my research journey began. I wanted to try and discover how to ensure participants did ‘get it’; to make practicum successful for both student and associate.

Two equally complex social concepts lie central to this research; teaching practicum and culture. Understanding the fundamentals of both serves as an introduction to the context in which this research occurs.

**Teaching practicum in New Zealand**

The practicum component is central to all early childhood teacher education programmes both in New Zealand and around the world (Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013; Faire, 1994; Ryan, Toohey, & Hughes, 1996). Practicums provide students with the opportunity to put theory learnt in the classroom into practice in real-life educational settings.

The aims of educational practicum are clearly set out by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, the independent statutory body for the country’s teachers. They are to:

- integrate theory and practice throughout the programme,
- plan, implement, assess, evaluate and reflect on their teaching practices,
- analyse and interpret practices they observe in schools or ECE centres in relation to research, theories and other knowledge gained throughout the programme,
- reflect on their own learning and practice to develop personal and professional goals (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015, p. 16).
Practicums are a common feature of a wide variety of professional qualifications. They feature across occupations where people are certificated on an ongoing basis and are required to attest to the quality of their practice. These qualifications include social work, counselling, nursing, speech therapy, and a wide range of other health fields. In this dissertation I use the term *practicum* to describe the fieldwork component of ITE.

In education, practicum can be known by a wide variety of names, dependent upon the ITE institution. In the literature, practicums have been referred to as teaching placements, field placements, field experiences, internships, work experience, cooperative education, and school experiences (Ryan, et al., 1996).

While attending their practicum early childhood centre, the student is mentored by a qualified, fully-registered teacher who holds a current Full Practicing Certificate (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). In New Zealand, these teachers are commonly referred to as associate teachers. I shall also be using this nomenclature throughout the dissertation.

Practicums allow students to try out their teaching skills in an authentic classroom environment with children, rather than simply trying to understand pedagogy as an abstract concept through coursework. Within the few weeks students work in the early childhood setting, they are expected to become fully involved with children’s teaching and learning. Under the guidance of their associate teacher, they have the opportunity to observe others’ practice, try out new teaching initiatives, and generally work to become as fully-functioning a member of the teaching staff as possible.

**Structure**

Every ITE institution in New Zealand is required to include a practicum component in their teaching qualification. The Education Council dictates that a minimum of twenty weeks of practicum must be included across a three or four year campus-based programme (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). Students studying for a one-year graduate teaching qualification must also complete a minimum of fourteen weeks practicum. When studying in field-based iterations of ITE, rather than on-campus, students are also required to work at least twelve hours in a licensed early childhood centre which is called their home centre. At least eight weeks are spent in different centres on practicum, as well as the practicum periods spent in their own home centre (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). Some
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providers adhere to the minimum programme approval criteria, while others choose to exceed the criteria. The length of time a student spends in each separate practicum experience also varies, again depending upon the ITE institution. Individual practicum can be anything from three to five weeks in New Zealand, again depending upon the ITE institution and the emphasis given to the benefit of hands-on learning (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015).

Assessment

Practicum is an assessed component of teacher education, just like other courses within the programme. The associate teacher is not only responsible for the mentoring of the student, but sometimes also for the summative assessment of the student’s teaching practice against criteria set by the training institution. These assessment measures are often, but not always, in alignment with the Graduating Teacher Standards as set by the Education Council (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.-a). Learning outcomes are set for the practicum, like any other course (For example, University of Canterbury, 2016). Students need to pass these in order to pass the teaching qualification.

If the associate teacher is involved in the summative assessment process, they usually share responsibility for assessment of the student with a representative from the ITE institution who visits the early childhood setting at least once during the period the student is present. Visits are to “provide [student teachers] with quality feedback and future goals for their ongoing development as a teaching practitioner … in order to receive the professional support and guidance they need to achieve success in the practicum” (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015, p. 19). Alternatively, the associate may only provide formative feedback towards a summative grade given by the visiting lecturer. Written reflective and planning work by the student may also be included in the overall grade (Aspden, 2014). The weighting given to each assessed component, practice or written work, varies depending upon the institution. Some ITE institutions assess practicum via a pass/fail approach, whereas graded components of practicum also feature (Aspden, 2014). Where there is a disparity between the visiting lecturer and associate teacher’s assessment of the student, the ITE institution is called upon to decide whether the student can pass the practicum or if they are required to do another one in its place. The assessment responsibility thus ultimately lies with the ITE institution, as it is accountable for awarding the qualification to the student.
All students from the same ITE institution are assessed using the same standardised, institutionally-defined assessment criteria. All students are expected to achieve these learning outcomes in order to be deemed successful. However, such uniform assessment does not take into account the widely diverse life experiences of each student. Nor does it accommodate those students who are not only new to early childhood education teaching, but who are also new to the entire New Zealand education system. There seems to be an assumption implicitly made by the ITE institution that all students, irrespective of their background, should reach the required performance standards within the same length of time in practicum.

**Culture**

The second central component in this research is culture. There is no one agreed-upon definition of culture and to confuse the issue further, it is often conflated with the concepts of ethnicity and race (Markus, 2008). Culture can be considered to be the sets of rules, norms, values and sanctions that develop within groups to guide how people subsequently act in different situations. Statistics New Zealand defines culture to mean “the shared knowledge, values, and practices of specific groups” (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.-a, p. 1). Such practices and values represent coordinated interpretative meanings, values and ways of living generated by people in the course of social living (Blumer, 1969). Cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next through a wide variety of socialisation processes, and constantly vary with time and experience. Considering oneself a member of a cultural grouping “confers a sense of belonging, pride, and motivation” (Markus, 2008, p. 654). Cultural values ebb and flow as individuals are exposed to new experiences, so new meanings and values may emerge. Culture is therefore an ever-moving, ever-changing concept. In this thesis, I shall be using the term *culture* to refer to common sets of values and norms which develop within groups, influence subsequent behaviour, and which can change and develop over time.

Race, on the other hand, is a term usually used to categorise groups of people in terms of perceived physical, biological and behavioural similarities (McLennan, Ryan, & Spoonley, 2004). It is often conferred upon groups by others in an unconscious effort to establish power and social ranking (Markus, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, n.d.-b). It has been associated with negative sociological and psychological connotations (Blackburn, 2000), so is not a term I will be using to differentiate groups within my discussion. However *racism*, the way that observable characteristics are used to stereotypically group people and judge their behaviour,
is acknowledged as existing nonetheless (McLennan, et al., 2004). Therefore it will be mentioned in reference to some research findings.

Ethnicity, according to Statistics New Zealand (n.d.-b), “is made up of people who have some or all of the following characteristics: a common proper name; one or more elements of common culture which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language; unique community of interests, feelings and actions; a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and a common geographic origin” (p. 1). Ethnicity is therefore associated with a person’s origins, and is used as a categorical label for groups of people from a similar geographical location and history (McLennan, et al., 2004). Sometimes individuals may identify with more than one ethnicity, and their affiliations may change over time (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.-b). Individuals with the same ethnicity may share some similar cultural values and practices, but not necessarily all, as culture is specific to the individual. *Ethnic origin* refers to a person’s “historical relationship to an ethnic group” (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.-b, p. 1); the group with which their ancestors will have been affiliated. However *ethnicity* is the term used for the group that people currently identify with. Labels such as New Zealand European, Māori, or Asian are examples of ethnic groups. In this thesis, I will also use such ethnic labels when discussing groups with common origins and in describing those who identify as being a member of those groups. The term *ethnic-minority* will be used throughout to indicate those people who attribute their origins differently to those of the dominant culture in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In sum, culture will be used when discussing beliefs and behaviour, and ethnicity will be used when identifying a person’s origins.

**Changes in New Zealand demographics**

Non-European immigration into Aotearoa New Zealand is not a new phenomenon. The Chinese, for example, have been in New Zealand, and particularly the South Island, since the goldmining era of the mid-nineteenth century. They were the first non-European-based immigrants to come to the country, and were initially expected to leave quickly. Their continued presence irritated the existing British settlers (Ng, 2003). An ongoing emphasis on the hierarchical view of ethnic difference was “supported … by contemporary Western theories of racial superiority and inferiority which eventually captured even the educated classes with their pseudo-scientific content” (Ng, 2003, p. 22). Chinese were not only viewed
as socially inferior, but were positioned as such by an ongoing series of legislative moves which restricted their arrival into the country and their entitlement to a pension. Their very culture was seen as an affront and a challenge to what it meant to be a New Zealander (Murphy, 2003).

Since the last century though, ethnic diversity has become more apparent in New Zealand’s population. Until 1945, immigration policies tended to maintain an ethnically-homogenous society (Ward & Masgoret, 2008), however the relaxation of the country’s borders due to economic globalisation has seen an increase in immigration rates. The fastest growing ethnic groups emigrating to New Zealand are those from Asian countries, particularly India and China (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a). The Asian ethnic label represents not just one, but hundreds of differing cultures, languages and beliefs all under the one heading. Those from China, Korea, Japan, South-East Asia, and India are all labelled as being part of the Asian continent (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2009). By 2038, it is estimated that immigration rates will have changed national demographics so that over 20% of the New Zealand population will be of Asian descent (Statistics New Zealand, 2016b). This number is expected to exceed the number of people who identify as Māori (New Zealand’s indigenous population) by the mid-2020s (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a). Although many immigrants are family groups, a large number also come as international students. In 2015 alone, 13% of all tertiary students were of international origin, with nearly 5% accounting for all enrolments in teacher education courses (Ministry of Education, 2016b).

In their large-scale local research, Ward and Masgoret (2008) suggest that current attitudes towards immigrants are now much more benign and inclusive. Yet such research, which directly questions respondents on their attitudes, may only reflect surface beliefs while still hiding the racism deeply embedded within New Zealand’s post-colonial society. Despite discourses that welcome the diversity that immigration brings to the country, there is evidence that a racist attitude is deeply entrenched in mainstream dominant perceptions and within the very structures upon which society is built (Harris et al., 2012; Sibley, 2010).

**Individualism and collectivism**

The changing face of New Zealand has also meant that a wider range of cultural beliefs are being encountered. Through the processes of socialisation and enculturation, all children are raised with a set of unconscious cultural values (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Greenfield, 1994; Kim & Choi, 1994). The work of Greenfield (1994) has labelled differing ethnicities as
having either an independent or interdependent foundation. She suggests that all ethnicities can be placed on a continuum, having varying degrees of individualist or collectivist cultural values. Individuals can also be placed on the same continuum, but may not exactly replicate the ethnic view, so assumptions about individuals cannot be made based solely on knowledge of their ethnic background (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Greenfield, 1994; Kim & Choi, 1994; Whittington, 2004).

In general terms, European-colonised countries like Aotearoa New Zealand have an independent, individualist approach derived from the dominant ethnicity that colonised the country (Kim & Choi, 1994). In New Zealand’s case, this country was imperial Britain. But *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, is expected to ensure that Māori are permanently culturally-acknowledged and celebrated in this country (Ritchie, 1996, 2002). There is also an ongoing sensitivity to the preservation of the wide range of Pasifika cultures as well, because of the significant Pasifika population residing in New Zealand who wish to preserve their cultural identity (Auckland Council, 2013; Statistics New Zealand, 2014b). As a result of these unique historical and sociocultural circumstances, the early childhood profession in Aotearoa New Zealand is sensitive to the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the country, particularly to Māori and Pasifika.

Despite the existing acknowledgement of ethnic diversity, many educational institutions in New Zealand are still dominated by the Westernised cultural values of the white *Pākehā* (New Zealand European) majority. This is because the early childhood workforce is predominantly staffed by this group (Education Counts, 2014), and society is structured to privilege those who value the dominant values and beliefs upon which it has been developed. Teachers are therefore likely to unconsciously favour their own values and beliefs within their own teaching practices. In early childhood, these values are manifested in the attitudes held about children, teaching, parenting, and play. Attributes such as freedom, individual choice, independence, self-esteem, empowerment, and competition are fostered (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Kim & Choi, 1994; Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, & Garcia, 2009; Whittington, 2004). These individualistic ideals have originated from historic theoretical views of children as active learners and constructors of knowledge (Morrison, 2013).

In contrast to individualism, a collectivist, interdependent worldview is held by over 70% of the world’s population (Yoon, 2010), including Māori, Pasifika and other indigenous ethnicities. Asian societies are also fundamentally collectivist. This philosophy manifests as
an emphasis upon the family as the dominant social group, serving others, sharing, modesty, and group achievement (Chan, 2006; Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Greenfield, 1994; Huntsinger, Huntsinger, Ching, & Lee, 2000; Kim & Choi, 1994; Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2009; Whitington, 2004). Children are socialised to rely upon family and to prioritise the wellbeing of others over themselves. Many collectivist values are in direct contrast to values held within individualistic societies.

**Confucianism**

Within the range of Asian ethnicities, collectivist cultural values originated from Confucianism. The ancient teachings of Confucius permeate modern society in China, also stretching beyond their modern-day borders to influence other Asian countries. Li (2001) makes the case that Western values are beginning to be reflected in the culture of some people of Asian ethnicity, but that the impact of traditional thinking is still highly significant. Confucian values have been reflected in different ways across time and across the population. They cannot be assumed to be representative of all those of Asian ethnicity. Nevertheless strong fundamental values of Confucianism continue to remain in modern day society.

Two deeply-held values symbolise Confucian teaching; filial piety and the maintenance of harmonious social relationships. Filial piety reflects a belief in the hierarchical nature of relationships, with children expecting to unquestioningly honour and obey their parents in all matters (Guo, 2006; Ho, 1994; Huntsinger, et al., 2000). The family is seen as the primary unit of society, with children expected to achieve personally in order to bring honour to the rest of the family (Ho, 1994; Li, 2001). From birth, children are strongly integrated within the family unit, which, in turn, provides lifelong protection in exchange for their loyalty (Kim & Choi, 1994). Because of the emphasis on family, the role of education in Confucian societies is to impart knowledge to children in order for them to be able to achieve academically and bring honour to the family unit. This also ensures that children are able to meet the material and emotional needs of their aging parents (Li, 2001).

A second key Confucian value is the maintenance of agreeable social relationships. Children are expected to conduct themselves with restraint and politeness, and to control their impulses and emotions (Huntsinger, et al., 2000). Inherent within this value is the concept of *face*, which Cupach and Metts (1994) define as “the conception of self that each person displays in particular interactions” (p. 3). Within Confucian society, face is closely connected with notions of respect, honour, status and credibility (Oetzel et al., 2001). Unconscious effort is
made to both retain face, and to be aware of oneself in connection to others. As result, those who have been brought up in a Confucian-based society often avoid conflicts with others and couch their intentions behind politeness (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Gao, 1998; Oetzel, et al., 2001; Zhan & Wan, 2016). Social interactions can therefore be indirect and subtle, leaving room for multiple interpretations. This is to ensure that discord is not made evident and disagreements are avoided (Oetzel, et al., 2001; Park-Saltzman, Wada, & Mogomi, 2012).

Parents adhering to these views raise their children very closely. Indeed, the relationship between mother and child can become more important than that which exists between parents. Children often sleep with their parents for several years, are held a lot and accompany parents wherever they go (Huntsinger, et al., 2000). Mothers can be very lenient towards their children in the first few years, doing everything for them. Under about the age of five, children are viewed to be below an “age of understanding” (Guo, 2006, p. 10). However, after that age, parenting becomes more of a training style, with stricter discipline employed (Ho, 1994; Huntsinger, et al., 2000).

Within Confucian-based societies, children tend to be viewed as passive, dependent individuals, needing to be filled with knowledge. The role of teachers, being seen as the reservoirs of this knowledge, is to impart this to children. Because social relationships are seen as hierarchical, teachers are treated with complete, unchallenged respect. Classrooms in many Asian schools emphasise teacher-directed activities, memorisation and repeated practice (Ho, 1994). Children do the same thing at the same time, and proceed at the same pace (Zhu & Zhang, 2008). However, it should be noted that the Chinese educational system, for example, has been the subject of significant educational reform since the 1980s (An, 2000; Jianjun, 2012; Yin, 2013). During this time, the effect of globalisation has meant that a more Western-influenced, individualised focus on children is beginning to be reflected in some classrooms. Yet Angle (2010) suggests that the Confucian influence is making a strong comeback in contemporary Chinese society, meaning that its influence is still very pervasive.

It is within this set of values that many Asian immigrant early childhood teaching students have been socialised. The participants in this research are likely to have been raised within an educational system in which standardised, hierarchically-based educational practices are commonplace. Their experiences of being a student, as well as their expectations of what it is to be a teacher, have all developed as a result of their own educational experiences. Coming
to New Zealand to gain an educational qualification places them in an entirely unfamiliar context.

**Intercultural theories**

Two similar, overlapping theoretical approaches have been used to underpin intercultural research. The first is based on the work of a number of researchers (Bennett, 1986, 1993; Berry, 2005, 2007; Hammer, 2012; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003), who have speculated as to a range of intercultural reactions experienced when encountering others who have contrasting cultural values. The second theoretical approach is Hybridity Theory based on the work of Bhabha (1994). Both suggest that the cultural ideal when differing cultures interact is an integration, or hybridisation, of both.

**Acculturation and the Intercultural Development Continuum**

Berry’s (2005, 2007) research with immigrants entering traditional immigrant-receiving countries, including New Zealand, documented the cultural and psychological changes following intercultural contact. Acculturation outcomes were documented in terms of the relationship between the maintenance of the home culture versus the ongoing contact with the new culture. Those that assimilated gave up their own culture entirely; those that separated held onto their home culture; and those who integrated achieved a balance between both. Integration has been shown to be beneficial to life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Research has shown that successful integration is related to resilience within the family unit (Dixon, Tse, Rossen, & Sobrun-Maharaj, 2010), the use of the new language, and participation in traditional cultural activities (Schnittker, 2002). Integration into the new culture allows immigrants to be able to acknowledge and value their own home culture, while still operating successfully within the cultural context of their new one. Working and socialising alongside both their own and other cultures supports the ongoing sociocultural and psychological changes that cultural integration requires (Berry, 2005).

However, the work of Bennett (1986, 1993), which was later further refined by Hammer (2012; Hammer, et al., 2003), developed Berry’s ideas further. Hammer (2012) suggests that intercultural contact goes through a greater range of reactions to cultural difference. His Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) suggests that people move slowly from a monocultural to an intercultural mind-set through five stages of denial, polarization, minimisation, acceptance, and finally adaptation. This more refined theoretical approach
allows for a deeper understanding of experiences of immigrants, as well as those encountering, working, and living alongside those who have different cultural values than their own. Integration is still the ultimate goal, but recognition is given for a broader range of responses. Hammer and his fellow authors (2003) summarised the continuum by suggested that “in general, the more ethnocentric orientations can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural difference… the more ethnoretative worldviews are ways of seeking cultural difference” (p. 426). Associate and student teachers in this research may be in different positions in terms of their perceptions on this continuum, so tension may occur in developing a shared understanding.

**Hybridity Theory**

A second framework used to conceptualise research examining the meeting of differing cultural values is Hybridity Theory based on the work of Bhabha (1994). Phompum, Thongthew and Zeichner (2013) define hybridity as a “model based on the thought to combine two things which are different but related to each other to create a new thing” (p. 203). Typically, Hybridity Theory has been used to examine situations where views and beliefs of the colonised and coloniser, the minority and dominant majority, intrinsically differ. It is a way for the beliefs of colonised minorities to be legitimised within an otherwise dominant discourse which seeks to position difference as deficit. Hybridity is the process, and the third space is where this occurs (Bhabha, 1994; Meredith, 1999). Thus, the third space is seen as a position where cultural values and beliefs can be articulated, reflected upon, and a new hybrid identity developed which interweaves the cultural elements of both perspectives. Watkins and Hook (2016) describe the result as the “cultural third” (p. 2).

In a colonised country like Aotearoa New Zealand, an educational imperative exists for all New Zealand teachers to be aware of the socio-political context in which they teach, as well as their own identity and ways of being which have produced an Anglo-normative discourse (Colvin, Dachyshyn, & Togiaso, 2012). *Te Whāriki* advocates for social justice in terms of cultural inclusion by stating that:

> Each early childhood education service should ensure that programmes and resources are sensitive and responsive to the different cultures and heritages among the families of the children attending that service. The early childhood curriculum actively contributes towards countering racism and other forms of prejudice (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 18).
Thus associate teachers working with students with differing cultural beliefs than their own are expected to be able to actively work towards supporting the student to develop a professional hybridised identity; a combination of their existing professional values with new ones encountered, rather than simply expecting students to assimilate to newly-experienced values to the detriment of their past heritage. Grenfell (1998) suggests that cultural hybridisation can occur unconsciously or intentionally. With a curriculum obligation in place, an intentional process where both associate and student are made aware of the cultural values which underpin their practice would seem to be the most optimal for this to occur.

**Curriculum and culture**

New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum* [*Te Whāriki*] (Ministry of Education, 1996) provides a context for socially and culturally-mediated learning for children. Its interwoven mat structure was gifted to early childhood from *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and serves as a bicultural foundation for cultural respect and understanding for *tangata whenua* (literally, the people of the land; the indigenous Māori) of Aotearoa New Zealand (Carr & May, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1996; Ritchie, 1996, 2002). On the surface, it provides a bicultural framework for inclusion, and a pluralistic perspective towards cultural diversity.

But understanding the societal tensions at the time it was written uncovers a more complex interplay of influences within the curriculum. *Te Whāriki* has just celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. It was developed in the early 1990s when multiple political, cultural, social and educational tensions were in play, so its apparent celebration of cultural diversity is coloured by other demands as well. Late in the twentieth century, a resurgence of Māori self-determination was being felt with the arrival of *ngā Kōhanga Reo* (literally, language nests; Māori language medium early childhood centres) (Nuttall, 2005). This new form of early childhood education was launched not only to revitalise the Māori language, but also as critique of the limited existing early childhood options at the time and their lack of authenticity for Māori children (May, 2009). So the curriculum development team included Māori representatives to ensure it reflected Māori worldviews and beliefs. These tend towards a collectivist approach, so family and relationships are central principles within the curriculum document (Carr & May, 1993; Ritchie, 2003). Theoretically, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological perspective and Vygotsky’s sociocultural perspective also interweave with Pere’s
te wheki (octopus) developmental perspective in *Te Whāriki*. These theories focus upon the importance and influence of family and wider social contexts on development (May, 2012; Ministry of Education, 1996).

However *Te Whāriki* was also launched at a time of rising neoliberal emphasis in education and other public sector services. The late 1980s saw the left-wing Labour government bring early childhood services under the responsibility of the Department of Education, and a complete educational sector overhaul in the 1989 Education Act (May, 2002, 2009). But during the ten years from 1990, the new right-wing National government cut funding to the sector and tempered the focus on change (May, 2002). Because of the changing political climate, the curriculum also has a focus on learning outcomes which are expected to be planned for and individually assessed. In addition, the document also has some goals which reflect an individualistic perspective. For example, children are encouraged to develop independent self-help skills, make their own decisions, and develop an appreciation for competition (Ministry of Education, 1996).

As a result of these conflicting influences, the current New Zealand early childhood curriculum holds mixed messages about cultural values and is open in how teachers interpret its requirements. Therefore teaching practices may still unconsciously reflect the dominant cultural foundation of the institutions that are responsible for teaching qualifications, and the teachers who actually interpret and teach within the curriculum framework. Student teachers who operate from a different set of unconsciously-held assumptions around children and education may struggle to understand the subtle nuances embedded within the curriculum.

**Issues in practicum for ethnic-minority students**

The focus of my research lies at the intersection of the concepts of teaching practicum and culture. It explores the notion of ethnic difference between student and associate teacher within the context of a practicum experience. Specifically, it examines the experiences of practicum of immigrant student teachers of Asian origin and their New Zealand associate teachers, and participants’ views of success. There are often issues around practicum success for this group of immigrant students because of the significant cultural differences between their culture and the New Zealand one in child-rearing practices, the nature of teaching, the supervisor/student relationship, and expectations of children in an educational setting. Issues include language difference, differences in expected teaching practices, and the emotional fall-out experienced from these (Campbell, O'Gorman, Tangen, Spooner-Lane, & Alford,
One obvious tension that could occur between an Asian immigrant student and their New Zealand associate teacher relates to language difference. Currently all teaching students who have English as an additional language (EAL) are required to meet a minimum level of 7.0 or higher in the International Language Testing System (IELTS) if they are to gain entry to ITE in New Zealand. Level 9.0 in this test represents an expert user, so the required level of 7.0 is high. After 2014, if teacher education candidates have completed at least two years of successful study at a New Zealand secondary school, achieving at least ten Level 2 National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) credits in literacy, then they are exempted from these language requirements. Prior to this date though, international teaching candidates only needed eight Level 2 literacy credits (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). However, despite the now higher language expectations placed upon student teachers, there may still be issues around deeper levels of understanding which are based upon culturally-acquired ways of knowing. Australian practicum research confirms that the language barrier becomes a significant issue for Asian immigrant students in practicum (Campbell, et al., 2008; Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009). But whether the high language requirements for New Zealand teaching programmes have mitigated this potential issue is as yet unclear.

A second cause of tension in practicum may be around pedagogical practice. Because of the differing cultural values reflected in the Asian and New Zealand education systems, it is to be expected that Asian immigrant students and New Zealand associate teachers may hold different views on the role of children, and their own roles as teachers or student teachers. Assessment criteria on which students are graded have been developed to reflect norms within the New Zealand educational system, the Education Council, and Te Whāriki. Students are expected to adhere to these normative teaching practices. Viewed through the individualistic perspective of those who may be assessing the student, cultural differences in practice may be viewed as wrong. Practicum success can therefore be negatively impacted.

A third area that may be problematic in practicum is around the emotional wellbeing of the student. Berry (2005) contends that all immigrants into a new country are likely to encounter at least some level of challenge when encountering differing cultural values. When confronted with such a sharply-contrasting worldview, as experienced by many Asian
immigrants into New Zealand, tensions can arise. Ethnic minorities encounter power inequalities and access to economic and social resources which underpins this tension (May & Sleeter, 2010). Being challenged with the different and sometimes conflicting assumptions and expectations between the education systems they are used to, and the New Zealand one, is likely to have differing effects on the psychological wellbeing of the student depending upon their personal state of acculturation. Assessment practices encourage students to assimilate with expected pedagogical norms, and set aside their own values and beliefs. Without strong intercultural relationships with, and support from, members of their new culture to support understanding, students can often lose self-esteem, feel powerless and lonely (Greenfield, 1994; Kim & Choi, 1994). When learning to become an early childhood professional in the practicum environment, performance pressure may add to this emotional turmoil.

**Research questions**

Much of the body of research into intercultural practicum experiences has documented students’ negative experiences. However, in line with the credit based approach to assessment used in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood centres, I instead focus upon what makes practicum for this group of Asian immigrant students and their New Zealand associate teachers *successful*.

The purpose of this study is therefore to explore what makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood student teachers, and their respective associate teachers. Specifically, students are immigrants from Asian countries who have either no or limited experience of the New Zealand educational system prior to beginning their teacher education.

This research addresses the following research question;

“What makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students and their associate teachers?”

From this main question, further questions are:

1. What perceptions of success in practicum do immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students hold?

2. What perceptions of success in practicum do their associate teachers hold?
3. Do the perceptions of success in practicum by immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students and their associate teachers differ? If so, in what ways?

4. What can be learned from these perspectives for initial teacher education?

**Thesis structure**

This document is broken into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two engages with current literature around intercultural practicum. The reviewed literature identifies success in practicum as being achieved through having similar expectations, effective relationships and communication, appropriate assessment, and positive identity development. However, in the chapter I raise arguments related to the extent to which the concept of success has been studied.

Chapter Three goes on to examine the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the research, as well as examining the process of data analysis. Methodological choices were made to gain a rich understanding of participants’ personal perceptions of success in practicum.

Chapter Four looks at findings as to what makes for a successful practicum from an individual case perspective, and key themes emerging in each of the three dyads.

Chapter Five builds upon this discussion by examining seven key success themes that developed for all participants. I go on to conceptualise success as a broader idea than is currently understood in the reviewed literature or in how practicum is assessed.

The sixth and final chapter goes on to examine a possible model of successful intercultural practicum from the perspective of student and associate teacher, based upon the research findings. The model proposes that a successful practicum between immigrant Asian ECE students and their associate teachers recognises the need to develop a third space in which to hybridise their understanding and include enough time to achieve this. I discuss a number of practical implications as a result of the proposed model, based on practicum length and structure, its assessment, and support processes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations of the research and proposed future research possibilities.
CHAPTER TWO:

PRACTICUM SUCCESS IN THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A practical component is considered an almost universally-accepted aspect of teacher education programmes worldwide (Farber & Armaline, 1994; Ryan, et al., 1996; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2004). It enables student teachers to experience first-hand the educational context within which they will be teaching, as well as being an opportunity for students to start to form their own professional identities (Elliott, 1995; Santoro, 1997). It is common for students to experience challenge and stress in this learning process as long-held beliefs are confronted and re-assessed (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Loizou, 2011; Owen & Solomon, 2006; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2010).

Changes to the demographic make-up of New Zealand, and increasing numbers of international students entering local teaching institutions, have diversified the ethnic composition of student teachers in recent years (Ministry of Education, 2016b). However, little has been written about the experience of ethnic-minority students within the practicum experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although attrition rates for non-New Zealand born students are similar to their local counterparts (Ministry of Education, 2015a), statistics do indicate that international students take longer than domestic students to complete similar-level qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2015c). Publically-available statistics around attrition rates from individual ITE institutions are not available. But the statistics around length of time to complete are concerning as they indicate an increased level of failure in courses by immigrant students (Howard, 2010; Scott, 2005; Statistics New Zealand, 2016b).

Three bodies of research are reviewed for this discussion. The first looks at what the literature has identified as indicating success in practicum. The second critically examines whether the literature identifies problems in practicum for students from a minority ethnic group, and what their issues may be. Finally, the third section of the chapter looks at how success has been conceptualised in the reviewed literature, before discussing my own perception of success.
What the literature identifies as success

Research literature around teaching practicum identifies a number of areas that contribute to success. Practicum success has been examined by researching the expectations of its participants, the nature of the relationship between the student and associate teacher, their communication, by the assessment practices used to measure success, and in the development of the student’s professional identity.

There is an underlying presumption in the findings of this body of work that if these key components are optimised, then the practicum will be successful. That is, the student will pass the institutionally-required learning outcomes for professional practice. Success is assumed to mean passing these learning outcomes; not failing. The Oxford Dictionary defines success as being “the accomplishment of an aim or purpose” (Success, 2016, p. 1), so this assumption is not surprising. If the aim of practicum is to pass the necessary learning outcomes, then success is deemed to be doing just that. Later in this chapter I examine literature which considers the notion of success itself, and whether passing the learning outcomes is the sole requirement for practicum participants to feel that their practicum was successful. However this current section examines each of the key identified factors that research indicates contribute to practicum success, (i.e. passing learning outcomes) with the impact of the student being from a minority ethnic group considered in relation to each.

Existing expectations of participants

In this section, three bodies of research are discussed around the expectations of the student teacher and associate teacher going into practicum. The first is how the associate teacher views their own supervisory role. The second is how the associate teacher positions the student. The final section looks at how the student themselves expects to be perceived while on practicum.

Associate teacher expectations of successful role

Becoming an associate teacher in New Zealand is not difficult for fully registered New Zealand teachers. The only legal requirement from The Education Council is for associates to have a teaching qualification, to be fully registered, and to have a current practicing certificate (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). There are currently nineteen ITE institutions in New Zealand offering early childhood teaching qualifications (Ministry of
Education, 2016a). The sheer number of associate teachers required throughout the country is therefore very large.

International studies show associate teachers in professional practice hold clear perceptions around their role. They think it involves the provision of encouragement, support, new pedagogical experiences, and the evaluation of performance in order to assist the student towards a successful outcome (Altan & Sağlamel, 2015; Hamilton, 2010; Loizou, 2011). One Israeli investigation also suggested that past experiences as a student became a significant influence in how associate teachers perceive their role (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007). In New Zealand, Trevethan (2013) has investigated the extent to which the ITE institution influences associate teacher perceptions of their role. In her study involving New Zealand associate teachers of primary ITE students, she also found associates’ views to have developed as a result of their own experiences as students, as well as their own professional learning working in the sector.

Because associate teachers have tended to learn how to supervise through personal experience, supervision styles vary. Some international research suggests that associates position themselves hierarchically above students, as they consider themselves to be role models and problem solvers for students (Altan & Sağlamel, 2015; Hamilton, 2010; Loizou, 2011; Rajuan, et al., 2007). In contrast though, several other international studies indicate that the associate teacher role is more variable and can be viewed on a continuum, with a directive style at one end and a non-directive, collaborative style at the other (Cameron & Wilson, 1993; Graham, 2006; Haigh, 2001; Hawkey, 1997; Justen, McJunkin, & Strickland, 1999; McDonald, 2004). Within their work, the authors make the assumption that a collaborative style is the ideal for students. They urge associates to move along the continuum from a more traditional directive approach to a more desired collaborative one. Collaboration is positioned as the ideal practicum supervision technique for student success in these studies. This positioning is not surprising as it reflects current Westernised sociocultural educational theory in recognising learning as a socially-based process. However, as neither the researchers nor the participants were members of ethnic-minorities, only the perspective of the dominant culture has been represented in the research.

Other international studies have categorised practicum supervision styles as being discrete types, rather than on a continuum. Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen (2014) reviewed international literature and described eleven different roles of cooperating teachers (an international term
to describe associate teachers), but concluded by using a three-part typology to summarise their findings; closed, invited, and claimed. Closed participation in the supervisory role represented a relationship where the more powerful partner, the associate teacher, makes decisions without consulting the student. Claimed participation was when the student acted independently of their supervising teacher. But the invited space was positioned as optimal; as both participants were working together with power equally distributed. As with continuum-style models, the authors argue that this invited space is the most productive for supervisor and student. Although this review was done by authors from historically-colonised countries, like New Zealand, it does not include research specifically aimed to investigate supervision styles in practicum with ethnic minorities. Indeed, there is a dearth of research on the associate teacher role set in the New Zealand context, and none which looks at how ethnic and cultural difference between supervisor and supervisee may affect this presumption of the best type of supervisory practice to support student success.

**Associate teacher positioning of successful students**

Research conducted in New Zealand suggests that associate teachers tend to position the student entering practicum solely as a *learner* (Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004). Likewise, Ferrier-Kerr (2009) confirms that New Zealand associate teachers view students as learners, rather than as professional colleagues. In Canada, Etherington (2011) found that even when students are of a mature age and have a great deal of life experience, this expectation persists. This is in direct contrast to the research assumption discussed earlier that a collaborative style of associate teacher supervision is optimal for student learning (For example, Clarke, et al., 2014). Associates themselves seem to resist such positioning in favour of a more top-down style. These findings suggest that there may be a tendency for associate teachers to view themselves as hierarchically superior in terms of their knowledge and practice; they assume their role is to model and support correct pedagogical practice in order for the student to be successful.

There may be little allowance made for ethnic-minority students in terms of their understanding of a new educational environment when beginning practicum. Research in this area has tended to have a small number of participants and be qualitative in nature in order to fully examine participants’ experiences. Hastings (2010) suggests that associate teachers expect *all* students, irrespective of ethnic background, to already know school culture and expected behaviour upon entering practicum. Similarly, in another small Australian
investigation, indigenous Aboriginal students and their supervisors were interviewed before and after practicum. Beforehand, teachers thought that there would be no difference in mentoring an Aboriginal student compared with a student from the dominant, white majority. Afterwards however, supervising teachers recognised that indigenous students did require additional support to understand fundamental differences in expectations (Martinez, McNally, York, Rigano, & Jose, 2001). Further Australian research reinforces the finding that associate teachers may assume that all students, no matter their cultural orientation, have the same access to information on the education system and on subtleties in expected behaviour in the education field (Campbell, et al., 2008; Erben & Wyer, 1997; Hastings, 2010). However such assumptions reflect an ethnocentric perspective; with the dominant ethnicity viewing themselves as the standard against which others are judged. Ethnic-minority students are not recognised as having differing experiences or cultural beliefs around their teaching role in practicum. Much of this intercultural research originates from Australia where ITE institutions have also had to react to the significant increase in the number of Asian immigrants in the past few years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). But research in the New Zealand context, where ethnic diversity is supposedly celebrated and supported, is still lacking.

**Student expectations to be successful**

In their study of international teachers re-qualifying to teach in Canada, Myles, Cheng and Wang (2006) put forward the argument that students are likely to enter practicum with pre-existing perceptions about the role of a teacher based upon their own personal educational experiences. This aligns with research findings around the expectations of associate teachers. Students expect that if their practice fits with what they believe a good teacher does, they will be successful. Those students originating from Asian countries may expect their new educational system to mirror their own life-experience, being teacher-led and with disciplined, compliant students (Myles, et al., 2006). Cruickshank (2004) found that Asian teachers trying to re-qualify to teach in Australia felt that the local Australian education system was too student-centred and had a much broader range of abilities in each class than in their home countries. None of these results are surprising, given the teacher-led Confucian model of teaching used in many Asian countries which was discussed in the introductory chapter.
All such perceptions are very deeply held, and difficult to change according to a Chinese-born New Zealand researcher (Guo, 2006). These durable perceptions about the role of the teacher are taken for granted until student teachers are challenged in a situation like practicum. Although I could find no similar research investigation into the early childhood practicum context in New Zealand, this group of international studies at least indicates that ethnic-minority students may enter practicum expecting to teach in the way in which they have become accustomed. They are expecting to be successful by doing what they have seen teachers doing in their own lives. However the difficulty lies in the fact that they may be unaware how fundamentally different their new educational system is from their own experience, and the different style of teaching that accompanies this.

Associate teachers’ positioning of students as learners may be in contrast to how ethnic-minority students position themselves in the practicum relationship. A good number of research studies suggest that students enter practicum in New Zealand or Canada expecting to be treated as professional *colleagues* by their associate teachers (For examples, see Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Etherington, 2011; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004; McGee, Ferrier-Kerr, & Miller, 2001). These research findings are from the student population in general, rather than those specifically of an ethnic minority. On the surface these expectations appear at odds with the type of relationship possibly favoured by associate teachers where they put themselves in the position of power in terms of acceptable practice.

The studies which have specifically focussed upon the expectations of ethnic-minority students in practicum have resulted in conflicting findings. Their expectation of being treated as colleagues extends further to encompass the notion of *respect* (Loizou, 2011; Martinez, et al., 2001; Nguyen, 2008). This assumes an equal power relationship between the two parties involved. In a Canadian study with immigrant teachers looking to achieve a locally-recognised qualification, participants expected there to be no power differential at all with their supervisor (Myles, et al., 2006). This may have been due to their existing expectation of respect as teachers in their home countries. Minority students tend to expect they will be given additional, specialised guidance during the practicum. This includes increased sensitivity to their personal situation, and specific guidance on how their new educational system operates (Loizou, 2011; Martinez, et al., 2001; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009). In this case, they afford their supervisors the power of having knowledge that they wanted to access. So there may be fundamental differences in the expectations that ethnic-minority students
bring to the practicum in comparison to associate teachers from the dominant majority. There also appears to be a disparity in ethnic-minority students’ perceptions of themselves as teachers who are worthy of respect, with the top-down knowledge-dissemination style they may wish of their associate teachers. Ethnic-minority students seem to oscillate between the two positions.

In conclusion, the expectations each participant in the practicum holds about their respective roles, each other, and of the educational system may be at odds. This misalignment could place strain upon the relationship between student and associate, possibly impacting upon practicum success. With ethnic and cultural difference potentially amplifying these discrepancies in expectations, a successful practicum experience for immigrant Asian students becomes more unlikely. Yet no research has been done looking at the expectations both student and associate teacher hold before entering practicum together. All research in this area has only been looked at from one perspective or the other. Undertaking research looking at the practicum in a holistic way could allow the opportunity for differences in expectations to be examined and explored by all its participants.

**How the relationship between associate and student supports practicum success**

**Similarities in personality and expectations**

Another research focus implied to support success in practicum is the nature of the relationship between the student and the person in charge of their supervision. Success is seen to be impacted by the quality of the interpersonal connection made between the two individuals. Australian research supports the idea that perceived interpersonal similarities within dyads results in increased levels of satisfaction with the supervision experience itself. Hastings (2004) interviewed Australian secondary student teachers, and found that having matching personalities with their associate teachers led to a positive interpersonal relationship. In the nursing and agricultural sectors in the United States, matching interpersonal qualities have been shown to increase levels of satisfaction within practicum (Kitchel & Torres, 2010; Whitfield & Edwards, 2011). Some studies suggest that it is not so much personality similarities that are important, but matching personal values (Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2002; Kitchel & Torres, 2010). Together, this international research implies that the less diversity in the relationship, the higher degree of perceived interpersonal comfort (Ragins, 1997). Above all, the supervising teacher and student seem to need to make
a positive, personal connection for the relationship to develop (Anderson, Walker, & Ralph, 2009; Chen, 1996; Graham, 2006). There is an inference made that the more positive the relationship is perceived to be, the more likely the student is to pass the practicum, to succeed. But with culturally differing values and styles, this may be difficult.

It is not only values that need to be comparable to optimise the relationship. As discussed earlier, both the supervisor and student can enter the practicum with very differing expectations of themselves and of each other. The effect of this mismatch is unclear. In a small international collective case study with pre-service teachers, it was suggested that having matched expectations related directly to having a positive experience during practicum (Graves, 2007). Similar work in New Zealand concurs (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). However, interviews of supervising teachers in Israel and the United States found that having slightly differing expectations created a level of discord that actually produced more opportunities for learning as it encouraged more critical reflection. With too great a difference, this finding was negated (Rajuan, et al., 2010). All these studies investigated the pre-service teacher population in general. But looking at the level of variance in expectations found between ethnic-minority students and their supervisors suggests the potential for greater discord exists within the relationship. This has been confirmed in one Canadian study of immigrant teachers, with differing expectations creating a climate of misunderstanding and defensiveness during practicum (Myles, et al., 2006). A feeling of subordination, “combined with personality differences resulted in a continual cycle of misunderstanding and defensiveness for some candidates” (p. 242). The lack of perceived respect by this group of student teachers, who were already qualified in their own country, heightened the negative climate. It is unclear whether this would still be the case if students did not already hold a teaching qualification.

This body of research reinforces the argument that similarity in personalities, values and expectations strengthens the interpersonal connection in practicum. But it is likely that participants from differing ethnic backgrounds could hold very different cultural values and expectations, making the likelihood of a strong interpersonal relationship less likely. If this relationship is not secure, there is the possibility that the student may not succeed in the practicum.
**Effects of ethnic difference and power on the supervisory relationship**

The research into how a cultural or ethnic difference within the practicum relationship impacts upon its quality has had conflicting results. The research base is primarily from the United States business mentoring or postgraduate supervision fields because of the lack of research into intercultural practicum supervision. Many survey-based results in the business and academic supervision fields indicate that same-ethnicity dyads perceive a higher degree of support, trust, satisfaction, and a closer interpersonal bond (For example, Blake-Beard, Murrell, & Thomas, 2006; Brown, 2009; Jeanquart-Barone, 1993, 1996; Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005). Yet over time, this effect may be moderated. Turban, Dougherty and Lee (2002) concluded in a large survey of doctoral students in Missouri, that similarity was only important early on in the relationship. No research appears to have been undertaken which examines the effects of matching ethnic backgrounds within teaching practicum, so it is difficult to predict whether these results would be replicated in New Zealand’s unique context. However, the fact that teaching practicums usually only last several weeks, compared to several years in a mentoring relationship, suggests that insufficient time may prevent working through any initial difficulties in an intercultural relationship.

Consciously addressing the difference in cultural beliefs within a relationship may be one way to diminish its potentially-negative effects. In United States mentoring surveys, participants agreed that directly discussing such issues improved the nature of the mentoring relationship (Blake-Beard, et al., 2006; Brown, 2009; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Schlosser & Foley, 2008). However, it may be that simply adopting the same strategy, to either address or ignore difference, is the key. The power differential between participants may come into play here, as the strategy adopted is usually the preference of the mentor (Thomas, 1993). A survey of Canadian ethnic-minority social worker students suggested they did not feel they were in a position to be able to raise racist-based issues if their supervisors did not initially do so (Razack, 2001). By ignoring this issue, supervisors adopt a ‘colour-blind’ attitude towards the relationship, neglecting a significant part of students’ personal identity (Martinez, et al., 2001). Once again though, this body of research is largely of a quantitative nature, has been conducted outside of New Zealand, has tended to focus on African American participants, and has not been done within a teaching context. Whether or not New Zealand associate teachers take into account cultural difference is discussed when looking at assessment practices in this review.
The hierarchical and evaluative nature of the practicum relationship does create a power differential between teacher and student. This distinction is likely to be accentuated across ethnicities because students may not hold the same cultural knowledge as their associate teachers. In a large survey of Canadian minority social workers, results showed that the power dynamic in supervision is different when ethnic difference is involved (Markham & Chiu, 2011). This theme is repeated in business mentoring literature. Ragins (1997) argues that if the supervisor in the relationship is a member of the dominant, white ethnic group, and the student is a member of an ethnic minority, perception of the student is negatively affected. Those being supervised are identified stereotypically, with more negative personal attributes and levels of competence than their dominant white counterparts. Several studies of already-qualified immigrant teachers also report an unexpected sense of subordination and powerlessness in the relationship with their supervisors during practicum (Myles, et al., 2006; Peeler, 2005). This could, therefore, affect the likelihood of the practicum being deemed successful by both parties.

Research into overcoming some of the negative effects of the power differential provides some direction for supervising teachers. Some studies between academic supervisors and their students suggest that it may be the interpersonal component which is the key to supporting students to a successful outcome. Crutcher (2007) argues that supervisors need to examine their own cultural stereotypical beliefs and develop empathy for their student, recognising that they are involved in a larger social context. This enables supervisors to view students as individuals, rather than merely as a stereotypical member of a particular ethnic group. Similarly, Whitfield and Edwards (2011) suggest that mentors of minority populations must recognise that each student is an individual with their own life experiences and cultural views. Getting to know each individual student well from a professional perspective appears imperative.

When considering the power difference within a supervisory relationship, it is possible that stereotypical racist-based perceptions may develop. Research has suggested that the perceptions of the dominant culture are so engrained and normalised that anything different can be perceived as deficit (Erickson, 2007; Markham & Chiu, 2011). Erben and Wyer’s (1997) Australian study of intercultural supervision in practicum, where the ethnicity of supervisory and student were different, reinforces this idea. The power relationship was validated by the hierarchical structure of the practicum. In their study, students’ success was
gauged by their ability to assimilate into existing school practices and discourses. The student teacher was the one assumed as needing to change to fit into the educational setting in order to pass the practicum’s learning outcomes; to succeed in it.

The way that practicum success is perceived by those in an evaluative position seems to be influenced by their own cultural values. The emphasis of Westernised cultures upon individualism, as discussed in the introduction, is therefore likely to colour the way supervisors evaluate their students. In a study with Aboriginal students in Australia, mentors cited personality issues as being the root of problems, not realising that they were instead differences in cultural values (Martinez, et al., 2001). Ragins’ (1997) survey of US business mentors indicated that perceptions of competence were influenced by stereotypical cultural perceptions. In her autobiographical account of her own cross-ethnic mentoring relationship, Johnson-Bailey (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004), an African American woman, suggests the only way to overcome racist tendencies was for her mentor to acknowledge her personal stories of racism. In this way, the mentor could see their own cultural assumptions, values and behaviours exposed. Indeed, this could be a beneficial exercise for both members of the relationship. As a member of an Asian ethnic-minority herself, Lau (2008) documented in her research that ethnic-minority teacher candidates in Canada were themselves resistant to Eurocentric cultural values. This reinforces the finding that cultural values and assumptions are extremely resistant to change. So the way that success is perceived in the practicum is likely to be culturally-determined.

Together, the above body of research suggests that ethnic difference between a supervisor and student could have a significant impact on their relationship during practicum. Participants come to the experience with very resilient, unconsciously-held cultural values. With the associate teacher sometimes also holding assessment power over the student, students may simply resort to doing as they are told without having any real understanding as to why these expectations exist. High levels of confusion and stress may result.

**Successful communication**

Positive communication is another research focus for successful practicum. A number of New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian studies suggest that the professional development of the student teacher rests upon the ability of both parties to communicate in an open, honest and collegial manner (For examples, see Anderson, et al., 2009; Graham, 2006; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hastings & Squires, 2002; McDonald, 2004). It is implied within this body of
work that having effective communication between the student and other key stakeholders in the practicum will contribute to its success.

Within a multi-ethnic relationship in New Zealand, effective communication rests largely upon English language proficiency. In the 2013 New Zealand census, 96.1% of the population used English as their primary language (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). Furthermore, well over 95% of the teaching population in early childhood use English over 80% of the time (Ministry of Education, 2015b). So it is reasonable to assume that associate teachers are most likely to use English as their daily language of communication with student teachers. There is an assumption that the student also needs to be proficient in the use of English to be able to clearly communicate with their associate teacher, understand feedback, build positive relationships, teach children, and therefore be successful in practicum.

Students and supervising teachers agree that the level of confidence in English affects the nature of the relationship and subsequent success of the practicum. English language proficiency has been raised as a significant issue in practicum by students and associates in research conducted by members of both dominant and minority ethnic groups (For examples, see Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, & Callan, 1991; Burns, 1991; Hyland & Lo, 2006; Nguyen, 2008, 2012; Remington Smith, 2007). The English language requirements for teacher education programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand mean that students need to have gained a NCEA Level 2 in the literacy requirements within their University Entrance qualification, plus an IELTS score of at least 7. So there is an expectation that ITE students will have a high level of conversational English because of these initial restrictions.

Despite language restrictions to enrol in ITE, there may still be an issue with English language usage within practicum. Although my literature search did not find any research set in the New Zealand context, research in Australia confirms that immigrant Asian students feel their restricted English capabilities become a major issue during field experiences (Spooner-Lane, et al., 2004, 2009). Many other studies have replicated this finding across different countries (For examples, see Campbell, et al., 2008; Chen, 1996; Han, 2005; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2003; Myles, et al., 2006; Nguyen, 2008; Zhou, 2010). This body of research suggests that the language barrier affects the supervisory relationship, the ability to learn, and student self-confidence. Furthermore, the degree of language proficiency and strong English accent may emphasise the difference in the relationship and accentuate the gap already there. Two Australian studies using discourse analysis of conversations between
students and supervisors suggested that the level of English capability was actually viewed as a personal attribute by supervisors; students either ‘had’ it or they did not (Santoro, 1997, 1999). The disparity in English language capabilities between the participants of the relationship is likely to significantly affect ongoing communication. Impaired English conversation skills of ethnic-minority students have been shown to make them feel self-conscious, unwilling to ask questions, be overly polite, and lack understanding when receiving feedback (Haggerty, 1995; Martinez, et al., 2001; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009). But no research seems to have yet been conducted in New Zealand to find out if the ITE language requirements here impact on these findings.

In sum, the importance of effective communication between student and associate has been identified as a central tenet to practicum success in the literature. The issues that occur as a result of the student not being able to communicate confidently in English mean that success is likely to be negatively impacted.

**Assessment practices that support success**

**Summative and formative forms of assessment**

The complexity of the assessment processes used during practicum may add to the complex nature of the relationship between its two main participants. Assessment is made of the student’s pedagogical performance through both formative and summative means. Formative assessment is that which can be acted on by the student to modify their teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In practicum, this occurs primarily through feedback given to the student, and ongoing student reflections of their own actions. The effectiveness of formative assessment is judged by its ability to initiate positive change as it has immediate consequences for learning (Wiliam & Black, 1996). However, there is an underlying assumption that both the assessor and the assessee have a shared understanding of what the success criteria are. Similarly, there is an assumption that the student is actively engaged in the assessment process (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Smith, 2010). In an intercultural practicum, participants may begin with different ideas about what successful practice should look like, calling into question the validity of the assessment process.

Summative assessment is the more fixed form of educational assessment. It is an evaluation of the student’s past performance during practicum. It is comprised of the final reports written by the associate teacher and visiting lecturer, as well as any written academic work.
that the student is required to submit such as discussions about implemented activities or reflections on practice. These can also be used in a formative way for future practicum experiences. The effectiveness of summative forms of assessment is also based upon shared understandings and relies upon consistent interpretation of evidence (Wiliam & Black, 1996). Once again, cultural differences may call such shared understandings into question as participants come to the process with differing worldviews.

Assessment in practicum

Much of the research into practicum assessment has focussed upon its summative aspects. Summative assessment looks to “assess ways in which students move from intellectual understanding to enactment in practice - and back” (Goulding, Bloomfield, & Reimann, 2015, p. 214). This body of research suggests that there are issues in the implementation of summative assessment. The first issue is that there may be a gap between what is externally mandated by the ITE institution and what actually happens on practicum. Recent New Zealand research into the reliability of three different instruments to measure how associate teachers judge readiness to teach in final practicum placements found that judgements were usually based upon the past individual experiences of the associates, rather than external assessment measures. The summative final report tended to be written from personal ‘gut experience’, rather than guided by the required competencies (Ell & Haigh, 2015). This finding has been replicated with research in the South African context (Noor Davids, 2015). In Canada, Danyluk and her colleagues further suggested that making the decision to fail a student is sometimes avoided because of the resulting emotional upheaval, rather than basing judgement solely upon pedagogical practice (Danyluk, Luhanga, Gwekwerere, MacEwan, & Larocque, 2015). Assessment, therefore, seems to be a highly contested exercise. Objective benchmarks are provided to encourage standardised assessment processes. However, taken together, these studies begin to build a picture of an assessment process from the associate teacher perspective that is instead highly personal and contextualised.

The second issue with practicum assessment is to do with the assumption that the associate teacher and student have a shared understanding of appropriate pedagogical practices upon which the student is being evaluated against in the final summative practicum assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wiliam & Black, 1996). Sharplin, Peden and Marais (2015) employed vignettes, scenarios of example pedagogical situations, in a recent study in Australia as a way to try and align understanding of practice requirements between
supervisors and students who shared the same ethnicity. This was a large study and found a
good degree of similarity between student and associate teacher understanding. This finding
goes some way into alleviating concern over the assumption about shared understanding
between student and associate who share similar ethnic backgrounds. However it did not
consider situations where participants had differing underlying cultural expectations around
the role of the teacher and child in society. These expectations could impact what individuals
consider appropriate practice, calling into question the assumption of a shared understanding.

Another issue concerned with the assessment process in practicum has to do with the tension
between the mentoring and evaluative roles the associate teacher may hold (Tillema, Smith,
& Leshem, 2011). Moody (2009) argues that being both a supporter and assessor of practice
places the associate in a powerful position which can place the relationship between associate
and student in a tenuous position. ITE institutions commonly attempt to diffuse this issue by
placing final assessment decisions with the visiting lecturer. Depending upon the institution,
visiting lecturers may visit during a practicum once, or several times. Yet recent New
Zealand research suggests that students and associates may consider the inclusion of the
visiting lecturer into the assessment equation as lacking validity, as the visitor has neither the
time nor the ongoing relationship with the student to effectively assess their practice (Zhang,
Cown, Hayes, Werry, & Barnes, 2015). Indeed, earlier New Zealand research with a small
number of students found that they considered the expectations of the visiting lecturer too
rigid to be able to appropriately assess their practice (Murphy & Butcher, 2011). So the
visiting lecturer is positioned as being too rigid or out of touch in their assessment. In
contrast, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the associate teacher may be criticised for being
too personalised in their assessment.

From a formative assessment perspective, some research has also been done in terms of the
quality of feedback given during practicum. Overall, helpful and constructive feedback seems
to be critical to the professional progression of the student (McDonald, 2004; Ventouras,
2016). But how feedback is given seems to be reflective of the nature of the style of
supervision employed by the associate teacher. For example, if associate teachers consider
their role to be primarily as role models, their feedback is likely to be concerned with how
well the student replicates their own teaching practices (Graham, 2006). It may not
necessarily be the best in supporting the student to come to their own understanding of what
is accepted by the dominant majority as appropriate practice, or the reasons behind it.
Assessment of ethnic-minority students in practicum

In summary then, there appear to be issues related to the implementation of summative assessment in practicum, the assumption of a shared understanding between student and associate about appropriate practice to assess, the tension between support and evaluation the associate teacher may provide, and how useful feedback is for the student. Taken together, they call into question the effectiveness of assessment measures used in practicum. Success is assumed to mean passing summative and formative forms of assessment. But it could become impacted by the assessor and assessee having differing cultural beliefs about correct pedagogical practice or by the associate making judgements not based on the assessment criteria. Adding ethnic difference to the practicum partnership seems to add further complexity to the already-questionable assessment situation.

A series of studies set in Australia by dominant-culture researchers Ortlipp and Nuttall (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012; Ortlipp & Nuttall, 2011), has highlighted issues arising when assessing ethnically-diverse students in practicum. Together, their work suggests a “discourse of denial” exists within assessment practices in an intercultural practicum (Ortlipp & Nuttall, 2011, p. 91). Student teachers of minority ethnic groups wanted their associate teachers to acknowledge and engage in understanding the depths of their cultural difference. But associate teachers instead wanted to focus on the similarity of the human condition. If they did acknowledge cultural difference at all, it was done within a usefulness, normalising or compensatory discourse (Ortlipp & Nuttall, 2011). Other research from this pair of researchers suggests that a Westernised bias also exists in assessment documentation. Their analysis of practicum documentation across four Australian universities showed that acknowledgment of cultural difference was almost non-existent. Instead, language used within assessment documentation made assumptions about English language proficiency, taking an assertive approach to interpersonal communication, and the need for the student to fit into the culture of their practicum centre (Nuttall & Ortlipp, 2012). All these assumptions privilege Western ways of knowing and being. Any deviance from these resultant norms may be seen as deficit.

Nuttall and Ortlipp (2012) go so far as to suggest that assessment requirements are fundamentally unjust for ethnic-minority students, especially if additional support is not given to them to help them adjust to the different cultural expectations in their new education system. But in another small Australian research project, Campbell and fellow researchers
(2008) concluded that supervising teachers do not think that international students should be given different assessment criteria to locally-born students because they are all studying for the same qualification. Ortlipp and Nuttall (2011) state that this is “symptomatic of a wider discourse in early childhood education: a reluctance to let go of notions of ‘equality’ in favour of notions of ‘equity’ and the inevitable pedagogical challenges this would bring” (p. 92). There appears to be a tension in recognising the need for more flexible assessment processes to cater for students who do not fit dominant majority expectations.

No similar research has yet been conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand. Whether a similar lack of equity exists in our context where ethnic diversity is embedded both within our history and curriculum documentation cannot be determined. But international research does seem to paint a picture of pursuing equality rather than equity; a focus predominantly on standardisation. A dominant Western discourse appears to be prevalent both in documentation and how it is interpreted. Success, then, could be interpreted to mean compliance with individualistic cultural and contextual norms, assessed on the basis of personal expectations of the associate teacher. But how this is translates to a more culturally-sensitive New Zealand context is not yet known.

### Successful student professional identity development

Another research focus around practicum success is the student’s development of a positive and pedagogically-appropriate professional identity. It is apparent from earlier discussion that practicums involving members of differing ethnicities are highly complex, and participants may be more likely to experience difficulty than those where the associate teacher and student teacher are of the same ethnicity. The above factors suggest that, compared to their ethnic-majority counterparts, immigrant Asian students may be facing additional challenges in building and maintaining a relationship with their associate teachers. This is cause for concern as it is in the context of, and with the support of, this relationship that students develop their personal and professional identities while on practicum (Elliott, 1995). Positive identity change occurs as the result of challenge and critical reflective thinking (Mezirow, 1990).

All students, when confronted with a challenge to their assumptions about pedagogical practice, use their relationship with their associate teacher to support them through a period of emotional upheaval, critical reflection and redevelopment of self (Elliott, 1995). When these processes are optimised, practicum success is more likely (Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016;
Peeler, 2005; Reid, Dahlgren, Petocz, & Dahlgren, 2008). Each part of the identity development process; emotional upheaval, critical reflection, and identity change, will now be examined in the context of research literature into each stage.

**Productive emotional upheaval**

There is recognition that strong negative emotions accompany identity change in any student (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012). An intense cognitive struggle is also reported repeatedly in the literature on practicum for ethnic-minority students. Whether it be new English speaking student teachers in Australia (Campbell, Tangen, & Spooner-Lane, 2006; Han & Singh, 2007), the United States (Lu, 2005), immigrant teachers in Canada (Duchesne & Stitou, 2010), EFL student teachers in Palestine (Barahmeh, 2016), or British nursing students in Finland (Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2003), all report a profound upheaval in their own perceptions, values and beliefs as they encounter an educational context completely at odds with their own. Together, these investigations report high levels of stress, depression, anxiety and exhaustion. As has been the custom with research with experiences of ethnic-minority students, the reviewed literature all centres upon the negative.

The acculturation model of Berry (2005, 2007) suggests that new immigrants go through a process of acculturation, where cultural and psychological changes occur, leading to high levels of distress. Exposure to new cultural norms in practicum is therefore likely to produce a negative emotional response, especially initially before time and experience allows for an integration of cultural understandings.

It is then likely to be the relationship with the associate teacher that students rely upon to support them through this emotional period if they enter practicum shortly after arriving in a new country. Loizou (2011) suggests that students need support to view these challenges as learning opportunities rather than obstacles. However Morales-Mann and Smith Higuchi’s (1995) study with the mentors of Chinese nurses learning in Canada reported that the students required very firm encouragement to be able to do so. So it may be very difficult to transform the negative response to cultural difference into a more positive outlook.

Both associate teachers and visiting tutors seem to also be emotionally and physically affected by the cognitive trials endured by students. Australian mentors of secondary school student teachers reported feelings of guilt, anxiety, stress, disappointment and frustration during these periods too (Hastings, 2004). Similarly, Finnish nursing supervisors testified to
heightened levels of exhaustion and isolation due to the additional support required for British students while on practicum in Finland (Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2003). This reaction from supervisors may further accentuate negative emotions about ethnic-minority students (Hastings, 2010). As students experience culture shock in a new country and education system, so too their associate teachers may experience a difficult emotional period during practicum.

The result of this emotional turmoil is difficult to predict. Mezirow (1990) suggests that the result of extreme cognitive and emotional stress on the student can be two-fold: either they are supported through a period of critical reflection about their own values and assumptions, or they adopt psychological defence mechanisms and shut down. In her literature review on business mentoring, Hawkey (1997) also concluded that high levels of challenge coupled with low levels of support predicted the psychological retreat of those being supervised from the relationship. Other international studies involving ethnic-minority student teachers showed they may recede into silence when confronted by culturally-challenging situations (Allen, 2008; Singh & Dooley, 1996), or simply wanted to be told what to do by their supervisor to pass their practicum component (Graham, 1997). So it may be that this emotional turmoil does not support an ethnic-minority student to develop a professional identity. Instead they may simply psychologically withdraw from the situation and not succeed in practicum as a result.

These studies infer that the effects of moving countries and the resulting intercultural challenges and opportunities can prove stress inducing for students on practicum. When comparing immigrant students to locally-born ones, however, research discussed earlier seems to indicate that those students from overseas are more likely to experience stress in higher levels when studying (Barker, et al., 1991; Burns, 1991). More recent research comparing stress levels between locally-born students and immigrant students does not yet appear to have been conducted. Therefore it is uncertain whether this degree of distress as a facet of practicum is common across all students, or whether international students are likely to experience it to a higher degree.

**Effective critical reflection**

The next stage of identity development is the ability to critically reflect upon the source of emotional challenge (Elliott, 1995). Student movement through this period is positioned in the literature as a factor influencing practicum success. Those students who have a
heightened level of emotional maturity, self-awareness, and who are encouraged to take risks within the safety of the relationship, seem more likely to be able to reflect critically upon their own long-held assumptions about children and teaching (Dobbins, 1996; Mezirow, 1990). But previous educational experiences may hamper ethnic-minority students from reflecting, as they may not have had previous opportunities to learn how to do so (Morales-Mann & Smith Higuchi, 1995; Zhou, 2010).

Little research has been conducted on improving the reflective capabilities of ethnic-minority students. One recently published study by Zhan and Wan in China (2016) found that Chinese student teachers were able to reflect at a surface level on practicum, but very few could do so at a deeper, more critical level. The authors suggest that the ability to be able to reflect in practicum is problematic for all Chinese students as it is a culturally-mediated, Westernised practice which is integrated throughout the Westernised education systems. Because of the interdependent perspective inherent within Confucian values, students in their study found that they depended upon each other, rather than their own reflective ability, to work through teaching problems together. But in Westernised countries, the dominant tendency was to rely upon supervisors’ opinions, rather than constructing their own ideas. The authors suggest this is due to the strict hierarchical nature of relationships in Confucian society, and the past experiences students have encountered in the classroom.

Other research on supporting reflective capabilities in student teachers has centred on the general student population, rather than those specifically from an Asian country. An Australian pilot programme gave students extra non-contact time each day in which to journal their reflections and hold group discussions. This led to a deeper level of reflection and improved teaching practice (Dobbins, 1996). Similarly, a quantitative study carried out two years earlier using journals and group sessions reported improved reflective capabilities in students (Farber & Armaline, 1994). Some work has also been done on the benefits to reflection by pairing students during practicum. Solomon’s (2000) research paired ethnically-different students with each other. Although this resulted in increased levels of peer support, it accentuated the reduced levels of guidance given to the ethnic-minority student. When ethnically-similar pairs worked together, students reported added richness to the reflective experience (Walsh & Elmslie, 2005).

Critical reflection is an area that has been positioned in the research as being an important component of a successful practicum. Reflecting upon one’s practice in order to develop
professionally is therefore seen as instrumental to creating success. However, students from Asian countries may find this a more challenging practice because of their past experience, and this could impact upon their success in practicum.

**Successful identity formation**

The third and final stage in the successful formation of a professional identity is identity change itself (Elliott, 1995). If students are able to develop a professional identity in line with culturally-accepted pedagogy, success is assumed to be more likely. As a result of reflective thinking about challenging situations, and with the support of the relationship developed with their supervising teacher, students can begin to develop new perceptions and understandings about both themselves and their pedagogy. Several studies suggest that the continual construction and reconstruction of identity lies at the core of teacher development with all students (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009), including ethnic-minority students (Lu, 2005; Nguyen, 2008; Peeler, 2005). Renegotiation of identity may serve to strengthen practice as students feel a sense of empowerment and control. Indeed, it may be the ability of the student to be able to verbally reflect about their own pedagogical challenges with the visiting lecturer and associate teacher that contributes as evidence of success during assessment, as reflection and professional discussion may be used as part of the assessment process.

A body of research conducted with ethnic-minority students suggests that identity transformation is less likely to occur during practicum for this group. In both the acculturation and hybridity models, ideal cultural adaptation occurs as a result of balancing the maintenance of one’s own cultural identity with new cultural understanding (Berry, 2005, 2007; Bhabha, 1994, 2008). But Berry (2007) suggests that increased contact with wider society, such as in a new educational institution, coupled with a non-inclusive dominant culture, is most likely to lead to cultural assimilation. This is the state when individuals completely set aside their own cultural values in preference for new ones. Similarly, Bhabha’s (2008) hybridity theory infers that if a productive third space environment cannot be created between the colonial majority and minority, then a successful hybridised understanding cannot be developed, and the views of the majority are again likely to dominate. Instead of finding a balance between the two, students may abandon their own beliefs and values simply to be able to fit in, and to succeed according to the dominant criteria of success.
An almost-universal theme in studies of the practicum experiences of ethnic-minority students confirms that they tend to *assimilate* with the dominant values of their new educational system. Han (2005) used metamorphosis as an analogy to describe the identities of a group of students being fractured and lost before assuming a superficial new identity to comply with assessment requirements. Similar results have been found with Latino and Native American students (Allen, 2008; Wenzlaff & Thrond, 1995). They reported having to ‘play the game’ during practicum, suppressing their own culture and submissively imitating their supervisor. Other work examining the perceptions of ethnic-minority students in both Australia and the United States confirms that students feel their own cultural knowledge is marginalised, and that they must assimilate in order to pass academic requirements (Han & Singh, 2007; Lee, 1999; Martinez, et al., 2001; Singh & Dooley, 1996). If this is indeed the case in New Zealand, then the objective of diversifying the teaching sector to reflect the cultural values of the changing demographic is compromised. Without their own cultural identities confidently in place, ethnic-minority students and teachers are limited in the diverse understandings they can share with children.

However, if a student is able to use the relationship with their associate teacher as a support base from which to reflect and incorporate new perspectives, the senior member of the dyad is also likely to benefit. A hybridised understanding of a range of appropriate pedagogy may be developed, rather than only limiting practice to what associates have always known and done. The collaboration and mutual respect required provides supervisors with a sense of pride, increased opportunities for reflection, and occasions to try out new teaching practices (Clinard & Ariav, 1998; Clinard et al., 1997; Hamilton, 2010; Hastings, 2004; Mecca, 2010). But very little research has yet investigated the benefits to the associate teacher when supervising an immigrant student. The little that has been done reports only the negative aspects of the experience, rather than considering all the positive opportunities it presents (Hastings, 2004, 2010).

In sum, professional identity development has been positioned in the reviewed literature as a vital aspect of success in practicum. If it does not occur, then it places success in doubt. However, in all three phases of identity development, the research suggests that those students from an ethnic-minority may struggle with the development of an identity deemed appropriate in their new educational environment.
A summary of contributors towards successful practicum

The reviewed literature has associated the likelihood of success with several key practicum elements. These are the expectations the associate teacher has of their role and of the student; how the student perceives their role and that of the associate; the quality of the relationship between the associate and student; the English language communicative ability of the student; the nature of the practices used in practicum to determine success; and the development of an appropriate professional identity while on practicum. However the reviewed literature suggests that ethnic-minority students may be hindered in all of these key elements. Next, I examine research that has specifically focused upon this possibility.

How success is portrayed in the literature with ethnic-minority students

Success itself has not yet been a topic of focus in the literature investigating the experiences of ethnic-minority students. A focus on the negative, rather than the positive, is the hallmark of this body of literature. I argue that ethnic-minority students have been positioned as victims of the dominant ethnicity, who are positioned to have more power and access to resources (May & Sleeter, 2010; Schoorman, 2011). These studies have attempted to document the effects of this social positioning within the context of teaching practicum.

Since the early 1990s when globalisation began to open the world’s educational borders, the negative experiences of minority groups in both practicum and ITE in general, have been detailed. Several smaller studies looking at students from minority ethnicities have used a case study methodology to document their ongoing issues (For examples, see Chen, 1996; Han & Singh, 2007; Jessop & Williams, 2007; Lau, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Peeler, 2005; Wang, 2016). Problems recorded in the literature have included the cultural shock of working in an educational system completely at odds with their own experience, the impact that language difference makes upon learning and social adjustment, being the recipients of covert and overt forms of racism, issues in developing a professional identity, and societal exclusion and loneliness. Although using a small number of participants in each, cumulatively the research builds a picture of ethnic-minority teachers in distress.

Two larger studies in the early 1990s did specifically set out to compare the ITE experiences of locally-born Australian first year students to international students from Asia. These were done in order to ascertain whether documented distress was a factor for all students or only those from overseas. Burns (1991) used a survey methodology to question 133 international
students and 76 Australian students. Those born outside of Australia reported heightened stress in relation to family pressures, finances, language issues, increased workloads, and mental illness. Similar problems were also reported with local students, but the authors concluded that international students were more at risk because “the additional role of being an alien exacerbates and magnifies the stress through linguistic problems, lack of support networks, social isolation, study method deficiencies and the socio-cultural-emotional difficulties... involved in cultural adjustment” (Burns, 1991, p. 73). Similarly, Barker et al. (1991) confirmed in their comparative research of 105 Asian students, 112 rural local Australian students, and 105 urban local Australians, that the overseas students had more difficulty in social situations and expressing themselves in comparison to others. More recent comparative research has not been done, so it is difficult to ascertain whether these difficulties still exist.

Practicum appears to concentrate previously-documented acculturation problems into one high-stress time period. Research in this area has typically been of a case study design, focussing on the detailed experiences of individuals. Several studies have documented challenges in practicum for Asian students studying in Australia. These have included issues related to the gap between student conceptions and those underpinning students’ new education system (Duchesne & Stitou, 2010; Hadley, et al., 2011), issues related to language, comprehension and interactions with others (Barahmeh, 2016; Martinez, et al., 2001), societal pressure to assimilate (Erben & Wyer, 1997; Fan & Yue, 2009), and ethnic difference influencing the nature of relationships with their associate teachers (Myles, et al., 2006).

Although Australia is a country with a similar level of Asian immigration into the workforce as Aotearoa New Zealand (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014), it does not have the same cultural history embedded within its societal make-up that Te Tiriti o Waitangi provided New Zealand. Nor does it have an early childhood curriculum that has specifically been designed to promote cultural respect. So it is unclear whether similar findings could be expected in this country’s unique context.

Problems with professional identity formation for ethnic-minority students have also been documented during practicum research. Fan and Le (2009b) documented six core conflicts that Asian students encountered during practicum that impeded the development of their professional identity. These related to styles of teaching, preparedness to teach, deep personal attributes required to teach effectively, cultural conflict, and their perspective on language
usefulness. Han (2005) also highlighted the significant shift in identity during practicum, and used the term “fractured” (p. 11) to describe the state of the identities of Asian students during this period. Research with graduate diploma students, whose course is only 12 months in length, also suggests that the restricted length of time to begin to address these issues heightens the intense stress during practicum for Asian-born students (Spooner-Lane, et al., 2004, 2009). Indeed, Spooner-Lane et al. (2004) concluded from their Australian investigation that the practicum actually reduced student confidence, as it highlighted the complexities of teaching to previously-unaware students.

The reviewed literature repeatedly reports on the impact Asian student teachers encounter in a society which does not operate within the fundamental values they themselves have had instilled in them since birth. The mismatch means that their inherent assumptions are challenged. The problems documented are likely to be as a result of encountering situations and values embedded into an education system developed to privilege members of the dominant ethnicity (Schoorman, 2011). But no research has yet focussed on practices that could support students to succeed in practicum in New Zealand.

None of these studies seem to have conceptualised those who have told their stories as being active participants in their own lives. Student teachers are positioned as being powerless and unable to react to, or change, any of these problems. They are not seen as being able to construct their own meanings about how they view success in practicum. The picture the research paints is one of negativity and helplessness. My own research will focus upon the positive experiences ethnic-minority students have in practicum, in order to determine what contributes to a successful experience.

The narrow conceptualisation of success

Despite the volume of research looking at practicum in general, and on the experiences of ethnic-minority students in particular, there remains a question over the concept of success itself. Success is a word commonly associated with practicum (For examples, see Anderson, et al., 2009; Kahn, 2001; McDonald, 2004; Yüksel & Alci, 2012). It is the goal of the practicum; for the student to succeed. The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand has a set of graduating teaching standards that ITE institutions need to ensure new teaching graduates meet (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.-a). Sometimes these are used as a framework as to how professional practice in practicum is assessed by ITE institutions. Yet, as a concept unto itself, there is virtually no research into how participants
make sense of success in practicum. Some practicum research with student or associate teacher participants simply makes the unwritten assumption that success is equated to meeting the ITE institution’s competency criteria (for example, Yüksel & Alci, 2012). In another small-scale New Zealand example, McDonald (2004) asked associate teachers, students and visiting lecturers to identify characteristics that would make the practicum successful. But no engagement was made with the concept of success itself. An assumption was made that success could be represented *solely* as positive academic achievement; that the student would pass the required pedagogical competency levels as stated by the ITE institution.

Other research has attempted to investigate success in a different way. Two pieces of research have looked at the idea of success from the perspective of the associate teacher. Kahn (2001) asked a small number of cooperating teachers in the United States how they defined success. But no ultimate definition of success was actually made in the research. Instead, five common elements were identified as being present in participants’ definitions. These were “(a) evidence provided by the student teacher, (b) attributes of the cooperating teacher, (c) much of the credit given to the student teacher, (d) establishment of a mutual learning relationship, and (e) absence of comments giving credit to the university” (Kahn, 2001, p. 51). Supervising teachers suggested that successfully passing learning outcomes resulted from the actions of the student, or from what they did as supervisors to support the student. In a similar vein, Graham (2006) also asked cooperating teachers in the United States to define success. But this author also failed to make a final definition of success per se. Instead, she provided a list of possible conditions that would lead to success. These were the “organizational structures to promote inter-institutional collaboration and to establish relationships based on trust and reciprocity; affective engagement with teaching and learning; cognitive engagement with the intellectual challenges of teaching; and professional mentoring” (Graham, 2006, p. 1122). But the actual concept of success in both pieces of research was skirted around; instead conditions to produce it were discussed. There is an assumption made that participants know what success is and what it looks like in practice.

Both these small pieces of research are limited in that they only examine the idea from one perspective, that of the supervising teacher. In both, there is an assumption that success is reflected by the student’s overall academic and practical achievement in the practicum. It is almost considered as something *external* to the associate teacher; something that is only
immediately relevant to the student but which can associates can support to occur. These two studies infer that associate teachers may not consider the practicum experience as an opportunity for their own success; as an opportunity for personal or professional growth. Instead, the responsibility for success is considered to lie with the student, with support by the associate teacher.

One larger study that has begun to consider the concept of what success in practicum may mean to students was conducted by Anderson, Walker and Ralph (2009). These Canadian authors researched a much larger cohort of 193 student participants over a three year period. This study gathered data from student participants post-practicum. The authors used participant-selected events that students deemed to be their most successful as a means to determine perceived self-efficacy in their professional capabilities. So they used self-efficacy as the signpost for personal success. This study positioned success not only in terms of extrinsic motivation (such as externally-imposed learning outcomes), but also through the internal motivations of the students. In this way, success was conceptualised as being a personal judgement, as well as an external one.

These studies have looked at practicum success from the perspective of either the supervisor or student. The lack of results from my literature search suggests that no research has yet investigated success from both perspectives at the same time. Ethnic difference between associate and student does not seem to have been considered in how success is perceived. Little conceptual understanding of the term success appears to exist in the context of teaching practicum. My research aims to investigate what participants consider produces a successful practicum experience for both associate and ethnic-minority student. An understanding of what success means to the participants will need to be conceptualised, before a broader understanding of how factors may contribute to it can be considered.

My own view of success

When I began this research, I presumed that participants would think that success would be achieved solely by passing the required ITE learning outcomes in practice. Success would equate to passing these. Since passing the required learning criteria are among the requirements to achieve their desired teaching qualification, I considered passing and success as one and the same concept. So when developing my research questions, I presumed that passing would be the only goal for participants, and was expecting to ascertain the key things that could be done to make this more likely.
However, my own perceptions were challenged from the very first interview with participants. It was apparent that they took success to mean something far broader than I had presumed. They discussed aspects of the practicum that were not related to externally-measured criteria, including how they felt about themselves during the practicum. This was not something I had expected. Internally-derived judgements of success appeared repeatedly in my conversations with students and associate teachers.

At this juncture, I cannot give a complete definition of success in practicum, and it may involve different things for different people. However, I do attempt to conceptualise the idea in Chapter Five of this dissertation. I recognise that success is not only an externally-recognised state, but also an internally-experienced one. Both seem to go hand-in-hand.

**Conclusion**

Success has been positioned within the reviewed literature as the result of optimising a number of different factors. These are often related to the perceptions and expectations of the student and associate teacher, the relationship between student and associate, effective communicative abilities, useful assessment processes, and the positive development of the student’s professional identity (For examples, see Etherington, 2011; Graham, 2006; Izadinia, 2016a; Lu, 2005; Mok, 2005). The body of research into practicum suggests that enhancing these processes will lead to a successful practicum.

But the literature looking at what counts as success for the participants in teaching practicum is relatively small in comparison to the body which focusses upon how to achieve it. Success is conceptualised as passing the ITE institution’s learning outcomes. The concept is not well understood; a more holistic picture including what counts as success for participants does not feature largely in the research.

The reviewed literature has reported issues for international students for a number of years. Although the existing research base has contributed to our understanding in the area, there is a dearth of research conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand’s unique sociocultural context that would help gain an insight into the experiences of international Asian students entering practicum, or the associate teachers expected to support them to a successful outcome.

I would argue that practicum needs to be examined in a more complete way, from the experience of both of the key parties involved. This would then provide two differing perspectives of the same practicum experience to ascertain the extent to which there were
similarities and differences in perception between students and associates. Only then will practicum become a truly meaningful teaching element of teacher education programmes, no matter the ethnic background of those involved.

The next chapter goes on to discuss the theoretical foundations upon which this study is based, its methodological approach, and how data were collected from participants to gather their understanding of success in practicum.
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

This chapter outlines the methodological decisions I made to gain a deeper understanding of participants’ understandings of practicum success. The chapter begins with the theoretical foundations which underpin my view of knowledge and how knowledge is constructed. I go on to describe the methodological approach I chose for the research, and why each methodological decision was made. The discussion also includes ethical issues related to the research design, and its credibility. Detail is then provided on participant selection, data gathering and analysis to understand the key themes in participants’ perceptions of what makes for a successful practicum.

As a reminder, this research attempts to answer the question;

What makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students and their Associate Teachers?

From this main question, the sub-questions are:

1. What perceptions of success in practicum do immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students hold?
2. What perceptions of success in practicum do their Associate Teachers hold?
3. Do the perceptions of success in practicum by immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students and their Associate Teachers differ? If so, in what ways?
4. What can be learned from these perspectives for initial teacher education?

Epistemology

Qualitative research, based upon an interpretivist paradigm, adopts a broad approach with the aim of producing a deep level of insight and understanding into social phenomena (Carter & Little, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The epistemological position of a piece of research reflects the researcher’s understanding of knowledge or “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). It underpins all other methodological decisions. Because the main research question focussed on different personal conceptions of success, I used a qualitative interpretivist framework as the foundation for epistemological decisions.
Interpretivism positions knowledge not as an objective reality, but as a shifting state that is contextual, interpreted, and indefinable (Lather, 2006; Willis, 2007; Yilmaz, 2008). Interpretivism is based on the premise that reality exists within the mind of each individual. It therefore needs to be interpreted in terms of individual perceptions, prior experiences, beliefs and mental habits (Bryman, 2008; Crotty, 1998; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Yilmaz, 2008). The context within which the research is undertaken is therefore fundamental to how the data are interpreted. I wanted to produce data that were highly descriptive, in order to broaden understanding about practicum (Bryman, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Saldâna, 2011). An interpretivist stance recognises research as a subjective process conducted by researchers and participants together (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Qualitative research is very appropriate for investigating a socially-mediated phenomenon, such as a practicum, as the investigation is not designed to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Instead it aims to produce highly detailed and contextual information about the situation with a view to understanding it deeply. It usually results in large amounts of detailed data, and is often employed in the exploration of potentially sensitive issues (Bryman, 2008; Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). For this reason, I chose to adopt an interpretivist stance to understand participants’ complex understandings around intercultural practicum.

The interpretive paradigm has many epistemological offshoots (Crotty, 1998; Lather, 2006). The most appropriate for this study was constructionism, as it emphasises the construction of meaning and knowledge in a social context through the “interplay between existing knowledge and beliefs and new knowledge and experiences” (Yilmaz, 2008, p.162). The importance of interactions that participants have can be accentuated, forming a unique context for their co-constructed meaning (Crotty, 1998). I therefore understand meaning as being culturally-derived and historically-situated within interactions between the individual participants. The key to uncovering their understanding was through their own perceptions (Crotty, 1998; Jeon, 2004). This sat well with my focus on practicum. I planned to examine the co-construction of meaning around the concept of success in practicum for the student and their associate teacher.

**Theoretical perspective**

From the constructionist epistemological foundation of this research, an appropriate theory to frame my understanding of data was symbolic interactionism. It situates meaning in the context of social interaction, and suggests that language is the tool by which meaning is co-
constructed and shared (Crotty, 1998; Jeon, 2004). In this research I therefore assumed that individual meanings of practicum success would be developed through participants interacting and discussing personal understandings with others. My research design sought to explore this.

Symbolic interactionism can be defined by the three fundamental concepts explained by Herbert Blumer and based on the work of his mentor, George Herbert Mead (Mead, 1934). The first of Blumer’s concepts is that humans act towards others and things on the basis of the meanings they have for them (Blumer, 1969; Burbank & Martins, 2009; Carrothers & Benson, 2003; Snow, 2001). In relation to practicum, this suggests the actions that the student and associate teacher take are related to the meanings they have each developed about their own and each other’s roles, and the relationships between them. Each participant in the practicum has a different history of experiences, which influences their meaning-making. Individuals usually develop patterns of meaning-making which reflect their cultural background (Snow, 2001). Therefore the actions of practicum participants will be informed by meanings about children and teaching they have developed during interactions throughout their upbringing, as well as through their ongoing meaning-making. Just as cultural interpretations can be manifested in patterns of meaning, so too can the relative strength of interactions be manifested as power (Anderson & Snow, 2001; Musolf, 1992). One individual may exert more influence or power over another in particular interactions, impacting on the respective meaning made (Dennis & Martin, 2005). Thus, both culture and power can play a part in interactions, influencing the meanings made, and impacting on the way individuals subsequently act.

The second key concept of symbolic interactionism is that meanings are developed during social interaction with others through the use of language as a symbolic representation of meaning. Meaning is therefore the social product of interacting with others, and, taken together with the first premise, determines how social participants will act (Blumer, 1969; Carrothers & Benson, 2003; Mead, 1934; Snow, 2001). In terms of practicum, the ongoing interactions between student and associate are one of the sites where the meaning of success in practicum develops. Research discussed in the previous chapter indicates that there are potential issues in an intercultural practicum for developing an interpersonal connection, communicating clearly, and in the giving and receiving of feedback. Together, this suggests that meaning could develop in different ways for the participants involved in practicum.
Blumer’s third key concept of symbolic interactionism is that the development and transformation of meaning occurs through an *interpretative* process (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Snow, 2001). This implies that social participants are continually trying to interpret others’ intentions in the creation of meaning, and to respond in a socially-appropriate manner. Within practicum, the meaning of what it is to be a teacher is partially learnt through observing other teachers, as well as constructed from interactions with other early childhood professionals during the course of study. The student develops this role by attempting to view themselves from the point of view of others. This is similar for the role of the associate teacher. They too have observed what it is to be an associate teacher during their own experience as a student and compare themselves to this previously-constructed meaning (Rajuan, et al., 2007; Trevethan, 2013).

**Method**

My research design decisions were made from an underpinning symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective. The concept of success was investigated via the individual perceptions of participants in the practicum using a multiple case study approach (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Cohen & Lawrence Morrison, 2011). This design gave me the flexibility to analyse and compare data from participants in a number of ways. Because I envisioned that what made for a successful practicum for participants would be a complex and abstract concept to investigate, I wanted to be able to gather a large amount of data from a small number of participants in order to produce a highly descriptive account of the practicum. The aim was to deliver an insight into participants’ individual meanings of success (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Murray & Lawrence, 2000; Yin, 2003).

The benefits of using a case study design were its ability to gain a deep insight into a complex situation through the eyes of a small number of participants (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Yin, 2003, 2006). Using a multiple case study design meant that I could explore differences within and between cases, with each individual person representing a case in my design (Baxter & Jack, 2008). These characteristics all fit well with my research questions, so that I could “identify, reveal and explain the unique features” of success in practicum (Murray & Lawrence, 2000, p.113). I wanted to examine what success meant with a small number of participants in the hope that these individual perceptions could provide deep insight into the practicum experience. A multiple case study approach could generate basic comparative data
which could be a basis for extrapolation to other intercultural practicum (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Murray & Lawrence, 2000; Yin, 2006).

The extent of transferability of a multiple case study to future intercultural practicum depends upon providing a very rich description of the research processes I used, the data collected, and the conceptual understandings I developed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a; Polit, 2010; Shenton, 2004). From that point, Polit (2010) suggests that future researchers can assess the degree of congruence or similarity between their own research contexts and my own; the level of “proximal similarity” (p. 1453). Results achieved may therefore be transferable to other immigrant Asian students on practicum in similar settings, depending upon the level of similarity between this research context and their own.

But as the aim of my research was to understand individual participant’s understandings of success in practicum, I did not wish to generate findings that would be assumed the same for future participants in the same situation. Instead, I was looking for a deep, contextual understanding of the situation from the two key parties in the practicum relationship, the associate teacher and the student teacher. From this understanding, I hoped that future researchers would be able to apply my own conceptual understandings in relation to their own case study research around practicum.

**Research credibility**

Within the qualitative paradigm, issues of credibility are relevant (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985b). The credibility of a research design is the “confidence in the truth of the findings, including an accurate understanding of the context” (Ulin, Robinson & Tolley, 2005, cited in Guest, et al, 2012, p. 83). It is this level of detail that allows potential future researchers to gauge transferability of results or to replicate the research themselves (Polit, 2010; Shenton, 2004). The key to qualitative research credibility, therefore, requires prolonged engagement with participants, observations within the field, researcher reflexivity and participant checks on data obtained (Morrow, 2005).

In order to enhance credibility, there were several things I did. My research design ensured an extended period of time was spent with participants and I utilised field-based video observations (Lyle, 2003; Rowe, 2009). Feedback from participants was gathered throughout each step of data collection and analysis, to ensure that my representation of their meaning reflected their intention (Shenton, 2004). I sent copies of interview transcripts to all
participants for feedback after each round of interviews to confirm they were an accurate portrayal of our conversations. The analysis process is clearly outlined in this chapter with a full audit trail from participant through to final analysis. All themes discussed are supported with evidence and quotes (Guest, et al., 2012).

**Data collection process**

Data collection was planned to occur over three phases; before, during and after one of the final practicum in the student’s ITE programme. Individual interviews with participants were a personal and interactive method of data collection. I used a semi-structured and open style of interview in order to elicit as much information as possible around the concept of success in practicum, rather than being highly structured in my approach (Barbour & Schostak, 2011; Brenner, 2006; Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). Semi-structured interviews further fit the case study approach as they allowed individual participants increased opportunities to take the interview in unplanned directions, while I could still retain some commonalities in the questions asked (Rowe, 2009). They provided the foundation for the rich, complex data I sought for each case study (Yin, 2003, 2006).

However, interviews only allowed me to collect participants’ perspectives on practicum success in an abstract sense. To gain additional perspectives around success, particularly how success in relation to *pedagogy* was perceived, I also used video-stimulated discussions. Lyle (2003) argues that video-stimulated recall is particularly effective for exploring social situations in “complex, interactive contexts characterised by novelty, uncertainty and non-deliberative behaviour” (p. 861-2). Therefore, their use within a practicum experience in which students were likely to be encountering unexpected pedagogical practices was warranted. Because passing pedagogical competency requirements was the focus of the practicum, perceptions of success in this area were important. I expected that viewing their own interactions with children would encourage student participants to recall their concurrent thinking about the appropriateness, and subsequent successfulness, of their pedagogy (Cutrim-Schmid, 2011; Lyle, 2003; Powell, 2005; Rowe, 2009). It was a means by which to access students’ internally-derived perceptions around success. The viewing of the student’s practice on video would help associate teachers articulate their understanding of what successful practice should look like in action; an externally-judged dimension of success. Both the use of interviews and video-stimulated discussion allowed for clear articulation of
participants’ meaning, or the interpretation of the meaning through the actions of others (Blumer, 1969).

I used a formative approach to the steps of data gathering, analysis and interpretation. This approach gave me flexibility to alter the research design as I proceeded with data collection in response to perceived issues. Such a plan worked well within a complex social scenario, like practicum, as decisions were able to be made about details of procedure depending upon data gathered at each step (Bradley & Reinking, 2011). A formative approach also meant that I did not conduct a pilot study, as I was able to change details of the design as data collection proceeded. However, this did not end up being required as the research design proved well suited for its purpose.

**Participant selection**

The criteria for participation were that students had been born and raised in the Asian continent and had less than two years of secondary education in New Zealand. This included international students as well as students who had permanently immigrated to this country. I chose these criteria because I wanted to study the perceptions of students who had had very limited experience of New Zealand’s educational system before beginning their teacher education. I wanted to discuss what made for a successful practicum for participants who had limited opportunity to integrate into the education system before their teacher education began. Initially, I anticipated that no more than five student-associate dyads would be used to enable sufficient volume of information-rich data to be gathered and analysed to an appropriate level.

I began the selection process by approaching students who fit my criteria; those who were born in a country from the Asian continent, and who had been in the New Zealand secondary school system for less than two years. Once I had gathered the student participants I intended to then approach their associate teachers for their upcoming practicum. I adopted this strategy quite deliberately as I recognised that the practicum experience revolved around the student, and I did not want to ask for volunteer participant associate teachers who may have already been particularly interested in intercultural pedagogy. I first approached my place of employment, a privately-run ITE institution, to gain approval to approach students who may fit my selection criteria. As no students did, I approached a second institution. Appendix One contains information and consent forms for the two institutions approached.
Students in their final year of training of a three-year degree qualification were approached as a group on their first day back after the Christmas break. I wanted to use third year students so they could reflect upon several previous practicum experiences, as well as the one they were about to embark upon. Two students met the criteria and were willing to be involved in the study, and signed consent forms as outlined in Appendix Two. However, upon approaching the associate teacher of one student, the centre did not give me permission to film, so I was left with only one possible student from this first contact with the institution who had granted me consent.

Because of this low uptake, I had to reassess my selection criteria. Later in the year, I approached students from a one-year Graduate Diploma qualification from the same institution as the first participant, and who were entering their final practicum. I met with a group of possible students in May 2013. After a long discussion, it became apparent that some students felt uncomfortable being involved in research in which they believed they would be offering their opinion on associate teacher performance. They considered this could affect their passing the practicum component if their views became known. I spoke with students about the measures I would be taking to lessen the chance of their identities becoming known. From this second approach, a further two students consented to participate.

Following student consent, I approached the associate teachers who had been assigned to supervise the students in their next practicum. Associates could have been of any ethnic origin, but had to be fully-registered teachers who held a current practicing certificate, as was required by the Education Council (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). The associates were asked to give their consent to be involved in the study, as well as to seek consent from parents whose children may be videoed as part of the video sessions. Appendix Three contains a copy of the associate teacher consent form, and Appendix Four contains the same for parents. Data from the first student-associate dyad were collected between March and May of 2013. Data from the other two dyads were collected between October and December of the same year. So in total six participants, made up of three student-associate dyads, participated in the research.

**Pre-practicum interviews**

I was aware of the need to establish trust quickly, and to balance asking questions with the use of silence and other conversational strategies to ensure the most deeply-held perceptions,
attitudes and behavioural intentions were discussed during interviews (Barbour & Schostak, 2011; Brenner, 2006; Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). As well as discussing the research in depth with each participant during the consent process, I provided them with a sheet outlining what to expect at the first interview. A copy of this is included in Appendix Five. This proved particularly useful for the students who spoke English as an additional language, as they had time to review the areas I would be asking them about and consider their responses in advance.

While language difference could have been problematic, and underscored the obvious power differential within the interview situation (Brenner, 2006; Crano & Brewer, 2002; Murray & Lawrence, 2000; Saldana, 2011), the current high expectation of English requirements to become a New Zealand teacher helped mediate this concern (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.-b). I was worried that participants may provide answers they believed I wanted to hear, rather than expressing themselves openly. To address these concerns, I spent time before the interviews getting to know the participant and setting them at ease by reassuring them of my genuine interest in their perceptions and experiences (Murray & Lawrence, 2000). The advantages interviews had of flexibility, personal access, in-depth information, and intimacy outweighed the issues of language and cultural difference, so I used them as my primary source of data collection. The relationships that I developed with the students over the course of the research meant that they became confident in expressing their confusion over any question asked so I could rephrase it in a more simplified way.

The participants were interviewed separately just before practicum. The overarching focus of the interview was success. Students were asked to reflect about their previous practicum experiences and whether they were successful or not. If the conversation naturally carried on, I tried not to impede the direction the student participant wanted to take. A similar interview was held with each associate teacher individually. They were asked to reflect upon previous successful practicum experiences with other students, especially any intercultural experiences. Appendix Six outlines the topics I used to guide the interview. All interviews were audio recorded.

**Video-stimulated discussions**

Following the pre-practicum interviews, I visited students in their practicum centre after they had already been assessed by a visiting lecturer from their ITE institution. This was to help lessen the anxiety of being video-taped, knowing there was no evaluative element to my
presence. The purpose of the visit was to video record aspects of the student’s practice in practicum, and interactions between the student, associate teacher and children. These were later used for video-stimulated discussions between me and each participant. Research has shown that such discussions are an effective way for teachers to reflect upon self-beliefs and implicit theories of practice (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014; Kavoshian, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2013; Lyle, 2003; Reitano, 2005).

To allow the children to get used to my presence and the camera, I spent a day beforehand practicing recording in the centre. Children approached me to look at the camera, but quickly tired of my presence. I acknowledged their questions but provided minimal feedback in order to discourage their company (Schuck & Kearney, 2006). This was to encourage their normal participation in the programme. I positioned myself in the same place for most of my time to minimise disruption and attention. The student teachers wore a lapel microphone attached discretely to their clothing which allowed the camera to record their verbal interactions, even though most of the time I was some distance away from them. They reported afterwards that within a few minutes they relaxed and forgot about my presence.

The next day I repeated this exercise, but videoed the student for the full morning, recording interactions with others in the environment. Once again, I positioned myself at a distance from the student and only moved when students went indoors or outdoors. Otherwise I tried to maintain my position and distance in order to avoid distracting the student or drawing too much attention to my presence.

Because the focus of practicum is on the student’s practice, the student led the editing of the morning’s video down to a shorter 30 minute summary video. This was done immediately following the conclusion of videoing. I wanted to ensure that as little time as possible had lapsed to ensure that the student was able to readily access their cognitive processes during the viewed interaction (Lyle, 2003; Stevenson, 2015). The student made the decision as to what interactions they felt were the most successful during the course of the morning and how much of each interaction should be incorporated into the summary video. They knew that their associate teacher would be viewing the video after they did, so they were likely to choose what they felt were their most ‘successful’ interactions. This meant I was able to compare what both the student and associate interpreted as successful pedagogy, a fundamental aspect to answering the overall research question.
The student watched the summary video after they had finished producing it in order to discuss what they considered to be successful in their practice. This was done either immediately following the video summary process, or a day later, in order to be able to optimise recall and prompt reflection (Lyle, 2003).

Students were invited to choose where to stop and start the video, and spoke to the questions, “What was successful about this interaction?” and “What could have been done to have made it more successful?” Periodically I also asked what they were trying to achieve during the interaction. The answers helped answer the research question about what perceptions of success immigrant Asian early childhood teaching students hold. During the recall session, I occasionally also stopped the recording if the student had not done so, and asked them to describe what they were doing at that time (Stevenson, 2015). These questions were used as prompts for reflection, and sometimes the student would go on in greater detail their reasons behind their choices.

The summary video was also shown to the associate teacher, either immediately after the student on the same day as recording, or shortly thereafter, in order to ascertain their perspective on the successfulness of the student’s practice. These interviews never occurred more than a week after being recorded. Often, associates had not seen the interactions the student had chosen for the summary video, so this viewing was their first occasion upon which to consider the successfulness or otherwise of their practice. Therefore I would provide some basic contextual information to them so that they had a better understanding of what had preceded the interaction they were viewing. Associate teachers were prompted with the same questions around success that had been used with students; whether they considered the interaction to be successful or not, why this was so, and what could have been done to improve its successfulness. Their answers would provide data to understand what perceptions of success associate teachers hold in intercultural practicum. Using the same questions allowed for comparisons to be made around perceptions of successful practice between associate teachers and students. Video discussions were again audio recorded and transcribed.

**Post-practicum interviews**

About a month following the end of the practicum, the student teachers and associate teachers were again interviewed separately. They were asked to reflect back on the practicum experience, and in particular to consider if they considered it to be successful, and why they held this opinion. Guidance sheets for topics discussed during the interviews are in Appendix
Seven. Interviews were conducted in a very similar style to the initial pre-practicum interview. Once again, all interviews were recorded for later analysis. Two of the students happened to be interviewed once they had not only completed their final practicum, but had completed all their other course requirements. This timing may have contributed to a more open and honest style of conversation as evaluative pressure no longer existed.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethically, using a multiple case study design did present some issues. Because of the very small number of participants involved, I was unable to guarantee that individual participants would not be eventually identified (Bryman, 2008; Piper & Simons, 2011). The likelihood of being identified was reduced slightly by using several cases, rather than only one, but it still remained a concern. I mitigated this somewhat by using pseudonyms throughout this dissertation, and not disclosing any identifying detail when describing the participants, the centre, or the community within which it sits.

Another significant ethical issue I was aware of was the ethnic difference between me as the researcher, and the student participants. I knew that developing a culturally responsive working relationship with this group could be difficult, as I was an “outsider” to their experience (Guo, 2007, p. 1). I am a *Pākehā* New Zealander, born and bred in this country, and as such, party to the cultural assumptions inherent within our society and education system. I was also in a position of power; a lecturer interviewing students who had not yet graduated from their qualification. I was very aware of this issue, and concerned that students would want to give me what they perceived as ‘correct’ answers to my questions. I addressed this issue by spending additional time in my interviews trying to get to know the students, their lived experiences and to be open and respectful to anything they told me (Guo, 2007). This provided a foundation for them to understand that I was purely interested in their personal understanding, and not interested in judging their actions as being either right or wrong. In addition, because I eventually only used students from an ITE institution I was not employed by, the potential evaluative issue was alleviated. However, it is impossible to ascertain whether this concern was completely assuaged or not.

The use of children as part of the video part of the research design presented another ethical dilemma around gaining informed consent (Schuck & Kearney, 2006; Warr, Waycott, Guillemin, & Cox, 2016). In order to gain consent, I gathered permission from the centre and parents to include them in shot. However, when children asked me what I was doing during
filming, I replied simply that I was videoing what the student teacher was doing and asked if that was alright. In this way I sought children’s informal consent to my doing so (Schuck & Kearney, 2006). Original footage was not used beyond the data analysis stage, so I could assure parents that the images would be destroyed at the conclusion of the project and dissemination of children’s images would not occur (Schuck & Kearney, 2006). No quotes were taken directly from children in the data analysis stage, only from the student and associate teacher as they watched the student’s practice on video. These details were outlined in the parental consent and information form that associate teachers arranged to be signed prior to my arrival in the centre.

The impact of the camera, and my presence, may have also presented ethical issues by influencing the behaviour of research participants and the general learning environment (Schuck & Kearney, 2006; Warr, et al., 2016). Having their professional practice videoed could potentially cause students additional stress over and above that already felt during practicum, and I wanted to minimise any harm experienced by participants (Warr, et al., 2016). By their third year of teacher education, I hoped that students were more likely to be able to understand that critical reflection with video could be a powerful tool for professional identity development. Watching their own practice provided a rare opportunity in their training programme to gain another dimension to their reflective ability and enable them to improve their pedagogical skills. I also used a lapel microphone while recording so I did not need to stay close to students while videoing their interactions. Students confirmed that this strategy helped them forget my presence as they were able to become involved in the general work of the day as usual.

Associate teachers could have also felt uncomfortable having their interactions with the student recorded. To help mitigate this, I spent time getting to know all the participants through the whole data collection phase, building a relationship, and reassuring them that this research was non-judgemental, and was instead focussed on their personal thoughts and experiences. When participants viewed the video, they could also choose to exclude material. In one situation, a student had a brief conversation with another teaching team member (not a research participant), who did not feel comfortable with being involved. This conversation was therefore removed from any subsequent data analysis.

Another ethical issue related to the use of video was the impact of editing on the subsequent data collected from participants (Schuck & Kearney, 2006). The students knew the whole
context of their interactions, and so were able to comment based on that more complete understanding. The associate teachers however, did not. I tried to mitigate this by providing basic information to the associates about what led up to the interaction. However I was aware that using data extracted in this way may have had an impact on their subsequent success perceptions.

Data analysis

In order to uncover the deep layers of meaning the participants had around what made for a successful practicum, I followed the thematic analysis technique as described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012). I chose thematic analysis as it offers a systematic approach to “identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). It was a way of identifying the common elements the participants had about success in intercultural practicum, and of making sense about any commonalities (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It also allowed me to uncover themes that were particular to only one participant, rather than across all.

The first step in analysis actually began before the formal analysis process commenced. I ensured that I was thoroughly intimate with the data by continually reading and rereading it (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2011). I was able to do so through the process of transcription which I did between interviews and for several months after their completion. This took many months of work to complete, as each interview covered at least 40 pages of transcribed text. I transcribed every utterance, pause, stutter and grammatical error as I wanted to ensure that I gave a true verbatim account of what was discussed. I also wanted to ensure that language ability was fully represented in final quotes. In some sections with students who spoke particularly quickly or who had a very strong accent, I was able to slow down the audio recording and listen to it multiple times in order to understand what they were saying. Using this technique, there ended up being very few words that I was unable to understand when transcribing. By the time I had finished the transcription process, I felt very familiar with the complete data set and had already begun to get a sense of possible important nodes. However, before I began the formal analysis process, I sent the transcripts of interviews back to the relevant participant to ensure I had accurately captured the meaning of what they were trying to say. No participants indicated any errors or misconceptions.

The second and subsequent phases of analysis were conducted using the nVivo 10 software programme. I began this process by identifying a small number of deductive nodes based on
the reviewed literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Saldâna, 2011). These included ideas around success, challenge, relationships, power, and culture. As I worked my way through each interview, I allocated small extracts of the interviews to a theme. Many more inductive nodes were developed as analysis continued. Sometimes, a quote would be allocated to more than one node. If I was unsure of whether a piece of data would be relevant, I would code it to a new inductive code (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The interviews of each participant were analysed together to provide a case record for each. This process again took several months of work, and produced a very large number of nodes. Because of the time delay in doing this process, I re-analysed the interviews to ensure that my decisions around themes had not changed over the analysis time period, and so that I could recode sections to newly-developed nodes if necessary. As a result, the complete coding process took nearly a year to complete. During that time, I had several meetings with my supervisors to discuss and check upon efficacy of the themes that I was developing.

The next phase of analysis was to cluster nodes into similar groupings, or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). To do this, I spent some time clustering similar ideas together through the use of a thematic map. Often this occurred concurrently with the original coding process. Unexpectedly, some of these themes clustered around similar concepts as the main strands within Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. Therefore I initially used the same terminology as found in that document: wellbeing (feeling safe, confident), belonging (feeling included), communication (with others, the language used, and challenges to communication), contribution (related to a need to feel respected for their contribution to the centre programme), and exploration (learning new pedagogical practices). In addition, several other themes emerged. These were: success; challenges to success; correct practice; perceived role of the teacher; children’s wellbeing; children’s learning of important knowledge; expectations of the associate teachers; expectations of students; time required; teaching philosophies; and support.

The most prevalent themes discussed in this dissertation were chosen as a result of the frequency and extent of their appearance in interviews. As each participant represented a case, I calculated what the most frequent nodes were for each person, and the percentage of discussion allocated to each of these nodes. As part of this process, I looked back at the entire transcript to check that the chosen themes were the most relevant and coherent (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They needed to make sense in context. It was also at this time that I was able to highlight certain passages of text that seemed good examples of the theme. Some of the
most relevant are used in this dissertation to illustrate key themes and to demonstrate their prevalence. I also examined the frequency and extent of common nodes across each of the three dyads, then across all three associate teachers, and all three student teachers. In this way, I was able to gain multiple perspectives of the data in order to answer all the research questions.

The next chapter discusses what participants considered success looked like in practicum. A broad range of aspects are highlighted including respect, communication, supervision style, emotional wellbeing, time, and cultural difference. The chapter includes evidence about what each individual participant considered indicated success to look like, before also discussing the key success criteria for each student-associate dyad.
CHAPTER FOUR:
INDIVIDUAL & DYAD PERCEPTIONS OF
PRACTICUM SUCCESS

In this chapter I examine the themes that emerged as I explored what made for a successful practicum for Asian immigrant early childhood teaching students and their associate teachers. As each participant is a case, I begin by illustrating how success is first understood by the students and their associates as individual cases by drawing out key quotes from their interviews. Themes have been chosen due to their frequency of appearance in interviews. I then go on to consider the key success themes that emerged within each dyad. In order to manage the volume of thematic discussion, and to avoid excessive repetition, I analyse arising themes within each dyad rather than each participant. Analysis continues at a deeper level in the next chapter where common overall themes are outlined.

Success within practicum is portrayed in this chapter not just through appropriate pedagogical practice by participants, but also as a personally-experienced phenomenon. A range of factors are discussed as supporting or hindering this experience. Success is also identified as being something that occurs over the course of the practicum, as well as being the final desired outcome. Success within practicum appears to be a complex concept, but with different emphases placed upon its occurrence depending upon individual participants and their construction of the concept as a result of past experience and ongoing interactions.

For confidentiality purposes, all names used are pseudonyms.

Jiao & Lucy

Jiao

When I met her, Jiao was in her late twenties and had lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for ten years, coming here for her tertiary education immediately following secondary school in China. She was married to a Chinese man who was raised in New Zealand, and both were now New Zealand citizens. Together, they had two preschool-aged daughters. She had a commerce degree from a New Zealand university and was completing a one-year Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education.
Jiao did not make the decision to come to this country herself; it was made for her by her parents. She had complied with their decision, as she agreed that her parents should make significant life decisions on her behalf. She reported that she enjoyed living here as she felt that people were more open and genuine in their communication in comparison to Chinese society, where intense competition meant that people’s real intent and meaning was hidden in order to appear at their best at all times.

**Jiao’s perceptions of practicum success**

When I first interviewed Jiao, she thought that three things made for a successful practicum. These were for the associate teacher to share their own personal learning experiences, to acknowledge student teachers for their contribution to the centre, and to supervise gently from a distance but give close support if required. These were all aspects of supervision that occurred during the practicum, and rested with the actions of the associate teacher, rather than herself. When asked to summarise what she felt was needed to make the practicum successful, she gave the following summary.

First is a loose environment… so I don’t expect my associate teacher [to] monitor my teaching practice every minutes, and give me loose environment, not too stressful. And also try to provide me suggestions what I needed…. friendly and gently the most important and let me relax… and also the response from associate teacher very frequently… you get help immediately… the another thing is I hope my associate teacher can share their own experience with the student teacher. So I hope they can share their experience with us… and also acknowledge our contribution, and that we are willing to make our own contribution to the centres, and I hope I can be valued and acknowledged (Jiao, initial interview, lines 1715-1790).

But by the end of the practicum, the concept of success for Jiao had evolved to rest upon one fundamental concept; mutual respect. This seemed to focus on others’ respect for cultures and cultural differences, as well as the unique contribution she could make to the centre. She believed this formed the foundation for reciprocal and inclusive relationships with her associate teacher and the rest of the staff. At the end of her final interview, Jiao summarised what she thought made for a successful practicum experience by highlighting respect as the most important thing to influence success.

The most important thing is the respect. I have respectful associate teacher and they say the foundation to build the relationship with each other is that mutual respect… So if the associate teacher and the student teacher is not from the same cultural background… acknowledge the culture difference and understand their own culture… Accept different answer and different options from other culture…
not make them change. So inclusive, both parties together…I think respect is the foundation (Jiao, final interview, lines 1750-1787).

So for Jiao, respect and culture appeared to be closely tied to her understanding of practicum success.

The impact of communication, culture and relationships on success

The strongest theme that I interpreted throughout Jiao’s interviews involved communication, relationships and culture, and the connections between them. It linked Jiao’s ability to effectively communicate with others positively or negatively upon the quality of relationships she subsequently developed. This included her relationships with children, staff, and parents. This theme suggested ways she thought success could be optimised. In previous practicums Jiao had not felt she had been able to develop deep relationships with children because she believed her communication abilities had hindered relationship development. She gave an example of this when describing the difficulties she had in developing relationships in a previous practicum.

The English I try to express, explain, is different, the words. So is kind of being excluded by the children... It’s not they didn’t respect me; it’s kind of they see you as a visitor, not a teacher in their centre (Jiao, initial interview, lines 911-927).

When I asked her about developing relationships with the children in her current practicum centre, she did not perceive this to be a problem anymore because of the younger age of the children.

In this placement it’s much better than before, ‘cos I found the young children, over three years old, they have strong idea about the person they see and also environment. It’s not easy to go into their world when they grow up. But for toddlers and infants it’s very, very easy to talk, to make friend with them. They treat every teacher the same (Jiao, final interview, lines 1547-1554).

The deepest relationship Jiao repeatedly discussed in terms of success was one she developed with a new Chinese boy and his mother. Here, she positioned success in terms of learning skills to settle the new boy into his new environment and transition his relationship to others upon her departure.

The other most important thing I learn is to help the Chinese boy to be settled in the centre... I got strong support from the teachers in the centre and I think I helped the child settle in the centre smoothly without hurting his feeling... That’s the most successful thing I have done in this placement, so I don’t need to worry about [Child X] when I left because he had [Child Y]. I can see he has built a relationship with other teachers at end of placement so he feels comfortable to go
to toilet with other teacher or go to sleeping room (Jiao, final interview, lines 339-348).

Her ability to be able to communicate effectively with this child meant that she acted as translator for him in terms of understanding the centre’s routines and behavioural expectations. Consequently, he became very close to her and Jiao recognised the need to support his friendship with other Chinese-speaking children. Jiao was also asked to provide transitional support for another older Chinese-speaking child in another part of the centre.

Because of the complex system of daily responsibilities employed by staff in the practicum centre, Jiao also needed to communicate effectively with other staff. She considered this a key aspect to her success; the development of her communication ability with them.

We have probably seven or eight teachers every day, and every day has role changing every day, so we have to negotiate with each teacher differently every day. So that improves my communication skills and also the teamwork to work with other teacher to reach the common goal every day (Jiao, final interview, lines 235-245).

Her relationship in supporting the new Chinese child to transition into the centre, as well as her involvement in the busy daily schedules meant that Jiao felt that she had made a contribution to the centre that was valued by others; one of her key success criteria.

**Acknowledgement as a success indicator**

Another theme that developed from Jiao’s conversations was the continued emphasis she placed on being acknowledged for her contribution in the centre. She positioned this as a part of a reciprocal and respectful relationship with the associate teacher and the other staff. It suggests that if she was willing to learn from the others’ experiences, then she believed that they should similarly expect to learn from hers.

In this placement I found more valued and acknowledged cos they need the Chinese teachers to translate for [Chinese child] and the other teachers, so I feel more valued (Jiao, final interview, lines 1566-1570).

She recognised that she had important skills to share, in this case her bilingual capability, so expected her contribution to be valued by others. This acknowledgement, and respect for her contribution, was an important personal success factor.
**Personal teaching philosophy**

Jiao’s personal philosophy around her role as a teacher changed over the course of this practicum. Initially, she discussed the importance of play in children’s learning, a new concept for her in contrast to her own upbringing in China. She signalled a change in perspective in her view of the role of the teacher in an early childhood setting by recognising that *Te Whāriki* requires New Zealand children, rather than teachers, to lead the learning experience. These changes likely developed during her previous two practicum experiences and through coursework. But after her final practicum placement, when she knew she had already graduated, Jiao acknowledged that this philosophy had developed further.

I think [direct] teaching is still very important and necessary way to learn. We can’t go directly from one point straight to [other] end. I try to focus on the combination of two cultures. I personally think New Zealand education is too loose for the children... sometimes make children doesn’t know where to go because the direction is too wide. They have enough space and room but is kind of too big for them, sometimes I need to narrow down. But the Chinese education is too narrow; I need to open it up... I try to find the balance between those (Jiao, final interview, lines 1180-1209).

This suggests that Jiao had got to a point in her professional development where she believed she had an approach to teaching that could make a valuable contribution in New Zealand. She appeared to believe that the increasing ethnic diversity here would require a wider view of pedagogical practice than was currently observed. So she may have considered success not just in making a contribution and being respected for it during practicum, but also making a contribution to the whole sector’s understanding of relevant practice. Her combination of existing and new educational thinking reflects both Bhabha’s (1994) and Berry’s (2007) intercultural ideal, suggesting that Jiao was developing an integrated understanding of both cultures; not giving up on her own cultural beliefs but also being able to operate within a new cultural context. She was forming a hybridised philosophy of teaching, incorporating aspects of both Chinese and New Zealand educational practices.

**Jiao’s perception of successful practice**

When viewing videos of herself interacting with children, Jiao related successful practice in her practicum primarily to the nature of her communication with children. She linked her communication to promoting either the child’s emotional wellbeing or their learning. She used Chinese in conjunction with English when speaking with Chinese children in order to support their understanding. But she suggested that she was not a suitable role model in New
Individual and Dyad Perceptions of Success

Zealand to young children who were still developing their English language capabilities. Retrospectively, she identified missed opportunities in many of her interactions to expand on children’s learning because she did not use open-ended questions to encourage two-way conversation, due to her limited English vocabulary and understanding of syntax. For instance, when viewing herself interacting with children at an art activity, she felt she had not made the most of the opportunity to extend their conversation.

I think next time I probably need to, not too much question, but some open ended question about the activity. Probably such as, why [Child X] making those kind of colour mix them together, and try to figure out and encourage conversation about why do you like to put them together, or probably she has particular thing like to put on the stone so maybe I just try to encourage her language and communication skills (Jiao, video discussion, lines 462-474).

This emphasis on effective communication with children in her practice may link with her desire to be respected for her contribution before she can view a practicum as successful. However, here she suggested that her English communicative abilities impacted on her ability to do so.

In summary, Jiao initially stated she had three key practicum success criteria before her practicum began. However, during the course of our conversations she focussed on only one of these; being respected for her contribution to the centre. Her contribution centred predominantly on her ‘Chineseness’ and her language capabilities with children who did not speak English.

Lucy

Lucy was Jiao’s associate teacher. She had been involved in the early childhood sector for about twelve years, was married and had two young children. The majority of her working career had been in another city, where she had begun as a student and eventually worked her way up to a supervisory position. She was particularly interested in infant and toddler care, and her career had reflected this. Previously, she had worked with a tight-knit early childhood team which included her best friend and her sister.

From the beginning of her career, Lucy had supported a wide variety of student teachers in her role as an associate teacher. These included many who had not been born and raised in New Zealand, reflecting the multi-ethnic population of her previous city of residence. Within the past six months, Lucy and her family had relocated to a new city. She began work at her current centre in a relieving capacity, but was then offered the team leader position for the
under 3-year-old group. She found the new role a challenge working with the existing staff as they did not have the same collaborative culture she was used to working within. Instead, the staff was comprised of individuals with strong personal styles and opinions.

**Lucy’s perceptions of practicum success**

Before the practicum began, and as a result of her previous associate teacher experience, Lucy’s idea of what made for a successful practicum was based on three key areas; the student passing the ITE institution’s required learning outcomes, the degree of student self-confidence, and the student becoming an integral part of the teaching team.

A successful practicum is you’ve successfully met your learning outcomes; like you feel you’ve established relationships with the children. I believe that if a student comes into a centre for five weeks, by the end of it they should be part of the team – confident, and that when they go it’s like we lose something. You know, like we notice them gone. A successful student is someone who comes in and they use their initiative. They step into things; they just become part of the team (Lucy, initial interview, lines 677-687).

By using these success criteria, Lucy positioned success as lying predominantly with the student’s actions, rather than with her own. She reiterated that a student’s confidence level in interacting with children helped her constitute practicum success.

Sometimes I think it’s just a confidence thing. I didn’t say they were unsuccessful because when you observe, like if you really watch them, the little conversations they have, the intimate conversations they have with one or two children, you can tell they’ve got it there. They just need to have confidence to bring it out (Lucy, initial interview, lines 307-320).

In the past, Lucy had only failed one student because she considered the student to be unsafe in the childcare profession.

Lucy proposed ways that associate teachers could help facilitate student success after this practicum ended. She suggested that supervising the student more closely and giving them the opportunity to share their own cultural heritage with children also contributed towards practicum success. She further recognised the need to be able to talk with the student about differences in teaching philosophies and practices. These additional factors position student success as being something that she too was responsible for. When asked to summarise her thinking around what made for a successful practicum, she suggested that supervising the student closely and sharing professional understandings was important.
Take them under your wing. Not allowing them to flounder around but to have established roles for them; just to be attached to you the whole time pretty much… And sharing her language and songs and stuff and cultural things, only because we’ve got a lot of Chinese children. It was a way for us to establish relationships with her and for her to feel more part of the team… What I’d do if I did get another Asian student, maybe talk beforehand about this is what we believe in, we like children to explore things, there’s not a big emphasis on the product, we like to see the process of learning. Ask open-ended questions and things like that. And also finding out their philosophy, what’s important to them, for the children and stuff like that (Lucy, final interview, lines 1360-1388).

So, for Lucy, practicum success was positioned both with the student’s actions and self-perception, and with her own supervisory and communicative actions. However, she appeared to be more monocultural in her mind-set, suggesting that Jiao needed to predominantly fit in with what was already done within the centre (Hammer, 2012).

**Impact of other staff on success**

Lucy had been experiencing significant difficulties with existing staff in her new leadership role. These issues formed the basis of the strongest theme occurring across the practicum for her. She commented on this in the first interview before the practicum began.

> I’ve got a very hard team, and I’ve got teachers who have been there for a long time and there’s some very strong personalities, some teaching practices that I don’t agree with wholeheartedly. I’ve struggled being a team leader there (Lucy, initial interview, lines 522-529).

She was also worried about how her current team would support her student, since she was used to a collaborative approach to supervision, with all staff observing and supporting students. But from what she had observed with other students in her current centre to date, this had not been the case.

Despite discussing her expectations around student support with her staff prior to the practicum, Lucy reported that an incident did occur between Jiao and another staff member.

> There was one time where a staff member came into the staff room and said she was disgusted at mat time, because it was the second week and Jiao was doing the good morning song with the children around the group and she didn’t know a few of the names. That’s exactly what she said; that she was disgusted. We were just gobsmacked. I’ve taken the team leader’s position; but it was something I think she really wanted… It’s difficult for students to get caught up in that; it wasn’t fair on her… She made her cry. It was completely unprofessional (Lucy, final interview, lines 509-544).
The number of times Lucy commented on issues with other staff suggested that she was concerned that they would have a negative impact on the success of this practicum. One of her success criteria involved the student becoming an integral member of the team and developing confidence in their practice. Other team members could potentially negatively impact on Jiao’s ability to do this.

**Changed supervision style to optimise success**

Lucy was used to having a friendly, open and casual relationship with her students. She preferred to only be indirectly involved in any planned activities to support student teachers if required. She did not want to emphasise any sort of hierarchical relationship between herself and her student.

> I like it to be personal enough that they tell me about things, they share with me… The more relaxed and open, friendly I am, I feel like that helps. I’m [not] the boss of you kind of thing (Lucy, initial interview, lines 416-423).

However, during the practicum, Lucy challenged her own supervision style. Jiao’s visiting lecturer did not pass her due to the perceived unsafe nature of the activity she had implemented during her visit. This made Lucy reflect upon her supervision up until the point of the visit.

> It made me think, maybe I really need to watch her and maybe she shouldn’t pass. So I really watched her… I had lots of meetings with her… I talked to her about her activities… When you’re working with infants and toddlers you need to be really age appropriate. So then I think I just watched her and to me she was a competent teacher. Because every day she grew, she took feedback really well, she reflected on what she’d done and she improved it. I just thought every day she got better. It was definitely a confidence thing with Jiao. I just couldn’t fail her. She didn’t just sit on the couch and twiddle her thumbs, she was in here. I’d ask her whatever needed to be done and she would be there. If she didn’t know what to do, she’d be asking what to do. And I think that’s what being a valuable team member is (Lucy, final interview, lines 61-87).

Lucy’s supervision style became closer and more directive not only in response to the visiting lecturer’s concerns, but also to align with her success criteria around increasing student confidence and ensuring the student felt a part of the teaching team. She implies that success was influenced by movement towards achieving summative learning outcomes, her third success criteria. Lucy passed Jiao on the practicum. Because of the discrepancy between the associate teacher’s and visiting lecturer’s results, an examiners meeting was held at the ITE institution and Jiao did eventually pass the practicum overall.
**Lucy’s perception of successful practice**

In terms of successful teaching practice, when watching videos of Jiao’s practice, the strongest theme that I interpreted from Lucy’s discussion was around appropriate communication with children. Lucy inferred from Jiao’s actions that Jiao was more comfortable communicating with children individually, rather than in a group, and that she used closed questions as a teaching strategy to try and extend children’s learning. When observing Jiao’s practice, Lucy also noted a distinct difference in the quality of interaction between English-speaking and Chinese-speaking children.

I think she [Jiao] understands English but I think little things are being missed. I feel like sometimes they are missed because of the language barrier but also because these children are just learning to talk, and sometimes their language doesn’t sound like it should sound… But she would pick up on these things with [Chinese Child X] and I see her with the Chinese children. The interactions with them are more in-depth; they’re more open-ended. I feel like when Jiao’s engaging with the English-speaking children it’s very rehearsed, very standard, basic (Lucy, final interview, lines 1025-1049).

Lucy seemed concerned that Jiao’s limited understanding of English would result in her not meeting the practicum learning outcomes that relate to interacting with children, even although she had achieved this outcome with Chinese children.

In summary, Lucy believed that a successful practicum included a combination of student-based and associate-based factors. She had concerns about how issues, such as the other staff, the visiting lecturer’s assessment, and Jiao’s language capabilities, could impact upon practicum success. She amended her supervision style to try and assuage these concerns.

**Dyad Findings**

Lucy and Jiao’s individual stories have three elements of success in common. These were that success was a personally experienced phenomenon, it relied upon effective communication, and that cultural differences needed to be acknowledged and respected.

**Success must be personally experienced**

Both Lucy and Jiao’s success influencers included that success needed to be a personally-experienced phenomenon, not just an externally-judged one. Externally-imposed learning outcomes did not appear as the only measure of whether a practicum was experienced as successful. Lucy and Jiao considered that success involved a positive emotional experience.
This was particularly strong from Jiao’s perspective, in that success was connected with a feeling of being respected and included. Feeling respected as a teacher appeared to have contributed to an increase in her own self-confidence. This was also reflected within Lucy’s experience of success. She felt quite differently at times about the success of the current practicum, based upon previous experiences with her staff. Her meaning of practicum success included the student feeling like they were a member of a collaborative team environment. She herself did not currently have this feeling so she was worried that her student would not either. Therefore she focussed upon issues in this area, whereas Jiao did not. Based on the social interaction Jiao had with other team members, her sense of meaning around belonging and inclusion within the team was very positive in general. She liked feeling included, despite one negative incident with a staff member.

The emphasis that participants placed on feeling successful was a common theme I interpreted right throughout their interviews. I concur with Anderson, Walker and Ralph (2009) who suggest that practicum success is a concept that is reflected in more than the external judgement of passing the required learning outcomes; it must also be signalled by the internal experience of the practicum participant. The focus on a positive emotional experience by both members of the dyad also calls into question the sole use of summative forms of assessment for practicum, when there is research evidence which suggests that the personal emotional state of the associate teacher directly impacts how they interpret the standardised learning outcomes (Danyluk, et al., 2015; Ell & Haigh, 2015; Noor Davids, 2015). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the focus upon internal experience directly reflects the concept that meaning is individually developed and experienced through social interaction (Blumer, 1969; Burbank & Martins, 2009; Snow, 2001). Using this lens, success is unable to be externally imposed without also being accompanied by a positive individual experience. That is, simply passing the practicum is not sufficient for the practicum to be deemed successful. I submit that participants also need to feel successful. This may be why both parties appeared to supplement the success learning outcomes given by the ITE institution when considering success themselves. Through interactions each participant had with each other and with others over time, their individual meaning and interpretation of a successful practicum experience continued to develop.
**Success relies upon effective communication**

The second key success criterion that Lucy and Jiao identified was the importance of communication to success. This includes communication with children, communication within the supervision relationship, and the impact that English language capability could have upon success.

Blumer’s second premise of symbolic interactionism is that meaning is developed through social interaction with others through the use of language as a symbolic representation of meaning (Blumer, 1969; Carrothers & Benson, 2003; Mead, 1934; Snow, 2001). So the ability to clearly convey meaning within the interaction is crucial to the success of that interaction. Meaning could be significantly compromised through issues with language comprehension or delivery.

That English language proficiency can act as a barrier to effective communication is a finding of other studies around practicum for non-native born students, both nationally, internationally and across professions. Communication problems appear to negatively impact success during field experiences including the supervisory relationship, the ability of students to learn, and student self-confidence (For example, Campbell, et al., 2008; Chen, 1996; Han, 2005; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2003; Myles, et al., 2006; Nguyen, 2008; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2004; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009; Zhou, 2010).

Jiao and Lucy agreed that English language competency impacted upon Jiao’s successful interaction with children, as she may have lacked the vocabulary and level of comprehension to deepen their learning experiences (Barker, et al., 1991). Therefore she was unable to fully support meaning-making in children. This also impacted her ability to develop relationships with English-speaking children. This was in stark contrast to when she was comfortable with the language being used. Her interactions when speaking Chinese appeared more in-depth and purposeful. This meant that Lucy found that Jiao was able to support Chinese-speaking children in developing meaning and the understanding of what it meant to be in that particular early childhood centre.

In terms of supervision and support, Jiao recognised the importance of ongoing communication with her associate teacher and team members. It was through this vehicle that she gained an understanding of how the centre operated, as well as gathering more pedagogical knowledge from those more experienced than her. Her colleagues’ ability to
question and spend time understanding Jiao’s needs meant that meaning-making between other teachers in the centre and Jiao was much more successful than meaning-making between Jiao and the children. This was in contrast to Lucy’s ability to develop a shared understanding of how the team would operate together under her leadership. She had already developed meaning around how she thought a collaborative team would work together from her previous employment experiences and appeared to be struggling to do the same with her current staff.

In terms of Lucy’s communication with Jiao, however, her style of supervision needed to change following her unsuccessful visiting lecturer visit. Initially her supervision style was very relaxed, replicating successful supervision she had used with past students. She amended her style of communication to be more directive and less open-ended, giving Jiao more specific instructions in order to meet Lucy’s own success criteria. Lucy found this closer supervision style more effective to ensure that the practicum was successful in enabling Jiao to pass the criteria set by the learning institution.

A little bit more help here and there and really supported her more I guess… It was just more like planning ahead the next day, you know, for her to meet those, her criteria and things, learning outcomes and stuff like that was more sort of, she wanted to sit down and we sort of went over it more so we were both on the same page. (Lucy, final interview, 1211-13; 1233-37).

My finding replicates that from Spooner-Lane and her associates (2009) in Australia which also suggested that ethnic-minority students expected to be given additional support in practicum.

Trevethan (2013) posits that the associate teacher role can be viewed on a continuum from an apprenticeship model at one end of a scale, through to an educative mentor at the other.

![Figure 1: Associate teacher role continuum (Trevethan, 2013)](image)

Trevethan’s research suggests that some associate teachers view their role as needing to tell students what to do, keeping them close and having an expectation that they will comply with
instructions. But at the other end of the continuum are associate teachers who facilitate the student’s own learning (Trevethan, 2013). Lucy was used to being more of an educative mentor, but moved backwards in the scale, positioning Jiao in an apprenticeship position instead in order to support her more closely.

The nature of this supervisory arrangement may support the idea that, within Confucian-based Asian cultures, collaboration with someone in authority is not considered socially appropriate (Guo, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Jiao positioned her associate teacher hierarchically beyond her, and had initially wanted Lucy to supervise from a distance. This psychological distance reflected a non-collaborative approach. Ultimately, Jiao considered the top-down approach from Lucy as contributing significantly to the success of the practicum.

I think the most successful thing she helped me is she give me lots of advice… and also the suggestions as well. So if I have any problems she’s very happy, you know, to answer me and give me the direction and also you know, it kinda like leading me (Jiao, final interview, lines 565-572).

Unquestioning respect of teachers is a foundational value within Confucian societies, so the notion of true collaboration with her associate teacher may be completely at odds with Jiao’s expectation of the associate teacher’s role.

**Cultural differences matter to practicum success**

The final key theme important in this dyad was the acknowledgement of cultural difference for practicum to be successful. Jiao recognised acknowledgement and respect as part of her sense of belonging and contribution, her development of self-confidence, and in the development of her personal teaching philosophy. Lucy also acknowledged that a better understanding of cultural differences underpinning Jiao’s teaching philosophy would have contributed to the success of the practicum.

Jiao’s meaning of what it means to be a student and a teacher at the same time had developed out of personal experience, as well as through observing other teachers. She had already developed a sense of this in her home country, but through social interactions in Aotearoa New Zealand was learning about what these roles mean here and was adapting her meaning accordingly.

I was born in China and the education in China is teaching, teaching, learning, learning… But here play is very important to early childhood education. And also I found New Zealand teacher provide a, the direction for the children, not one, only one answer there… But in China there is only… one answer, easily for
marking. But in here, the choice is for children. And also I quite like being a
teacher to provide the guidance for children - point out the right direction for them
and let the children find answer themselves (Jiao, initial interview, lines 1458-69).

Blumer’s third premise of symbolic interactionism is that meaning is transformed through
interpretation of others’ intentions (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Snow, 2001). Jiao’s meaning
of what it meant to be a teacher had developed through interpreting other teachers’ intentions
in their interactions.

At times these two roles, of learner and teacher, were at odds with each other. Jiao wanted to
be given the freedom to contribute her experience, but also wanted to have support close-by if
needed. Lucy only positioned Jiao as a learner as she provided top-down feedback rather than
recognising a reciprocal opportunity for her own professional learning. This represented a
potential tension in Jiao’s practicum needs. Previous research with ethnic-minority students
suggests that they consider mutual respect vital and expect to be treated as professional
colleagues (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Loizou, 2011; Martinez,
et al., 2001; Nguyen, 2008). But this body of work does not seem to highlight any friction; of
students’ identity being both a learner and a teacher within practicum.

Arjun & Shelley

Arjun

When I met Arjun, he had only lived in New Zealand for two years. He was born and raised
in India and worked there as a mathematics teacher in a primary school. He was married to an
Indian woman, and, at the end of this particular practicum, they welcomed their first child.

Although Arjun’s Indian teaching qualification had been assessed by the New Zealand
Qualifications Authority as being valid to use in this country, he had had difficulty finding
employment. He attributed this to his lack of English language competence and strong Indian
accent. He also recognised that there were significant differences between the education
systems of both countries. As a result, he decided to gain a local qualification that would
assist him in understanding the system here from its roots. He felt that studying at the early
childhood level would enable him to understand the foundations upon which the New
Zealand educational system was built. He was about to begin his third and final practicum of
a one-year Graduate Diploma qualification.
Of his two previous practicums, Arjun reported two very different experiences. In the first, he perceived his associate teacher as being unsupportive and disrespectful. He had found out on his last day that she had not passed him on several ITE practicum learning outcomes and he was surprised and very upset by this. In contrast, he viewed his second associate teacher as friendly and helpful. By this time in his study, he was also more aware of New Zealand educational theory and practice and how these differed from what he was used to.

**Arjun’s perceptions of practicum success**

Before beginning this practicum, Arjun reported that the main contributors towards practicum success were self-confidence and acceptance as a teacher by others. When asked how he defined success in terms of practicum he focussed on the importance of feeling confident.

> When we feel confidence, and if we are able to [convey] that confidence [to the] associate teacher, and more important, children and parents, then we are successful... If children and parents trust upon you within five weeks, if you’re able to make good relationships, and perceive yourself as a teacher, then they accept you as a teacher. It does not matter if we pass from this course, it is more important for parents and children, they accept us as a teacher, then we are successful (Arjun, initial interview, lines 930-944).

He made several references linking confidence with success. For example, when discussing the style of feedback used by a previous associate teacher, he again made connections between self-confidence and acceptance by others of him as a teacher.

> She gave me her suggestions: how you can improve this one, how can you improve this one. She give me examples and showed me demonstrations and it’s really helping me. And at the last day I think I was feeling lots of confidence and it was, I think, very successful... When we feel confidence, and if we are able to send that confidence of the associate teacher, and more important, children and parents, we are successful... We have to prove, it is important to prove our self. If we are successful to prove that we can do this job, then we will be successful (Arjun, initial interview, lines 386-946).

His expectation of an associate teacher was that they would teach him, recognising that he did not know what to do.

> I think it’s most important that the associate teacher gives you support. They behave like a teacher, and they try to teach you, and that’s good. If they expect you there as a teacher, not a student, they expect everything from you as a professional. If we already teacher, why are we there? We are there for learning (Arjun, initial interview, lines 373-380).

Here a tension became apparent in Arjun’s success criteria. He wanted to be treated as a student and told what to do by his associate, but at the same time to be viewed as a teacher by
children and families. This may have been because he had a qualification that already allowed him to teach.

Following the practicum, Arjun added two further elements to his concept of success. He suggested that reflection and formal theory were also both important components of a successful experience. He suggested that students needed to be able to critically reflect on successful and unsuccessful experiences in order to learn, and that an understanding of the New Zealand education system was required.

Arjun developed a broad conception of success. He positioned success both within himself and with the actions of his associate teacher. He emphasised success as occurring during the process of practicum, rather than at its end. It is possible to speculate that, because he was already a qualified and experienced teacher who had not been able to gain employment, he wanted to understand more about the process of teaching during this qualification, rather than simply passing the required learning outcomes.

**The development of personal teaching philosophy and identity**

A significant ongoing theme from Arjun’s interviews was the development of his personal teaching philosophy and how this linked to his personal identity as a teacher. This may be because of his focus on the process of success rather than success as a final goal to achieve. His first difficult practicum had shaken his existing sense of identity as a respected teacher, an identity he had developed in India. He had come to believe that respect in New Zealand is earned, rather than attached to the teacher role in which he was accustomed.

In my first practicum I really struggled how to manage this, because it was question on my self-identity, my previous beliefs. I was respectable teacher in India and everybody respect me and nobody questioned me, and my respect was like a right there for teacher. But here we need to do something for get respect… They will not respect me if we are doing nothing… I think there is more respect for teacher here, but in India it does not matter you are doing job properly or not, there is respect (Arjun, initial interview, lines 138-152).

However, Arjun also expected to be respected as a teacher by his associate teacher, citing this as the foundation of a successful mentoring relationship. So he appeared to need to feel respected by others in order to have a positive self-identity.

I think, and on both sides, both people respect to each other and are interested in each other, then there is no reason by they cannot build good relationships (Arjun, final interview, lines 716-717).
Arjun made an interesting adjustment in his thinking around his teaching philosophy prior to and following his practicum. He described his change from considering education to be only subject-based as a result of his upbringing and work in the Indian education system, to considering it should address the fundamental wellbeing of children.

Before I believed being a teacher means teach children; give him the alphabetical, numerical, literary knowledge... But I think it is not teaching, just giving knowledge. It has changed my philosophy. I think children are not objects; they are living. Person is person; it doesn’t matter how little or big he is (Arjun, initial interview, lines 877-884).

This reflected his growing recognition and acceptance of cultural differences between his home culture and the new one he was operating within (Hammer, 2012). However, following the practicum, Arjun amended his thinking based on conversations he had with friends who have older children in the New Zealand education system, and the fact that he had just become a father himself for the first time. Like Jiao, this may also have been because his final interview occurred after he had learnt he had graduated from his qualification, and he felt less inhibited.

I want to add something in this philosophy... Some of my friends’ children go to intermediate schools and they say there is nothing, other than they play... There’s no homework or anything... I don’t like that things... I believe it is very important for them, for success in life, for success in citizenship... Only few of them choose to go to university and work hard and go for the PhD and other technical levels... I would like to combine both these systems; Indian system and New Zealand system... I want both things in my time (Arjun, final interview, lines 865-894).

Arjun was developing his understanding of what a successful education system, and his place within it, should look like. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, his ongoing meaning-making about these things had developed as a result of interpreting the actions of others through discussion. Like Jiao, he demonstrated that he was still in the process of integrating his cultural understanding to develop a hybridised philosophy which incorporated aspects from his Indian and New Zealand experiences (Berry, 2007; Bhabha, 1994; Hammer, 2012).

**Success is learning new things and doing them correctly**

Another key success theme for Arjun was learning new things while on practicum. He positioned himself as the recipient and implementer of new knowledge.

To be successful this practicum I tried my best... I tried to do naturally the knowledge. And ask lots of questions to my associate and I would try to get
guidance from her, and follow the rules. Try to follow the rules of the centre (Arjun, final interview, lines 257-263).

The language used by Arjun indicates that he holds the perception that a teaching practice can be categorised as either right or wrong; whether it is allowed or not by the associate or their centre. This perception underpinned the idea that mistakes in practice could be made. Arjun praised Shelley’s supervision style based upon her ability to let him know whether what he was doing was ‘right’ or not.

She was very helpful. She tried to explain everything; what I need, she explained my queries and she told me the rules. And also, lots of times she also give me instructions; do this and don’t do these things, what is allowed, what is not allowed; all these things. She was very helpful, and she praised me my every good habit (Arjun, final interview, lines 499-505).

Here, Arjun is positioning correct pedagogical practice as a means to gain internal self-confidence and external respect, his key success criteria.

**Arjun’s perception of successful practice and communication**

When viewing his own teaching practices on video, Arjun predominantly focussed upon children’s safety, wellbeing, and imparting important knowledge to children during the interaction. These outcomes centred on his communicative abilities. However, he found communicating with non-verbal children in this practicum easier than the verbal communication with older children in previous practicums.

It was non-verbally, and signalling communications. I think it will supply me opportunity to read their emotions and their needs from the body language, what they want, their smiles, their cries, they’re coming to me or going away from me… It was easier than verbal I think, because body language very strong language, you can understand what he want from the eyes (Arjun, final interview, lines 1141-1156).

When verbally communicating with children he used repetition as one of his primary teaching strategies, as he linked it with teaching children knowledge.

We need to repeat again and again because they experiment with word every day… they are listening, and re-repeating the whole sentence… I said to him ‘be gentle, take care of all your friends’ and the next time when he listen two times, three times, four times, a hundred times, then he will. Yes, there’s something you’re going him to learn (Arjun, video discussion, lines 685-692).

For example, in an interaction with a small group of children using a manipulative bead frame, Arjun reported to me that he was conscious of trying to deliberately teach children key concepts around colour and number.
In this interaction there are two things happening. I am trying to give some words to increase infants’ and toddlers’ concept of colours and their concept of up and down, and concept of numbering - one, two, three. And showing them the concept of up, down, up, down, and showing them colours, the yellow one, green one, blue one… In fact these same concept can be applied everywhere, the colours, the up, down, the numbers (Arjun, video discussion, lines 905-920).

The focus on academic concepts such as colour and number likely originated from Arjun’s previous understanding of what it is to be a teacher. His pedagogical experience in India had emphasised direct teaching as the key teaching strategy to be used. This focus can be linked to his ongoing development of professional identity as a teacher.

Indeed, all of Arjun’s perceptions of success appeared to relate to it being an ongoing formative process; developing a sense of self-confidence, wanting to be respected, developing his teaching philosophy, learning new things, and teaching children. None focused on success being something that was achieved only at the end of practicum. Instead they centred upon his actions and accompanying feelings, supported by his associate teacher.

**Shelley**

Shelley was Arjun’s associate teacher for this practicum. She had been born, raised and had worked her entire career in the same North Island town. She had worked in the early childhood sector since leaving school, progressively training until she gained her degree qualification. She had specialised in infant and toddler care for the past eleven years. She had a young daughter who also attended the centre in which she worked.

Shelley was the Head Teacher in the Infant and Toddler room of a relatively new centre. She was hired before the centre opened, and so had provided significant input into how the room was set up and how it operated. She often mentored student teachers on practicum, including some who had not been born in New Zealand.

**Shelley’s perceptions of practicum success**

Based on her one unsuccessful experience as an associate teacher, Shelley listed a willingness to learn at the top of what would contribute to success when asked what she thought made for a successful practicum.

I think that the successful placements I’ve had have been students, even if they haven’t worked with that age group before, they’ve come in ready to listen, ready to learn and ready to try (Shelley, initial interview, lines 199-201).
All her factors for success rested with the student. She thought that students should study the specialised type of care needed for infants and toddlers before beginning their practicum, and should observe other staff to understand correct procedures. Their focus should be on building relationships with children. Ideally, she thought that a successful student should leave at the end of practicum feeling they have learnt something new. She felt that if a student did all of these things, then they would have met and passed the required learning outcomes set by the ITE institution. Although she did not specifically state that passing these equated to success, this was implied in her subsequent discussions.

In the last week of practicum, after a positive visiting lecturer visit, Shelley commented that Arjun’s practice with children deteriorated noticeably. When asked what he could have done to have improved the success of the practicum, Shelley commented upon Arjun’s lack of enthusiasm once he knew he had passed its required learning outcomes. It appeared from this that passing summative learning outcomes was, in fact, an important aspect of success for Arjun, despite what he had previously stated to me.

I think probably stamina. It came down to, I think, passion for a particular age group I think. While he was eager to learn about infants and toddlers he did all he needed to do - almost like a checklist? And by the time it got to be the last week he did a lot of sitting around, and I think that was just because he’d done all he’d needed to do (Shelley, final interview, lines 62-70).

She attributed this to Arjun’s checklist mentality; that he’d done all he needed to do to pass. She earlier noted that he preferred to go through each of his learning outcomes individually when receiving feedback, and that this preference seemed to come through again in his final week. It is interesting to note that Shelley perceived Arjun doing what was needed to pass the ITE learning outcomes in order to be successful, yet Arjun himself did not overtly discuss this himself when considering success. This represents a tension in what Arjun reported to me in regards to success, versus what his actions implied. It is possible that he was influenced in what he said by what he thought I might want to hear as a researcher; a person in authority. Although Shelley commented on his lack of stamina, it did not impact her perception of the success of the practicum as he was still willing to learn, her key success determinant.

Following this practicum, Shelley amended her ideas about how to better support Asian-born student teachers to meet the summative criteria for a pass grade in practicum. She acknowledged the importance of reflective discussions with the student about cultural differences; bringing these to the fore for both herself and the student. She also recognised
that this group of students may require more individual support, and therefore time, to be able to be successful.

As far as difference, it would really just be the time to talk to them. I do think the conversations that we had about culture are important too, so that I can understand his culture and he can understand mine. I think it definitely helps… being able to understand the little things, like the mother in the relationship with the babies, that’s something I wouldn’t have thought of… I think it all really comes down to allowing them the time, and giving them the time, to talk about, well, just to talk in general (Shelley, final interview, lines 925-942).

So, although she positioned success as resting mainly with the student, she also acknowledged that her own actions can support the student to achieve this. Ultimately her success criteria was for the student to meet the required learning outcomes set by the ITE institution, but she suggested that there were a number of ongoing success factors that could contribute towards achieving these.

**Success as compliance with her philosophy**

One of the key themes that I interpreted from Shelley’s interviews was her idea that there was a correct and incorrect way to teach within the centre in order for students to be successful. Because of Shelley’s position as Head Teacher and her involvement with the initial setting up of the centre, she acknowledged that the culture within the nursery room was a direct reflection of her own personal philosophy. She was quick to explain her teaching philosophy to students and expected them to interact with children in the same way she does. She referred to this as the centre culture and supported students to comply with the same teaching practices that she and the other staff use.

I generally tell people straight away what my philosophy is because it is so important to me. My philosophy has become, or it is, the room… There are some things which are very important and I just won’t tolerate. And so from day dot I explain to my students my philosophy and what I believe. And they generally take that on board. And then I’m able to support them through it; if there’s any questions because sometimes they don’t understand… Because even if they don’t agree with what I’m saying, they’re still listening, and taking that on, and accepting the culture of the centre (Shelley, initial interview, lines 703-717, 424-426).

She noted that Arjun listened closely when she discussed her philosophy, acknowledging it, but expressed no personal opinion on it himself. He did not contribute his own ideas about his own philosophy. Following the rules was also an important success criteria of Arjun, possibly because of the emphasis placed upon doing so by his associate teacher. Through this
statement, Shelley indicated that she was likely to still be in the polarization stage of 
Hammer’s (2012) intercultural continuum, as she positioned difference from a “us versus 
them” perspective (p. 121). She seemed to feel as though difference was threatening to her 
own cultural way of doing things.

Shelley noted that Arjun sometimes copied the practice of the staff in the centre, again 
framing practice as being either right or wrong.

I’d say he learnt from watching us. And often I’d notice he was doing things 
exactly how we had. And sometimes, the way you do things with infants and 
toddlers can alter a bit depending upon the child’s mood or whatever. I don’t think 
he was learning exactly what we were doing and following, he wasn’t able to read 
those cues the same as us, so you’d see him completely repeating what we did, 
and not always at the right time (Shelley, final interview, lines 211-223).

Shelley’s key success criterion was a willingness to learn. With the focus she placed on Arjun 
aligning his practice with hers, there was an implication that she set herself up as the role 
model to which Arjun needed to emulate in order to be successful. Through the lens of 
symbolic interactionism, Arjun interpreted what it meant to be successful by replicating the 
interactions of his associate teacher and other centre staff.

**Communication issues as barriers to success**

Another significant theme around practicum success Shelley had was the success, or 
otherwise, of communication with her student. She explained how she felt uncomfortable in 
communicating with Arjun.

Because when he started on a really big conversation his accent would get quite 
thick and it would get quite hard to understand him and people were worried they 
were offending him… Sometimes I did feel bad saying ‘pardon’ over and over 
again… If I tried to explain something that he wasn’t doing quite right, he 
wouldn’t understand. And I’d say it three or four times and he still wouldn’t quite 
understand what it was (Shelley, final interview, lines 260-278).

This communication barrier meant that she was unable to have in-depth conversations with 
him to support the development of his practice. She would try several times to communicate 
her message, but gave up if unsuccessful. Similarly, if asked a question, she gave an answer 
to what she hoped she had understood him to say. She found that giving him readings to take 
home was a more useful strategy to convey meaning as it gave him time to read and develop 
comprehension. Shelley believed understanding had been affected so much by 
communication difficulties that she joked that she wished she could speak Hindi so she could 
have a deep conversation with Arjun to assist his learning.
Actually, all humour aside, it actually probably would have been really helpful as far as him understanding infants and toddlers when it was completely new to him. To have been able to have a really in-depth conversation would have been really great (Shelley, final interview, lines 322-330).

It is interesting to note that Shelley positioned the exchange of information as being one way; from her to Arjun. She did not appear to prioritise her own learning in the relationship. Shelley confirmed that the development of the relationship between herself and Arjun had been affected by the communication barrier, and had taken longer to develop than it would with a New Zealand-born student.

So initially everything’s a little bit awkward while you’re developing that relationship. But I think by the end of it, I suppose you start to learn their accent a little bit as well, so he becomes a little bit easier to understand, especially after five weeks. Had it been only a three week placement, it might have been different (Shelley, final interview, lines 692-700).

Shelley’s perceived issues with understanding Arjun are likely to be linked to her success criterion regarding learning correct practice. If Arjun did not understand her, or vice versa, then his learning could be affected.

**Shelley’s perception of successful practice**

When viewing Arjun’s practice on video, Shelley focussed on his communication with children, children’s wellbeing, learning new things, and respect for children. These were broader than Arjun’s main foci of wellbeing and teaching children something specific. Shelley noted that Arjun’s communication with young children in the video of his practice was very encouraging, overall. He used language repetition a lot as a teaching strategy. However, sometimes, Shelley felt his language was too generalised, rather than being specific.

I think he was encouraging them to keep trying going up and down the ramp. He was trying to praise them in what they were doing. I think a way he could have improved that is more specific praise. ‘Well done’, and ‘good boy’ and ‘good girl’; it’s just a bit empty. So that specific praise is probably one way he could have improved that; putting words to their actions, what they are doing - ‘you’re going up the hill’, ‘you’re going down’ - all those learning concepts that you can get through language (Shelley, video discussion, lines 317-332).

She also noted that Arjun was very respectful in his interactions with children, linking this with her own practice. In the following excerpt, she discusses Arjun’s approach to *kai* (food) time with children in their centre.
I think he’s very respectful in his interactions and he always asks them if they want stuff. And when [Child X] said he didn’t want any, he carried on; he didn’t force it on him… I think he’s naturally respectful anyway, but he also got it from watching us as well, because that’s how we deal with kai, we always ask and so maybe he had watched us (Shelley, video discussion, lines 279-292).

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, Shelley believed that Arjun had interpreted his understanding of appropriate practice through the interactions he had with her and the other staff. Through their interactions, his conception of what a teacher should do during this time with children had developed.

Several times Shelley interpreted Arjun’s actions as meaning he was uncomfortable working alongside children in a curriculum area, either because of his gender or his cultural interpretation of its appropriateness. She cited examples in messy play, and below, in the family area.

He’s so uncomfortable with that kind of play! You can just see, in his whole body language, you can see when they offer him babies or anything that’s a bit girly, he kind of freezes. You can tell he’s not comfortable… I think he’s definitely brushed it off. He hasn’t delved into it as much as could have. He hasn’t followed that through as much as he has with the sand play, or the areas where he’s a bit more comfortable (Shelley, video discussion, lines 612-643).

From Blumer’s (1969) third premise of symbolic interactionism, Shelley has interpreted Arjun’s practice in relation to her own. This again positions pedagogical practice as something she perceives needs to be done in the same way as her own, one of her key success criteria. The other criteria that Shelley initially identified; a willingness to learn, specialised study in infant and toddler care, observing others for correct teaching procedures, and learning something, all revolved around her concept of practicum success as being linked to the student’s pedagogical practice. But this practice seems to need to be correct in her eyes before she deemed it to be successful.

**Dyad Findings**

Analysing findings from Arjun and Shelley, I found four key themes that featured for the dyad. They were that a successful practicum for Asian immigrant students needed a hierarchical approach; it relied upon effective communication, took more time than the standard four week period, and was impacted upon by the student’s positive self-identity.
Success is hierarchical

A strong ongoing theme throughout both Shelley and Arjun’s descriptions was that there needed to be a hierarchical approach to practicum in order for it to be successful. This appeared from the associate teacher’s perspective in her discussions around compliance with her personal teaching philosophy, providing the student with pedagogical information that she expected him to adhere to, and role modelling her practice. Similarly from the student’s perspective, Arjun wanted to follow the rules of the centre, and expected to be provided new knowledge and practice from his associate. Learning was described as being one way; from the associate to the student. Their expectations were matched in this respect.

By her comments, Shelley positioned herself as offering a form of apprenticeship to Arjun, expecting him to follow her instructions closely and for him to model his practice exactly upon hers.

Because even if they don’t agree with what I’m saying, they’re still listening, and taking that on, and accepting the culture of the centre (Shelley, initial interview, lines 424-426).

This expectation replicates the finding with Jiao and Lucy, when Lucy perceived she needed to eventually change her supervision style to a more apprentice-like model (Trevethan, 2013). Shelley was more overt in her expectations though, in being very open that she expected Arjun to replicate her own style. This finding adds to a growing body of research which suggests that associate teachers tend to view their own practice as normative, and therefore the benchmark against which to assess students (Graham, 2006; Hamilton, 2010; Hastings, 2010; McDonald, 2004). Students tend to be positioned by their associate teachers solely as learners in the relationship, rather than being viewed as professional colleagues (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004).

Arjun’s position within this hierarchical relationship seemed contradictory. His fundamental criteria for a practicum to be successful was to be viewed as a teacher by others, yet in the supervisory relationship he expected to be told what to do. Previous research with minority students suggests that, like Arjun, they want to be perceived by other staff as colleagues (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004). Yet this expectation may be more complex than seems immediately apparent. As Arjun had been a teacher in India before coming to New Zealand, his identity as a teacher may have already been well developed. His previous experience with an associate teacher had left him feeling confused and therefore
possibly wanting to be given explicit guidance on what was expected in his new educational environment. The cognitive dissonance he experienced in his earlier practicum suggested that he may have adapted to the new environment in a way that he felt was expected, if he was to function within it successfully. This aligns with previous findings around the psychological defence mechanisms adopted when high levels of challenge are coupled with low levels of support (Allen, 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Mezirow, 1990; Singh & Dooley, 1996). Arjun’s two expectations were at odds with one another, but within the supervisory relationship he assumed a subservient role in order to be successful. He had learnt how to “play the game” of what each centre required of him to pass (Allen, 2008, p. 15). So, despite his success criteria focussing upon the internally-experienced emotions of self-confidence and acceptance, his ultimate success indicator still appeared to be actually passing the ITE learning outcomes and doing whatever was needed to do so.

**Success relies on communication**

A second predominant theme from this dyad lay around effective communication, and the barriers that arose from different English language capabilities between associate and student, and between student and children. This was also a significant factor for Lucy and Jiao.

Between the student and associate teacher, the relationship took longer to develop because of the language and cultural barriers between them. Shelley noted that she didn’t want to offend Arjun by indicating that she did not understand him, and found it difficult to provide in-depth answers because of his comprehension ability in English. She found that giving him information in writing, in the form of journal articles, was helpful in conveying a deeper level of understanding. She noted that this barrier also affected the depth of relationship she was able to have with Arjun. With this obstacle apparent between them, there was a likelihood that the degree of practicum success could have been affected (Barker, et al., 1991; Burns, 1991; Hyland & Lo, 2006; Nguyen, 2008, 2012; Remington Smith, 2007). It impacted the quality of meaning-making between them.

Although Arjun did not report any communication issues with Shelley, he did imply that these existed with children when talking about how much easier it was to use non-verbal communication with them. Like Jiao, he positioned himself as a language role model to these very young children, as indicated by his use of overly-simplified and repetitive language with them. He felt comfortable developing reciprocal relationships that did not rely upon his verbal communication ability. Research in the secondary school classroom confirms that non-
native speakers do differ in their style of teaching (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 2001). This research has not delved into teacher perceptions or confidence in their teaching abilities as indicated by Arjun or Jiao, although there is some indication that non-native speakers do view themselves as inferior in their teaching to their native English speaking counterparts (Medgyes, 2001). This perception could also have a significant impact on perceived practicum success for student participants.

**Success takes extra time**

The longer than usual time needed to answer Arjun’s many questions and to give detailed feedback was particularly important to the success of this dyad. Extensive spontaneous reflective discussions were able to occur during the course of the day because of the low numbers of children in the nursery. Shelley noted that these informal meetings, together with the more formal weekly meeting, took up considerably more time than she would usually take for a student teacher in order for them to pass the practicum. It was not until after the practicum ended that Shelley acknowledged the need for this extra support. Her perception implied that she went into practicum thinking that mentoring a student from a minority ethnicity would be no different to supervising one who was from the dominant majority (Martinez, et al., 2001). Previous research has suggested that associate teachers expect all students in the same year of study to enter the practicum with the same level of understanding and capability (Campbell, et al., 2008; Erben & Wyer, 1997; Hastings, 2010). But Shelley was able to recognise and make accommodation for Arjun’s need for additional support.

Arjun expected Shelley to be able and willing to answer all his questions whenever he asked them during the day and to provide feedback on his practice continuously.

> And I think feedback should be at the appropriate time. If everything is gone then it doesn’t matter whether she give feedback or not... If she, she will teaching me before, the middle of, during the activities it would help me to improve my practice. Otherwise, if my practice has gone, then what we can do with it? (Arjun, final interview, lines 1259-1268).

He also had an expectation that their formal weekly meeting would take the time to review each ITE practicum learning outcome individually. This additional level of support replicates previous research which suggests that ethnic-minority student teachers expect to be treated differently and to be given additional assistance by their associates (Loizou, 2011; Martinez, et al., 2001; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009).
**Success is personally experienced**

The final theme within this dyad was the impact that the student’s personal self-perception had upon his perception of success; both within the practicum experience and in his identity development as a successful early childhood teacher. Similar to Jiao and Lucy, this dyad believed success needed to be internally experienced, as well as externally dictated. Shelley wanted Arjun to feel that he had learnt something new as one of her key success determinants. Experiencing success personally seemed particularly important for Arjun. Although he did not overtly state that passing the ITE institution’s learning outcomes was part of his own personal success criteria, his actions indicated otherwise. He insisted on receiving very detailed feedback on each competency each week, and his interest in the practicum appeared to decline once he knew he had passed. Despite this, though, he still strongly linked the feelings of confidence and acceptance as needing to also be present in order for the practicum experience to be successful. This finding further reinforces the symbolic interactionist view that meaning is individually experienced through interactions with others (Blumer, 1969). For Arjun, the personal experience of feeling successful seemed to need to be coupled with passing the external ITE learning outcomes for practicum to be deemed successful.

Interwoven throughout Arjun’s need for self-confidence was his sense of professional identity. His construction of being a teacher that had developed during his career in India was significantly challenged during his first New Zealand practicum experience. Although such identity reconstruction is common in teacher development (Lu, 2005; Nguyen, 2008; Peeler, 2005), it was particularly significant in his case because of the extent of deconstruction involved. It is possible that Arjun’s need for external acceptance by other staff and parents may be linked to the deeply-engrained reverence accorded to teachers in Indian society (Joshi, 2005), as he sought to rebuild that sense of self.

**Lien & Alison**

**Lien**

Lien was in her late 30s and had been in New Zealand for over ten years on and off at the time of my research. In her home country of Taiwan, she had completed a commerce degree and had worked in that sector for several years. Upon first arriving in New Zealand, she completed an ECE certificate level course and was now in the final year of a three-year
Teaching and Learning (ECE) degree. Lien said that her decision to pursue early childhood education was due to her English language capability and the higher language expectancy she thought would be required within the New Zealand education system for older children.

Originally I want to be in primary school teacher. But I realise, cos English is not my first language, so if I want to be a primary school teacher that would be a little bit difficult to me cos I don’t know the education system here well and I haven’t been to the primary school here before, so I might not understand what children think… And for younger children I think they will be better, easier to say with (Lien, initial interview, lines 247-260).

Lien had passed all previous practicums, both during her degree and earlier certificate qualifications.

**Lien’s perceptions of practicum success**

Based on her previous experiences, Lien made a close connection between positive personal affect, learning and success. When asked what made some practicum more successful than others, she suggested that it was the encouragement that built her self-confidence.

I feel like if you get more encouragement, you will get more confident. You get more confidence to do things to practice your plan… I get less and less confidence and maybe because of that my performance was getting worse and worse…I need to learn something from this placement… and I am including as a team member… I understand Te Whāriki, belonging, I understand that (Lien, initial interview, lines 817-824; 1420-1434).

When I asked her if she thought it would be possible to achieve this level of self-confidence and not actually pass the ITE institution’s learning outcomes, Lien felt that they were connected.

I feel they are linked… ‘Cos I feel that for my first and third placement, I feel not very difficult to reach all the criteria, but in my second teaching placement I feel so scared that I won’t pass. ‘Cos I mention about that my performance is linked to your confidence, so if I got more confidence I can have a good performance, so I can pass (Lien, initial interview, lines 1465-1479).

So she linked her personal feeling of confidence, which came from encouragement, to success in practicum. Thus success was ultimately meeting the required learning outcomes, but confidence contributed to achieving them.

After completing the current practicum, Lien supplemented her ideas of what she felt contributed to practicum success. These included genuinely wanting to become a teacher, having an open mind and a willingness to develop new learning, remaining positive,
developing a good relationship with the associate, and having the time with the associate to
discuss and understand each other’s cultural background.

I think firstly you need to know that you really want to become a teacher, not just
looking for a job and to get to your qualification…. And you need to have an open
mind to learn. And also, always be positive. No matter what kind of situation you
meet, you need to be positive… Try to build a good relationship with your
associate teacher… Open mindedness. Positive frame of mind. Try and build up a
good relationship… and to accept each other’s cultures. Respect, try to
understand, discuss (Lien, final interview, lines 1109-1152).

Unlike Jiao and Arjun, Lien’s perceptions of practicum success rested largely with her
personal frame of mind, rather than predominantly with the actions of her associate teacher.

**Success requires emotional safety**

Closely linked to self-confidence contributing to practicum success, Lien also connected the
need to feel emotionally safe before opening herself up to feedback from associate teachers.

You know if you just say like the thing that I didn’t do very well, but you didn’t
give me any suggestion, I will feel that you are not really, really want to teach me
something - just want to show me like you are the teacher; you are better than me.
So I will close my mind. I don’t want to learn anything from you… You need to
be a good model for me. So if I see that, I will open my mind and I will follow
you, I will learn from you (Lien, final interview, lines 143-153).

This was further illustrated throughout the practicum in Liens’ reticence to converse with the
other staff, despite repeated invitations and reminders. It was only in the last two days of the
practicum that Lien was comfortable enough to relax with others. Lien said this was due to
not knowing how accepting the other team members were of her culture and whether they
genuinely wanted to get to know her as an individual. Lien reported that in some previous
practicum settings, staff had been very busy and had not made an effort to either know her
well or understand her accent. This meant she closed herself down to listening to their
feedback.

‘Cos of the language, sometimes if I don’t talk to you, it will keep me safe. [I]
keep [my] distance. As long as you start to show your interest in me, I will start to
talk to you. Otherwise I won’t start, because I want to put myself in the safe place;
I want to protect myself (Lien, final interview, lines 868-878).

It may be that Lien’s requirement to feel self-confident as a basis for success cannot occur
unless she feels she is in an emotionally safe environment to be able to do so. One may build
upon the other.
**Communication issues as barriers to success**

Lien commented a lot on the consequences of her knowing English as an additional language after Taiwanese and Mandarin. These were all framed in the negative. She linked her limited English capability with difficulties sharing in class, being able to express herself fully, making New Zealand friends, and understanding those around her when in early childhood centres.

> Sometimes I feel like if English is my first language, maybe I can share more in class and I can response to the requests, maybe from teachers or from children more quickly? And I can do my assignment better… I think I would be able to express my feelings more accurately. Sometimes I want to say something but I don’t know how to describe (Lien, initial interview, lines 835-848).

This practicum was the first in which Lien had been actively encouraged to use Mandarin with children and to implement activities using Mandarin.

> I was encouraged to use my own language to talk to children and to parents. I use a storybook that’s written in Chinese, my language, to read that story to children both in English and Chinese. And I feel my associate teacher appreciate that very much. Cos when I show her the storybook and she saw the English version and the Chinese version and she asked me, ‘Are you going to read the Chinese to the children?’ I say no. And she say, ‘why not?’ You can read two languages so that they can understand. She encourage me to do that… It is the first time (Lien, final interview, lines 1172-1188).

Being able to communicate in her own language with children may be linked with Lien’s feelings of confidence in herself and subsequent practicum success.

**Lien’s perception of successful practice**

An important focus for Lien on practicum was children’s social learning and supporting them to express their feelings. For example, when watching herself on video managing a group of children in a small group activity, she was primarily interested in teaching them acceptable social behaviour around taking turns.

> I will let them know if you wait, you will get your turn. So I was very careful that each of them got equal chances to mix up the concrete. So [child A] got two turns, [child B] got two turns… they got equal turns, equal opportunities (Lien, video discussion, lines 695-720).

She was also concerned with the emotional and physical safety of children in her interactions with them, such as in this interaction when a child’s block construction was inadvertently knocked down by two other children on the mat.
[Child A’s construction] was destroyed because [Child B] and [Child C] pushed the blocks. She was very upset. But I know that these two boys they didn’t mean that, so I just ask them to stop moving the blocks and explain this situation to the boys and ask [Child B] and [Child C] to help [Child A] rebuild her [construction]… She was very upset but after I say, ‘OK, we can rebuild that, I can help you’, she was getting better (Lien, video discussion, lines 388-407).

Through the lens of symbolic interactionism, Lien’s developing identity as a teacher would have been influenced by the interactions she had as a school student and child growing up in Taiwan. She talked about the transmission of knowledge between teacher and student, and the strict respect and acceptance of adults in her childhood environment.

The style of teaching is just students respect teacher, and teacher just stand on the stage and they transmit their knowledge to students… I think it’s also from our traditional thought, cos my Mum always told me that a child has ears, and has no mouth (Lien, initial interview, lines 432-433, 487-488).

In a similar vein to Arjun, she too emphasised emotional wellbeing and the teaching of key knowledge, in this case, social skills. Doing what she thought a good teacher should do was likely to develop her confidence in her own abilities, her underlying success criterion.

**Alison**

Alison was a mature and experienced Head Teacher of a kindergarten in a highly multi-ethnic community. Although she was born and raised in New Zealand, her parents were British immigrants, so she reported that she felt an affinity for newcomers to the country. She rarely offered to supervise student teachers on practicum as she liked to have what she perceived to be enough time to support them.

**Alison’s perceptions of practicum success**

Alison felt that a successful practicum required two key elements; namely that the student learnt something and that they developed increasing confidence in their practice.

I want a student to come, to leave here feeling I’ve actually learned, I’ve grown a bit, whether it’s confidence-wise or just, you know, in whatever area it is, and to go away feeling better prepared for the job… If a student has learnt and can go away feeling a bit better about themselves, you know, a bit more positive, then great (Alison, initial interview, lines 1169-1216).

When I asked her about the importance of passing the education provider’s learning outcomes for success, she felt that it was not ultimately necessary for a successful practicum experience.
It’s gotta be successful if they’ve progressed, if they’ve made some progress… and some positive steps, then yes I think it has to be viewed as being successful. Because you have to look at the big picture, because the success and failure of the student doesn’t hinge on one placement; this is only a part of the whole, it’s a snapshot of time (Alison, initial interview, lines 1234-1243).

She viewed a single practicum as contributing towards meeting ITE learning outcomes in the long term, even if this did not occur in the one practicum experience. This view was firmly reinforced at the conclusion of the practicum when Lien did not pass the necessary learning outcomes. Alison still regarded it as being highly successful because of the pedagogical progress that Lien made in that time. According to Alison, there were gains made in Lien’s practice, ability to take on board feedback, and her reflective capability. Movement towards achieving the ultimate goal of passing the learning outcomes seemed to be important in her measure of success, even if this did not occur within the set period of one practicum.

After the practicum ended, Alison suggested that for an Asian immigrant student to experience a successful practicum, an associate teacher needs to be willing to support a student who is likely to require more time and intensive support.

If people were honest and said, well yes I am willing to take on somebody who has English as a second language who doesn’t necessarily understand the way we do things here, who does need a little bit more support, who will take me more time to have conversations with them - I think that’s really, really important (Alison, final interview, lines 818-822).

Like other associates in this study, Alison predominantly positioned success with the student, their learning and emotions. It was only later that she also added the support of the associate teacher as contributing towards practicum success.

**Genuine individual interest to support student success**

As well as the support she gave to Lien during the practicum, Alison became interested in her ongoing wellbeing for the rest of her study. Part way through the practicum, Alison challenged Lien to critically reflect on her motivations for becoming a teacher, and this became a positive turning point in their relationship, Lien’s practice, and Lien’s openness to feedback. Alison’s focus on Lien needing to be open to feedback may relate to one of her key success criteria; the student learning new things from the practicum. This was reflected in her response when she talked about the progress Lien had made in response to her consistent feedback.
Yeah, and professionally I could see that there was a huge difference in her; in her knowledge, her understanding from when she started to when she finished… she actually made a huge leap forward if you like. And I think connected things that she, fragmented bits of information that she’d have started to connect up and, and because I didn’t at any point say, ‘oh no, that’s ok,’ I was consistent the whole way through and I told her, you know, I was very honest with her, and I think that’s what made the difference (Alison, final interview, lines 64-72).

Alison invited Lien to continue to volunteer at the kindergarten in her own time to continue the relationships she had already developed with children, and to continue learning as a teacher. This may have also been in order to support Lien’s developing -confidence in herself, another of Alison’s key success criteria.

And I want her to feel, to have the confidence to know that she can do what she needs to do. And that she can hold her head up high and walk into any place. And not just a kindergarten or somewhere where she’s familiar with, but to be able to walk in and think: yes, I can do this (Alison, final interview, lines 753-756).

She commented on the ongoing feelings she had as an associate teacher.

They don’t just go. People touch you in different ways. Some of the students I’ve had, I don’t remember as well, it depends on them and how willing they’ve been to share. Lien was very willing to share in the end. I learnt quite a lot about her. And so I think about her; I’m still thinking about her. I do care what happens to her. I really care what happens from her on in… I want it to work out for her… I want her to have the confidence to know that she can do what she needs to do (Alison, final interview, lines 723-754).

Alison was able to lobby the education provider and Lien repeated her practicum back in the same centre at a later date.

* Cultural awareness*

Alison had spent many years working in a community with several different Asian ethnicities represented, so she had considerable experience in discussing and appreciating diversity with parents. She extended this experience to her supervision of Lien. She was particularly interested in language as key in the transmission of culture and actively supported Lien to use Mandarin extensively with children.

I said to her I’ve always been really interested in language… I’m looking forward to you hearing you use it with children. But she’s had occasions where that hasn’t been acceptable… But I said, don’t worry about that because you can communicate much more freely with [children and parents] in your own language… And she read this book to some children, it was the Chinese calendar, the zodiacs, and so she was counting the animals and they were counting together in Chinese and the little girl said, it’s my language! (Alison, initial interview, lines 958-1012).
Alison’s encouragement of Lien to use her home language was likely to have supported Lien in her own success element of developing her self-confidence. Alison viewed language diversity as a very positive dimension to professional practice.

And in terms of language I think it’s a reality of the world that we live in, and if you have the advantage of somebody who can add an extra dimension to your centre, to your team, certainly in a community like ours, why wouldn’t you encourage them to, to relate to people in their own language and to children? (Alison, final interview, lines 502-506).

Alison also reflected on her own cultural assumptions around practice in terms of how she could have better supported Lien in interacting with the other staff in the centre.

That was a learning curve for me as much as her... She didn’t think it was appropriate to do, in spite of having said almost on a daily basis... I didn’t realise that she didn’t think that it almost wasn’t her place or she was bothering them or something (Alison, final interview, lines 171-182).

Alison was the only associate teacher to mention her own learning during the practicum supervision process. Her experience within the multi-ethnic community, together with her interest in lingual diversity, suggested that she was perhaps further along Hammer’s (2012) Intercultural Development Continuum in terms of her perception and acceptance of cultural difference.

**Extra time and support**

Additional time was another strong theme in Alison’s interviews about conditions needed in order to facilitate summative success in practicum. It was present in three different ways; the time needed to build a meaningful relationship with Lien, the significant amount of time she spent providing feedback to Lien each day, and finally the additional time she felt was needed in the practicum to make it successful for Lien.

You have to be willing to put in a bit of extra time and make the effort like we do with our families, to actually build a relationship. You take the time to build a relationship, to make the person feel welcome, to make them smile and look relaxed (Alison, final interview, lines 882-886).

Alison thought that the five-week-long placement had simply not been long enough for Lien to be able to make the fundamental changes to her practice that were required to meet the learning outcomes specified by her ITE institution. This suggested that these external success requirements were also ultimately involved in how she gauged practicum success.
I think a bit more time would have been good - but not just a week. She probably would have needed a few more weeks really... I think both options... either to have a short break, a bit of time to consolidate new information and then to come back, or to have carried on. I think either would have been quite good. I don’t think another week would have been really here nor there (Alison, final interview, lines 258-284).

Having extra time could have given Alison more time to support Lien to learn more and to develop confidence in her practice, which Alison had felt were two main contributors to practicum success.

**Alison’s perception of successful practice**

When reviewing Lien’s teaching practice on video, Alison seemed to place emphasis upon Lien’s responsiveness to children and extending children’s interests by the use of subtle language and questioning techniques. She had not initially mentioned passing the summative learning outcomes as being important for practicum success, but, as these pedagogical emphases align with them, it indicates otherwise. Based on these, Alison felt that the results of Lien’s practice were of mixed quality. For example, when reflecting on an interaction Lien had with a young boy, Alison commented on the appropriateness of Lien’s questions to build on the child’s conversation.

She asked some questions at the end of it. There possibly was an opportunity a little earlier on to clarify some of the things he was saying, to get a better idea perhaps, without actually detacting from his conversation... Her questions weren’t terribly relevant; perhaps relevant talking about worms but it was not relating to what he was doing... It was kinda just random comments about worms really rather than questions (Alison, video discussion, lines 236-264).

But at other times she appeared to be impressed by Lien’s ability to manage multiple situations around her.

She kept an eye on who was coming and going, and noticed that there were parents while she was talking to the children as well. That’s just what I mean by the busyness of it. That’s actually quite a challenge... I think she managed all of that very well actually (Alison, video discussion, lines 106-118).

Alison’s interpretation of the success of interactions appeared to be more nuanced than Lien’s interpretation. Whereas Lien’s readings of interactions focused upon children’s emotional wellbeing and important social skills, Alison’s approach centred on supporting children in their own learning. Her lens on what made for successful practice was again likely to be culturally-driven and developed through interpreting past interactions with others. For
instance, in the following quote she positions practice that is more adult-led as being inappropriate in the New Zealand context.

When I first came here there was a grandmother sitting here and they’d draw up a grid and the child would write one to a hundred on the grid really well. But, you know, the child also loved creative activities and so she’d sit there and diligently work away with grandmother and when she’d finished she could move on and do these other things… But over a long period of time, through talking to our parents all the time, and the children go home and talk to them too, they can see how the learning happens in different ways (Alison, initial interview, lines 671-684).

Alison’s perspective replicates strong New Zealand early childhood education discourse, also found within *Te Whāriki*; that learning occurs in socially and culturally meaningful contexts. The curriculum positions children as competent individuals, able to lead their own learning experiences with the support of more capable others in a social context (Ministry of Education, 1996).

**Dyad Findings**

Looking at this pair together, four themes emerged. They were that successful practice needed a sense of emotional wellbeing upon which to build, that it needed to be personally experienced, that both the student and associate teacher needed to be critically reflective of their own practice, and that cultural difference was something to be celebrated.

**Success requires emotional wellbeing**

The interactions between Alison and Lien highlighted the importance of emotional safety for this student. Lien’s emotional safety and ongoing wellbeing lay at the foundation of her professional development. Without this in place, she acknowledged that she did not accept feedback on her practice.

It is possible that Alison’s actions were beyond that which other associate teachers may have made the effort to do in order to support the ongoing wellbeing of Lien. She compared her own level of supervision with Lien to that which she thought was standard practice.

And one meeting a week sort of thing would be the standard, whereas we’d have a catch-up each day. Some were longer than I intended them to be but that’s just the way it went. And then we had a formal meeting. So we were always checking in, you know, we did a lot of talking (Alison, final interview, lines 146-149).

Together with the additional time taken to get to know her and support her professional development, Lien then developed a perception that Alison had her wellbeing at heart. With
this in place, she became open to receive and reflect upon the feedback that she received. As she did not interact in the same way with the other staff, Lien missed the opportunity to develop a similar sense of wellbeing with them.

Alison’s push for Lien to critically reflect upon her motivation to teach, together with her provision of appropriate support, meant that Lien was able to move forward in her understanding, as Mezirow (1990) predicts. However Mezirow (1990) similarly suggests that psychological defence mechanisms develop when such support is not given. Lien’s silence with other staff members reflects similar research which suggests that this strategy is common for ethnic minority students when confronted by culturally-challenging situations (Allen, 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Singh & Dooley, 1996). By not trusting the cultural understanding of the other staff members, Lien chose to shut down from the situation in an effort to remain psychologically safe.

**Success must be personally and internally experienced**

As with the other two dyads, key personal success criteria for both Lien and Alison were internally-experienced phenomena (Blumer, 1969). Even though Lien did not pass this practicum according to the learning outcomes outlined by her ITE institution, both she and Alison considered the practicum to be a highly successful experience. The learning outcomes of the ITE institution were, as they largely were for Jiao and Lucy, put to one side as the dominant focus for success. Although still ultimately the goal, the processes towards achieving the learning outcomes were focussed upon. Lien reflected upon her previous practicum experiences and concluded that success for her included feeling positive about herself and learning something new. These were two factors that Alison also upheld as contributors to success. Alison prioritised the development of Lien’s positive personal perception over the passing of externally-dictated criteria. The fact that both student and associate had the same measures of success may have contributed significantly towards developing a meaningful supervisory relationship. Similarly, having a meaningful relationship may have contributed to their common understanding of success.

Previous supervisory and mentoring research has noted the benefits of the supervisor and supervisee having matched expectations of the other’s role, of personalities, and of cognitive styles (Armstrong, et al., 2002; Hastings, 2004; Kitchel & Torres, 2010; Whitfield & Edwards, 2011). So it is not surprising that having similar measures of success would also contribute to the perception of a positive supervision experience. Examining successful
practicum from the perspective of both student and associate has not yet been undertaken, so this research has added to the body of work around matched expectations accordingly.

**Success requires critical reflection**

Without Alison confronting Lien and prompting her to critically reflect on her motivations for wanting to teach, this pairing may not have been successful as it was. Pushing Lien into this period of cognitive dissonance, and supporting her through it, enabled Alison to make a breakthrough with Lien through which their trust developed. As argued by Mezirow (1990), the development of professional identity is tied up with emotional upheaval and critical reflection of the kind seen in Lien and Alison’s relationship. In this case the challenge to Lien’s personal and professional identity came directly from Alison herself, as she directly challenged Lien about her motivations to become a teacher. Triggers that cause students internal conflict are usually more subtle (Morales-Mann & Smith Higuchi, 1995), and based on the significant upheaval in perceptions caused by the different educational context students find themselves in. However, the relationship that the two had developed by this point provided the basis for the support Lien required to aid her through this period of doubt, critical reflection and redevelopment of self (Elliott, 1995). After reflection, Lien acknowledged that she had really only looked at the teaching role as a means to find employment rather than as a way to make a positive impact in children’s lives. I suggest that it was this significant challenge that formed the basis of the success of this practicum for both Lien and Alison. It took their relationship to a deeper and more meaningful level for both of them and ensured that their subsequent communication was thoughtful and insightful. It also reflected the style of supervision that this associate teacher used. Rather than dictating what behaviour she expected of Lien, according to Trevethan’s (2013) supervision continuum, Alison used more of a mentoring style in supporting Lien to come to her own conclusions about the nature of her role.

This was the only pairing where the associate teacher indicated that she too had learnt something new over the course of the practicum. Alison was able to critically reflect upon her own degree of effectiveness in supervising Lien and her new understanding of cultural appropriateness of collaboration with other staff. She did not position herself as expert in all things, but recognised that Lien had something to teach her as well. This indicated that together, both Alison and Lien had begun to hybridise their understanding around effective intercultural mentoring practices. As Bhabha (1994, 2008) theorised, this hybridised thinking
would have occurred within a psychological third space where both participants could have respectfully developed an understanding of each other’s position in order to develop a shared meaning.

Cultural differences matter to practicum success

The centre and community where Lien and Alison undertook this practicum was comprised of a wide variety of ethnicities. Furthermore, the centre’s programme reflected and honoured diversity in a meaningful way. Alison was very used to encountering and openly discussing with parents their different culturally-based understandings around educational practice. This was reflected in the open conversations between Lien and Alison around Lien’s understandings of her professional role in contrast to what she had been brought up to experience. For the first time, Lien was encouraged to use her own language as much as possible when conversing with children and parents. A large body of research on whether students want to discuss cultural differences has originated from the business mentoring field. It confirms that participants agree that the relationship improves significantly if cultural differences are directly discussed, rather than ignored (Blake-Beard, et al., 2006; Brown, 2009; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Schlosser & Foley, 2008). Language is the key to cultural transmission (Clarke, 2009). In being encouraged to use her own language, Lien felt acknowledged and she believed that her cultural input was valued and respected. As with Arjun, this feeling of respect has become a deeply-engrained part of the teacher role within Asian society (Guo, 2005a). So it was possible that the sense of being valued, that she experienced through interactions with Alison, helped Lien to develop a strong sense of confidence in her own abilities that ultimately led to her feeling of success.

Summary

This chapter has explored the main aspects of each participant’s story over the course of their practicum in terms of their perceptions around success. Often, students positioned success as an internal emotional need which, if met, was more likely to support the achievement of externally-set ITE learning outcomes. Associate teachers positioned success mainly with the student’s actions and emotions, and added their own support to increase the likelihood of this occurring. All participants suggested that success was a far greater concept than only passing the practicum.
The next chapter proposes a conceptual model of success itself. I then go on to discuss the seven predominant themes that make for a successful practicum experience overall.
CHAPTER FIVE:
THE NATURE OF SUCCESS

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the findings from my study of student and associate teacher perceptions of success. It focussed on the perspectives of three dyads; Jiao and Lucy, Arjun and Shelley, and Lien and Alison. In this chapter, I build on the analysis of the previous chapter to add a more complex layer of meaning to the collected data. I examine and discuss the overall perceptions that participants had around what made for a successful practicum, drawn from their interviews before and after the practicum experience, as well as the discussions we had while watching a video of the student’s pedagogical practice. Analysis of common themes across all participants allows me to address the overall research question of what makes for a successful practicum for these participants.

Seven perceptions of what makes for a successful practicum are discussed. They are mutual respect, the positive progression of student identity, the nurturing of student confidence, an alignment of understanding around pedagogical practice, supervision and feedback in response to student need, English language capability, and, finally, sufficient time to accomplish these things. These perceptions were upheld in varying degrees of importance by students, associates, or both. Success was constituted as being externally demonstrated in practice, and internally experienced, in formative and summative ways. From these perceptions, I propose a conceptual model of practicum success based on these two dimensions.

What makes for a successful intercultural practicum

Mutual respect

Feeling respected by others in the centre environment contributed to the formative, and ultimately the summative, success of the practicum. Jiao and Arjun wanted to be able to contribute to the centre programme and to be acknowledged for their contribution, particularly as they perceived they had unique cultural and linguistic skills, or updated
pedagogical knowledge to offer. For example, Arjun positioned winning professional respect as his right.

It is my right to win respect and to be valued if I’m there. If I feel not valued then how can I see it is a successful practicum? If I am assigned there to respect children, respect parents, respect teachers, respect everybody, then why I am entitled to my own right of respect?... I also can demand it as my right (Arjun, final interview, lines 692-699).

Being acknowledged and respected as a fellow teacher by other staff may link to students’ personal view of what it means to be a teacher, developed during their own personal educational experience while growing up (Guo, 2006; Ho, 1994; Huntsinger, et al., 2000; Li, 2001). Nguyen and Sheridan (2016) confirm that, within Confucian-based societies, “the teacher is perceived as a hierarchical authority figure, whose opinions should be respected and not openly questioned” (p. 31). Students seemed to assume that, now that they were in a teaching role, gaining this respect was fundamental to their practicum success.

From the students’ perspective, the traditional view of the position of teachers has originated through Confucianism. Within this worldview, teachers are viewed with respect and as the repositories of formal knowledge (Huntsinger, et al., 2000). This aligns with the student teachers’ views, as what it meant to be a teacher for them was to be the recipient of respect, and for children to offer unquestioning respect.

One of the consequences of feeling disrespected by children was that students reported difficulties in supporting children’s positive social behaviour. Jiao suggested that behaviour management was the biggest struggle she encountered when working with children.

I think one thing is difficult for me, is dealing with the conflict between children. Because I were there for a short time, only five weeks. So I don't have too strong relationships to figure out, and solve them their problems. So every times when I try to solve conflict between children I have to find the support and help from my associate teacher. That is the most struggle thing for me (Jiao, initial interview, lines 889-900).

When she was a child herself, Jiao had come from a background where such behaviour in a classroom environment was uncommon because of the respect accorded automatically to teachers. So she had not developed meaning on how best to respond when she was in the teaching role, as she had not been witness to interactions where this had occurred. Students’ meaning-making about the role of the teacher has developed through years of interactions with the teachers in their own lives. So entering into a new education system, the students may have assumed the role of a teacher would be accompanied by the respect that they were
used to giving when a student, or in Arjun’s case, receiving as a teacher. When this did not occur, their practice was negatively affected (Han & Singh, 2007; Nguyen, 2008), which would have also impacted on their ability to reach the required level of practice to pass practicum learning outcomes.

Although none of the associate teachers discussed wanting to be respected by students, it is possible to speculate that they too may have assumed respect was intrinsic to their role (Altan & Sağlamel, 2015; Hamilton, 2010; Loizou, 2011). They will also have developed meaning of their role through interpreting past interactions with associate teachers when they were students. Alison did this when discussing her perception of her role as an associate teacher.

I had a couple of placements where I had absolutely superb associates and what they actually did for me, probably more than anything else… was building my confidence, and them telling me that I was doing, you know… I mean, I remember a first year placement and being quite stunned the feedback that I got because I was thinking I don’t know anything and I’m not doing very well. And it really boosted me (Alison, initial interview, lines 189-197).

Here Alison positioned her associate teachers when she was a student as being able to improve her confidence by providing supportive feedback. Being the person whose role it was to provide feedback meant that the associate teachers saw themselves as possessing knowledge that the student did not have; a position reinforced by their appointment in the role of associate by the ITE institution. This aligns with previous research, both locally and internationally, which suggests that associates tend to view themselves as role models of correct practice, adopting an apprenticeship view of the relationship (Altan & Sağlamel, 2015; Hamilton, 2010; Trevethan, 2013). If they positioned themselves as being pedagogically superior to their student, then they may have assumed that respect was their due as part of their role.

**Positive progression of teacher identity**

Closely linked to wanting to be respected, was whether students’ sense of identity as a teacher progressed during the practicum. They wanted to actually feel as though they were teachers; this was another key success criterion. As Zhan and Wan (2016) argue, how the students interpreted other stakeholders’ perceptions of themselves was a key part of the process of forming their identity as teachers.

However, their view of themselves as teachers is only one aspect that emerged as part of their developing sense of self. In addition to wanting to be respected for their pedagogical
contribution, students also positioned themselves clearly as *learners* in their relationships with associate teachers. Both Arjun and Lien clearly stated that one of the purposes of the practicum was to learn new pedagogical skills from the experience. They expected their associate teachers to give the necessary level of support to ensure that they learnt whatever their associate considered they needed to. Indeed, they seemed to situate themselves hierarchically *below* their associates, who they appeared to perceive as holding the pedagogical knowledge they themselves were trying to access.

Considering what may be going on theoretically in terms of the students’ identity development is complex. The research into identity formation in teachers has two dominant research emphases. One has tended to focus on identity as being formed by discourse (For example, Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Reid, et al., 2008). The other focus suggests that identity is formed through practice (For example, Trent, 2010; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005; Wenger, 1998). Both these perspectives align with a symbolic interactionist view in that identity can be seen as meaning-making about *self* through the use of language in interactions with others in a particular social situation (Schepens, Aelterman, & Vlerick, 2009; Trent, 2010, 2013).

Conflicts between students’ new professional and existing personal notions of self adds further complexity to the making of meaning around identity. This reflects previous research into the identity formation of ethnic-minority students. Identity formation for all teachers, irrespective of ethnic background, often occurs as a result of struggles and tension. Usually, a person’s identity consists of a series of sub-identities which are in alignment with one another (Beijaard, et al., 2004; Han, 2005; Izadinia, 2016b; Lim, 2011). So a professional identity as a teacher develops as part of a person’s overall sense of self. However, previous research into the identity formation of immigrant teachers suggests that they may be unable to simply replicate a construction of themselves as a teacher from their home country. They are seeking to bridge their traditional past lives with their new existence (Peeler, 2005). Prevailing identities need to be broken and reconstructed in order to succeed in their new educational and cultural environment. Nguyen and Sheridan (2016) found that school context, cultural background and strong relationships with their supervising teacher supported new identity development in student teachers who used English as an additional language. But they acknowledged that such students have more issues developing a professional identity because of personal cultural values, beliefs and expectations. As a result, multiple perspectives about
self may develop that allow immigrant student teachers to hybridise their professional and personal identities (Fan & Le, 2009b; Han, 2005; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Peeler, 2005).

The issue that arises is that these two aspects of identity, the personal and professional, can be conflicting. For example, the student may have a deeply-held understanding of teacher-directed education but be expected to practice child-directed pedagogy in their new setting. Similarly, they may hold a transmission-of-knowledge view of education, but be required to use a co-constructed sociocultural pedagogical approach (Fan & Le, 2009b). Ideally a hybridised understanding of both perspectives would develop within a new professional identity. My research suggests that a teacher-learner tension in identity exists for students. They seemed to be developing an identity about being a learner in practicum, while at the same time wanting to be viewed as a competent teacher, worthy of respect and acknowledgement. Therefore, successful progression of their professional identity may be at risk if student teachers are not fully supported. They may be unable to progress through feelings of powerlessness and lack of control if they have to work with children in ways that are inconsistent with their core cultural beliefs and values (Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016).

**Nurturing of student confidence**

As important as the progression of a professional identity for practicum success was, so too was the corresponding feeling of self-assurance for students. Every participant cited the development of student teacher self-confidence as a key formative and summative success criterion. For example, when talking about what her associate teacher did for her to ensure a successful practicum, Jiao said that she boosted her confidence.

> I think she give me strong support to build my confidence in the placement. Personally I’m not a confident person, but she give me lots of encouragement and you know, she point out some good things I have done, so that gives me more confident in the teaching process (Jiao, final interview, lines 605-612).

For the three students, a successful practicum was an aspiration that was represented by a state of positive emotion, as well as meeting the required learning outcomes. More often than not, this was verbalised as confidence. However, belonging, pride, happiness and emotional safety were also mentioned. The role that feelings play in the formation of professional identity has had some research focus. Several studies have positioned emotion at the very heart of the process of becoming a successful student teacher (Malderez, Hobson, Tracey, & Kerr, 2007; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012; Zembylas, 2003). Positive emotions are thought to
support ongoing learning, whereas negative ones are remembered more intensely and exert a stronger influence on identity formation (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012). So the desire to feel ‘good’ about themselves was central to the students’ ongoing successful development of their teacher identity.

However, students in this study often focussed on negative emotional sensations, including confusion, shame, stress, anxiety, unhappiness, hurt, disappointment, loneliness, fear and helplessness. The mention of these types of feelings arose frequently in their discussions with me. For instance, Arjun repeatedly discussed his upset and hurt over the way he was assessed in his first practicum experience.

At the last day placement, teacher finds so many faults with me. “You are not doing, you did not do this, you do not do this, you do not do this”. But it very upset me… Why she, she saying all this faults at the last day when she has to fill my report… [In] previous weeks she was very happy with me. She talked very little to me and when she talked she said, “It’s OK, Arjun, you are good, you learn”. And at the last day she finds a big list of faults. It really upset me… It really hurt me… If she was going to do these things, she can discuss it with me before giving it (Arjun, initial interview, lines 349-365; 711-712).

Even several months after this incident, Arjun’s recollection of it was still coloured with extreme negative emotion. The students appeared emotionally vulnerable, with their emotive state being close to the surface of their awareness of self. Nguyen and Sheridan’s (2016) recent research into the experiences of two immigrant pre-service teachers also documented their feelings of vulnerability, and the negative impact such feelings had on their successful identity formation. Their findings contribute to the body of research which documents the emotional turmoil experienced by ethnic-minority teaching students (Allen, 2008; Jessop & Williams, 2007; Lau, 2008; Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016; Razack, 2001). Negative emotions, such as the ones experienced by Arjun, affected how he thought of himself as a beginning teacher and consequently his perception of success within practicum.

Practicum is fraught with emotion for all student teachers, irrespective of their ethnicity. Such emotion can be the impetus for changes in identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Hayes, 2003). For example, Malderez and her colleagues (2007) posit that “one of the factors which produces emotional responses in beginning student teachers is their perception of the success or otherwise of their relationships with significant others” (p. 237). So the nature of the relationship with their supervising teacher during practicum becomes a primary source of these extreme emotional responses. Students’ feelings of confidence, belonging and safety
therefore can stem from this relationship. Processing feedback from associate teachers became the impetus for identity formation. Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012) suggest that the associate-student relationship describes the *external* aspect of the student’s identity, whereas students’ emotions represent their *internal* meaning-making of the same thing.

From the associate teacher perspective, there was also a recognition that they needed to support the developing self-confidence of the student. All recognised that the emotional wellbeing of the student was fundamental to both formative and summative practicum success. Alison acknowledged this in remembering her own experiences as a student teacher and how important it was for her to feel that she was doing well.

> I had a couple of placements where I had absolutely superb associates, and what they did for me, probably more than anything else - I mean, yes I learned about curriculum areas and I learned about supervision and so on - but actually it was building my confidence and them telling me that I was doing … I remember a first year placement and being quite stunned the feedback that I got because I was thinking I don’t know anything and I’m not doing very well. And it really boosted me… and it gave me the confidence to be myself cos I was a very timid, shy person (Alison, initial interview, lines 189-200).

While a research base exists around the importance of emotional wellbeing in practicum from the perspective of the student teacher (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012), little research appears to have focussed upon the associate teacher’s understanding and support of student teacher emotions. Although some have highlighted the range of emotions experienced by supervising teachers during practicum (Campbell, et al., 2008; Danyluk, et al., 2015; Hastings, 2004), I could find none which examined the support required to boost students’ positive affect and confidence from the associate teacher’s perspective.

In summary, associate teachers aspired for students to feel good about themselves and their practice on practicum. Students also appeared to want their internal feelings to align with their aspirations of a professional identity and with what they wanted others to think of them. They wanted to feel good about themselves, as teachers.

**Alignment of understanding around pedagogical practice**

Building upon the students’ professional sense of self was also their actual observable so-named ‘correct practice’ with children. However, there appeared to be a disparity between the emphases that students and associate teachers placed on aspects of practice. Two key areas emerged as what students considered as correct, or right, for successful interactions; that
children’s wellbeing was nurtured and that the children gained valuable knowledge in the process. Wellbeing is the foundational strand within *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996), so it is unsurprising that it would be a primary focus for any student teacher. However, its emphasis by students may also have had cultural origins. For example, when I asked Arjun about the successfulness of an interaction with a child where he demonstrated to him how to shake hands to greet someone, he focussed on the child’s happiness within the interaction.

Yes, I think he’s very happy. And, and again you can watch there, when he shake, shake hand and I move from here. He is so happy he does it. He is so happy, he followed them to say hello (Arjun, video discussion, lines 780-783).

The wellbeing of very young children is a primary focus of adults in Asian society; so too was it a focus for this group of student teachers (Guo, 2006). They may have been replicating their own upbringing, as well as views reinforced within *Te Whāriki*, in how they viewed and engaged with children. Their meaning-making around children would have been developed as a result of ongoing interactions in their own lifetime between children and adults, both in their own country and New Zealand. They consequently acted towards children in practicum based on these meanings. All the students specifically mentioned children’s happiness as one of the key determinants as to whether an interaction with a child was successful or not, or whether an activity was appropriate for children.

The way that Asian-born adults interact with very young children can be highly lenient and focussed on warmth and wellbeing. This is related to the view that such children are of an age of “not yet understanding” (Guo, 2006, p. 10). After this age, firmer guidance is used to teach the child appropriate behaviour and academic knowledge. The perception of when a child reaches the age of understanding can vary, but usually occurs around the time that the child begins formal education in primary school (Chen & Luster, 2002; Guo, 2006). Until that time, adults tend to treat children with indulgence, care, and protection. Thus, the focus of interactions that students had with children was primarily on ensuring the child’s happiness and wellbeing. In addition, through previous practicum experiences working with other associate teachers and staff, as well as their new theoretical knowledge of the New Zealand curriculum, students have also begun to develop new meaning around appropriate practice. This will have further reinforced the need to focus on children’s wellbeing.

The second key success determinant in students’ perception of successful practice was being able to pass on important knowledge to children. Knowledge was seen as being either academic knowledge, such as numeracy or literacy concepts, or social knowledge, such as
appropriate social behaviour with other children. When asked how she could have improved the successfulness of an interaction with a child, Lien focussed on the need to have conveyed more knowledge to him.

I don’t think it was a successful interaction. Cos I feel like maybe I can try to talk about… discuss something more about worms. Not only talk about what he made and maybe I can extend his thought, this interest, more. Something like do you know what the worms like to eat? You know, where do they live? When can you see the worms - kind of that (Lien, video discussion, lines 337-350).

In addition to ongoing meaning developed during previous practicum, the need to disseminate knowledge to children is likely to mirror both parenting and teaching practices that students have been the recipients of in their own upbringing. Their meaning of what teachers should do has developed through interactions with other teachers during their own childhood. The role of teachers in many Asian countries is as holders of academic knowledge which they are responsible for passing onto students. Parents also have a role to play in passing on knowledge to young children (Guo, 2006; Huntsinger, et al., 2000). Despite very young children being perceived as ‘not understanding’, parents’ attitudes and practices still reflect a training style as children are very gently encouraged to act and play appropriately (Guo, 2006). So, as part of their ongoing professional identity development, students’ practice reflected their understanding of what their role as teachers should be, transmitting important knowledge. This then became a priority in how they interacted with children.

The perception of associate teachers as to what made practice successful appeared to be more comprehensive than that of student teachers. Foci for associates included the quality of communication with children, respect for them, responsiveness to their needs, and extending their interests. For example, when examining Arjun’s interactions with a toddler in a tunnel, Shelley focussed on engagement, extending the child’s interest, and relationship-building.

I think that halfway through that he… lost focus and he’s watching what’s going on around. And [Child A] was still sitting there playing with the tunnel. He could have re-engaged [Child A] at that point. But I think he sort of watched [Child B] go away and he, sort of lost confidence maybe. And he could have brought it back to [Child A] and said something like, ‘you’re in the tunnel’, to engage him… I think he was trying to build a relationship and have fun with them (Shelley, video discussion, lines 53-65).

This broader view reflected the holistic nature of Te Whāriki. Associates’ emphases on practice linked to a broader range of principles or goals within the curriculum document. (Ministry of Education, 1996). Their meaning of appropriate practice had also been
developed over their careers during multiple, ongoing interactions with lecturers and other early childhood staff.

These foci also reflect how, in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education, children are viewed in policy and practice as competent social beings, rather than as passive recipients of adults’ decision-making (Smith, 2007). The ratification of the United Nations Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1989) by New Zealand in 1993 has further reinforced this perspective (Smith, 2007; Te One, 2011). As a result, children’s voice and agency are foregrounded within early childhood education through a strong discourse of empowerment and respect (Alvestad, Duncan, & Berge, 2009). Student participants respected children by trying to meet their assumed needs, rather than respecting their individual rights for agency. This reflects the hierarchically-based collectivist society in which they had been raised, rather than an individualistic focus on each child. Children’s agency is very much a culturally-driven perspective, dominant within New Zealand because of the inclusion of sociocultural and ecological thinking in the development of the curriculum and around children’s learning. This perspective has evolved over time as Te Whāriki has become deeply embedded within teachers’ interactions with children, and as meaning has developed around teachers’ roles and the position of children within education (Carr & May, 1993).

The associate teachers in this research reflected this dominant discourse when considering what successful practice with children should look like. They assumed respect for the child involved power being shared between child and teacher. The nature of communication also needed to recognise children’s assumed underlying competence. Students were expected to be able to have open-ended discussions to stimulate critical thinking and deeper interest in individual children. What the associate teachers identified as successful practice reflected this dominant discourse. Therefore if students were seen to be too ‘teacher-directed’, the interactions were perceived as being neither appropriate nor successful.

Thus, although there was some overlap between the two sets of perceptions around what made for ‘correct’ pedagogical practice with children, there were differences. Arjun and Jiao in particular had different perceptions than their associates, Shelley and Lucy. These appeared to have originated from varying perspectives around the role children play in society and in their own education. Hybridising the perspective of the other may have supported their perception of practicum success as participants developed appreciation of how both collectivist and individualistic values can be reflected in practice.
Supervision and feedback in response to student need

Another key factor that participants emphasised in their perceptions around practicum success was the nature of supervision and frequency of feedback given to students, and whether this met student need. Formative support throughout the practicum was seen to support ongoing improvements in practice, with a view to achieving summative practicum success (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wiliam & Black, 1996).

Feedback

Students appeared to prefer a close supervision style with frequent feedback. Lien mentioned how the frequency and specificity of feedback she received was helpful and how it matched her expectation of the role of an associate teacher.

I feel that she discuss my performance with me every day after the session finish. And this half an hour, nearly every day... And we discuss everything I did, and she will get me some suggestions. Some thing like she felt good, some things she felt, nah, I need to improve… She didn’t just point out the things I didn’t do well, but she also told me how to do it… As an associate teacher it is your responsibility to teach me right, not only point out my mistakes, but you need to also teach me. I think that’s the role of associate teacher (Lien, final interview, lines 78-115).

The students also mentioned the value of having frequent feedback and close supervision in order to help boost their confidence in their practice. Although Lien initially indicated that she preferred an indirect supervision style to help manage her nervousness, her subsequent actions and comments refuted this desire. All students commented upon the frequency and nature of support given by associate teachers as being important for formative, and eventually summative, success.

The high frequency of feedback ultimately given to students contributed to improvements in their learning. White’s (2009) New Zealand investigations into what student teachers felt made for useful feedback while on practicum suggested that one important contributing factor was its timeliness. While she did not specify the ethnicity of students in her sample, the findings also seem relevant to my research with ethnic-minority students. Participants did not wish to wait for a weekly formal meeting, but, instead, valued feedback given immediately so they could amend their practice in the moment. Their higher pedagogical need called for a higher frequency of feedback. When this was eventually provided by the associate teachers, students felt their practice benefitted.
Student participants also valued the specific focus on the technical aspects of pedagogy in feedback, rather than simply generalised praise (White, 2007; Wiliam, 2012). Arjun appeared to value immediate feedback about his practice, in response to his frequent questions, as well as in response to specific learning outcomes. Usually the feedback students received was verbal, although Shelley did mention she also provided readings for Arjun to take home which he read and could discuss the following day. The use of a combination of both verbal and written feedback was also recommended by White (2007) to increase efficacy. But in research specifically conducted with student teachers who used English as second language in Oman, students actually preferred a written format to allow them greater time to comprehend its meaning (Ali & Al-Adawi, 2013). So the use of ongoing written feedback, together with frequent, specific reciprocal dialogue, may improve meaning-making around pedagogy for ethnic-minority students.

Feedback also impacts the development and nurturing of student self-confidence as part of their professional identity development (McDonald, 2004; Ventouras, 2016). Within the three participant dyads, students felt the style of feedback met their needs in developing an understanding around practice. This boosted their sense of self-worth as a teacher, contributing towards their sense of success in the practicum. I therefore suggest that all three aspects of success, self-confidence, feedback and identity, are interconnected.

**Supervision Style**

Two of the associate teachers focussed upon the behaviour of the student as being the key determinant of practicum success. This was in contrast to the students’ perceptions that it was the actions of their associate teacher which determined whether a practicum would be successful or not. However, these two associates did not include themselves in the success equation. They tended to concentrate on the student’s new pedagogical learning and increasing self-confidence to indicate success. Because the focus of practicum is upon the assessment of student performance, this finding is not surprising. But a range of researchers have recommended that practicum should be a professional development experience for all the parties involved (Hastings & Squires, 2002; Noor Davids, 2015; Trevethan, 2013), but this did not appear to occur in two of the dyads in this study.

The trend to focus upon student actions to gauge success indicates how the associate teachers in this study may have adapted their supervisory role to fit the perceived needs or demands of
students. A wide variety of past research has attempted to categorise a spectrum of supervisory styles within practicum (Cameron & Wilson, 1993; Clarke, et al., 2014; Graham, 2006; Haigh, 2001; Thomas, Wineburg, Grossman, Myhre, & Woolworth, 1998; Trevethan, 2013). All agree that the role is manifested in a range of ways, with a more directive top-down style at one end and a collaborative, mentoring style at the other where the associate teacher works to empower the student to develop their own pedagogical style. Before the practicum began, the associates perceived their own supervisory style to be more indirect to allow students to develop their own practice in their own way. Shelley made direct links between her preferred indirect style of supervision to how she felt as a student.

Yeah. I just remember being a student myself and having lecturers… right over you and you feel, you feel like… everything you say and everything you do is being listened to and judged. And I think sometimes it’s nice to just give them a bit of space to try things and - and even though I can see and hear him he doesn’t necessarily feel like I can (Shelley, final interview, lines 541-549).

However, by the time the practicum ended, Lucy and Shelley used a strongly directive style to support the student teachers. This was in response to either direct student requests or perceived student need. For example, Arjun wanted detailed ongoing feedback on each of the required performance competencies and wanted to know what he could do to ensure he passed each of these. Another example occurred when Jiao’s visiting lecturer failed her following her assessment visit. As a result, Lucy adapted how she supported her, and gave more direct instructions to ensure she had a clearer understanding of what was needed to pass the required ITE institution practice competencies. Lucy described her change in supervision following Jiao’s unsuccessful visiting lecturer visit.

I was a bit more, not so friendly. You know, like more directive. Maybe not so best friends type of thing… I needed to rein that in a bit…because I felt she needed that. I couldn’t just leave her on her own… She needed to be taken under the wing and given specific sorts of roles and things like that (Lucy, final interview, lines 789-813).

Feeling they needed to position themselves as the recipients and passers down of knowledge indicated that the associate teachers felt an apprenticeship style of practicum was necessitated for their students (Trevethan, 2013). This meant they tended to focus on the technical dimensions of teaching (Clarke, et al., 2014). This therefore minimised the opportunity for reciprocal learning opportunities between student and associate (Clarke, 2006), as information tended to go one way; from associate to student. It inhibited the development of a reciprocal hybridised sense of meaning around practice. Because this did not tend to happen,
these students missed out on new learning opportunities that locally-born students may have had because of the different supervision style employed. Similarly, the associate teachers missed the opportunity to problematize their own practice and develop a deeper sense of meaning and refinement around their work (Clarke, et al., 2014).

An apprenticeship supervision style also accentuated the power differential between the two key stakeholders of student and associate teacher. The associate teacher became the holder of knowledge and sometimes also the holder of assessment power over the student. From a symbolic interactionist view, power was manifested in the interactions between the two people (Dennis & Martin, 2005). The relative strength of the associate teacher in interactions with the student ensured that their positions within the relationship were maintained and reinforced on an ongoing basis; something that the students seemed to demand. Associates were always the one to give feedback, direction and instruction. An example of this in action was when Shelley discussed her philosophy and the centre’s practices with Arjun. She provided him with the information but did not appear to expect him to offer his own thoughts or provide feedback on what she told him.

I talked to him quite a lot about it on the first couple of days… just explaining infants and toddlers in general… And he was able to take that all on board and there were definitely no issues… He didn’t say anything. He was just listening to everything I said and acknowledging what I said (Shelley, final interview, lines 575-604).

In his research with doctoral students and their supervisors, Gurr (2001) suggests an alignment of supervision style to match the student’s need is the most effective to develop student autonomy, as outlined in Figure 2. This appeared to occur with the associate teachers as they amended how they felt they would usually supervise a student teacher. Gurr (2001) predicted that if a student needed extensive support, and was supervised in a close style, then the student would more likely feel adequately supported. Similarly, if a more competent student was supervised in a more removed way, Gurr suggested that the student is likely to develop independence from their supervisor. However if supervision was either too close or too distant in relation to what the student required, then a negative outcome was predicated, either conflict with the supervisor or the student feeling neglected.
Although the supervisory relationship in practicum is of a much shorter duration than that in doctoral supervision, it is possible that a similar relationship between style and student status still exists. Associate teachers may have preferred a more ‘hands-off’ style, but recognised that they needed a ‘hands-on’ one to support someone they perceived as being more dependent than expected. Therefore, matching the supervision style with student need became an important indicator of success in practicum for these participants, both student and associate.

**English language capability**

Another key to practicum success was English language proficiency. This notion appeared strongly with all the student participants, and was reflected in how communication issues were acknowledged as being the largest barrier to their ongoing formative success. It was also identified by Lucy and Shelley as a significant barrier between them and their respective students.

The key advantage that students identified that linked with their ability to speak English was being able to act as a support and translator for children and parents who spoke the same home language as they did. Jiao’s success stories all focussed on this one factor, particularly her relationship supporting one Chinese child to transition into the centre.
The Nature of Success

Yeah - yeah - that’s the most successful thing that I have done in this placement, so I don’t need to worry [Child A] anymore when I left… And also I can see [Child A] has built a relationship with other teachers at end of placement so he feels comfortable to, you know, go to toilet with other teacher or go to sleeping room - much better than the first week I saw him. So that’s the most important thing I have learned (Jiao, final interview, lines 339-352).

However, all students discussed a wide range of issues that occurred for them because of their restricted English capabilities. Fundamentally, they recognised a significant impact on their ability to develop relationships with both children and other adults, including staff and parents. Issues included their depth of understanding of others’ meaning, their ability to pick up on children’s cues, the speed of being able to respond in a conversation, having the correct vocabulary to fully express themselves, the depth to which they could engage in conversation, and their ability to be a language role model to children. As an example, Lien suggested that the language barrier could cause a rift between the associate teacher and herself.

Sometimes some associate feel like cos English is your second language, or you’re from other countries, they will expect like you cannot understand something. Or they won’t explain something to you cos they feel like maybe you don’t understand, or they feel your English is bad, not good enough. I really feel like sometimes I don’t know how to explain, but it doesn’t mean that I don’t understand. Sometimes I don’t know how to say it, or how to speak very fast… Sometimes I don’t know how to explain (Lien, final interview, lines 1182-1198).

These findings add to the extensive body of similar evidence in research of ethnic-minority students during the practicum experience (Campbell, et al., 2008; Chen, 1996; Han, 2005; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2003; Myles, et al., 2006; Nguyen, 2008; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2004, 2009; Zhou, 2010). The long list of communication issues affecting relationships would have had a marked impact on the student’s ability to develop meaning themselves during interactions with stakeholders in the practicum, as well as supporting children’s own meaning-making during interactions.

Teaching with younger children was perceived as being easier or less complex, linguistically, by Arjun and Jiao, who both completed their practicum in an infant and toddler room. They felt that their English abilities did not impact the development of relationships with children of this age as they thought their relationships were not founded on oral language. They believed relationships were based more upon responsiveness to facial expressions and non-verbal cues. They did not recognise the importance of responsive, reciprocal, and one-on-one conversations to children’s own meaning making and subsequent language acquisition.
(Smith, 1999). However, they did recognise that they had difficulties with early language speakers as they did not understand toddlers’ unusual combinations of vowels and consonants that mark the beginnings of speech development.

I think I still need to learn more about toddlers’ language. Cos sometimes they speak out is not - how do I say? - formal or baby English… To me, English is another language, but baby language is another language so I have no idea what they are talking about sometimes (Jiao, final interview, lines 1621-1631).

There is strong research recognition that teachers’ talk with children does support children’s oral language development (Green, Peterson, & Lewis, 2006; Scarinci, Rose, Pee, & Webb, 2015; Test, Cunningham, & Lee, 2010). But there appears to be little that examines the impact that being a non-native English speaker has upon its development in children. This is certainly an area that would be important for future research focus, given the increasing ethnic diversity in New Zealand’s early education workforce.

As language is the symbolic means by which meaning is interpreted, barriers to its effectiveness are significant. The development of meaning for student, associate, and the children the student works alongside, is therefore likely to be impaired or delayed if language difference impairs the process (Fitts, 2009). This may potentially impact upon identity development for the student (Sears, 2012), and the quality of assessment by the associate (Campbell, et al., 2008). In my search, I could find no research that positions this language barrier as an opportunity for growth, rather than simply as deficit. So, although language difference was acknowledged as an influence on the successful outcome of practicum by both groups of participants, it was generally identified as a negative influence.

**Time**

The final important theme, especially underlying associate teachers' perceptions of practicum success for immigrant Asian students, was having the extra time needed to supervise the student. This was reflected in two separate aspects; the additional time required for supervising students during the practicum, and in the actual length of the practicum itself.

**Ongoing supervision**

All three associate teachers suggested that supervising a student from an ethnic-minority took longer than it would for a student born and educated in Aotearoa New Zealand. This appeared to be for several reasons; the time answering additional questions relating to practice and culture, the time taken to provide very detailed feedback, and the time taken to simply
comprehend one another’s language and meaning. Shelley suggested that she was initially uncomfortable talking with Arjun because of his heavy accent, was unable to have in-depth conversations with him, and spent much longer answering his questions and giving formal weekly feedback. She felt that to be successful as an associate teacher she needed to spend a lot of time with Arjun understanding his cultural perspective.

As far as difference, it would really just be the time to talk to them. I also do think the conversations that we had about culture were important too... the little things, like about the mother in the relationship with the babies. That’s something I wouldn’t have thought of... I think it all really comes down to allowing them the time... just to talk in general... There was one day where we had roto virus going around and I sat and cleaned the whole afternoon, and he sat on a chair and we just talked the whole afternoon (Shelley, final interview, lines 925-956).

Alison supported this finding, and suggested that, because of some cultural and linguistic barriers, associate teachers needed to be aware and ready to commit to meeting the additional needs of these students before the practicum even began.

I think that if people were honest and said yes, I am willing to take on somebody who has English as a second language who doesn’t necessarily understand the way we do things here, who does need a little bit more support... that will take me more time to have conversations with them. I think that’s really, really important (Alison, final interview, lines 818-822).

As discussed earlier, the associate teachers also amended their supervision style to better support the students. A more directive, closely-supervised manner appeared to better suit students’ needs. This may have been because, ultimately, associates and students wanted to be able to pass the ITE practicum learning outcomes, so direct instruction on how to do so came to the fore. This style also took more time because of the level of detail needed to provide feedback and instruction.

The nature and quantity of feedback provided implied that associate teachers recognised that meaning-making took longer for this group of students because of the lack of cultural commonality between the two parties in the relationship. Cultural norms do appear to affect the making of meaning (Benzies & Allen, 2001). Students attempting to develop new meaning around significantly different culturally-based assumptions would have been hindered in this process. Although meanings are actively modified through an ongoing interpretative process (Benzies & Allen, 2001; Blumer, 1969), the length of time this process can take is not known. Because meaning-making during interactions is also reliant upon the use of language, having participants whose first languages were different would also impact
the time taken (Fitts, 2009). As a result, exactly how language barriers affect meaning-making is, as yet, unclear.

**Length of practicum**

The second factor in the influence of time upon success was the actual duration of the practicum itself. Of the two students who were not passed by their visiting lecturer in their assessment visit, both associate teachers felt that a longer practicum would have better supported the student to succeed; perhaps not just a matter of days, but of weeks. Lucy suggested that longer and more frequent practicums were required in order for overseas students to understand differences in New Zealand educational practices.

I don’t think that students should have to go back and do the whole three years, but maybe having more practicum, like doing a bit more practicums and centre things would help… Because I mean in China and different cultures, different countries and stuff, that’s completely different. I can imagine their centres are run completely different. And to come over to another country and, you know, it would be hard to be able to do it straight off. You need lots of practice and so more time (Lucy, final interview, lines 1454–1477).

Studies of what might constitute an ideal duration for student teacher practicum have given varied results. Most suggest that more time developing practice in practicum supports professional practice and development (Covert & Clifton, 1983; Ergul, Baydik, & Demir, 2013; Mutlu, 2015; Pedersen, Cooley, & Hernandez, 2014). However, one meta-analysis suggests that the efficacy of the practicum is purely dependent upon the goals and objectives of the programme itself (Ryan, et al., 1996). These investigations seem not to have considered the impact of cultural difference between student and supervising teacher upon achieving their practice goals, thus impacting on the ideal length of practicum. This study has identified this issue, suggesting that this group of associate teachers did not consider the current length of four or five week’s practicum sufficient for their Asian-born student teachers to experience either formative or summative success.

**A conceptual model of practicum success**

The ways that participants positioned success in practicum were complex. However, it was apparent from the findings that success was perceived as being more than just passing the final ITE practicum learning outcomes. There was also a significant focus on the internal emotions that contributed to the experience of success. An emphasis was also on the ongoing
processes during practicum that contributed towards the concept of success, as well as it also being an endpoint to which to aspire.

I therefore suggest that practicum success can be conceptualised along these two dimensions; internally experienced and externally demonstrated, and formative to summative. Recognition of these two dimensions reveals four quadrants which support success in practicum. Within each quadrant, different practices, knowledge and feelings illustrate each dimension, which are indicated in the model in Figure 3.

![Model of Practicum Success](image)

*Figure 3: Model of Practicum Success*

**Success is both summative and formative**

It was apparent from the very beginning of my conversations that all six participants looked at success as being more than the results of the summative assessment report the student
received at the end of the practicum. It was more than simply passing or failing. Both groups also incorporated the ongoing, formative discussions, feedback, practice and subsequent emotional responses as part of their sense of success. Depending upon different conversations at different times, participants moved seamlessly and unconsciously along this continuum. Sometimes they talked of success in terms of an ongoing process, and at other times they positioned success as a final goal to achieve.

For example, Alison suggested a successful placement occurred when a student learnt new pedagogical techniques and grew in self-confidence. When I questioned her if a practicum could be considered successful if a student had demonstrated these, but had still not passed externally-provided practicum learning outcomes, she agreed that it could be.

Yeah, I think so… So they might not be where they are, but if they have, it’s gotta be successful if they’ve progressed - if they’ve made some progress and they have made some strides, you know, and some positive steps, then yes it has to be I think, it has to be viewed as successful… Because you also have to look at the whole, the big picture, and the success the failure of a student doesn’t hinge on one placement. So this is only a part of the whole isn’t it? This is only a snapshot of time (Alison, initial interview, lines 1233-1243).

Here, she appears to position success as an ongoing progression towards a summative goal.

Lien, her student, also felt that both formative and summative concepts of success were important. She suggested that one was directly linked to the other.

I think they are linked. Although I pass my second placement, even though I didn’t have a very good experiences cos I feel that if you got this kind of positive things, you will - that will make you easier to pass, to reach all the criteria. I feel like that. Cos I feel that for my first and third placement, I feel not very difficult to reach all the criteria, but in my second teaching placement I feel so scared that I won’t pass…so if I got more confidence I can have a good performance, so I can pass (Lien, initial interview, lines 1465-1479).

However, ITE institutions tend to conceptualise success purely as the summative assessment report received at the end of practicum. The final report tends to represent the demonstrable actions of the student (For example, University of Aotearoa, 2014). The use of words such as “communicate”, “participate”, “demonstrate”, “use”, and “provide” in the final assessment report checklist suggest that success is something that can be seen in the _actions of the student_ (pp. 25-26). Even the competencies are described as either being met or not observed. Observation of a particular behaviour is positioned here as being an indicator of compliance, which is interpreted to mean being successful. I wonder, therefore, the extent that ITE institutions take into account the ongoing emotional and identity development that occurs
during practicum. Only quantifiable and observable factors appear to be favoured as measures of success.

**Success is both externally-demonstrated and internally-experienced**

In my model, the second dimension along which practicum success can be conceptualised is from an internally-experienced emotion to an externally-demonstrated practice; from something someone *feels* to something someone *does*. As discussed above, externally-demonstrated behaviour tends to be used as the predominant means to assess success in practicum since the final assessment judgement rests with the ITE institution. Behaviour, or practice, is used as evidence of thinking that accompanies it and of identity development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Wenger, 1998).

However, it was apparent that this was not participants’ only focus for success. There was a strong tendency for all students needing to *feel* successful to ultimately demonstrate successful practice. When asked what made the difference between the practicums she considered successful to those she considered unsuccessful, Lien positioned how she was feeling as the impetus for successful practice. She suggested that encouragement lead to confidence, which in turn contributed to practicum success.

> I feel like if you get more encouragement, you will get more confident. You get more confidence to do things, to practice your plan, and in the second placement because most of time I not get this encouragement, so I get less and less confidence, and maybe because of that my performance was getting worse and worse, so that - that’s why my associate feel like - oh, your practice wasn’t very good (Lien, initial interview, lines 817-825).

In a similar way, Jiao talked about the importance of feeling acknowledged for her contribution, and having a sense of inclusion within the centre team. Arjun discussed how feeling respected by those around him supported the development of relationships with parents. This, then, contributed to success in passing his external learning outcomes.

> When I know I have, what the meaning of respect, how to respect community, how to respect family, parents, children, the same thing come back to me. And it helped me to build a good relationship with the parents, with teachers, with childrens (Arjun, initial interview, lines 480-485).

The associates too all recognised that part of their role was to support the development of self-confidence within students.
Just as positive emotions were positioned as the impetus for positive behaviour, negative emotions were also discussed by students as impacting upon their observable practice. For example, Arjun’s perception of poor support and a surprise negative final report in his first practicum knocked his confidence, impacting his subsequent practice. The lack of support led to his failure to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

In this way, it can be seen that externally-demonstrated practice can be accompanied by an internally-experienced feeling of success. Arjun felt that his practice was a journey from which he could continually learn from through reflection, irrespective of whether he personally experienced it as being good or bad.

And being a teacher, to become a successful teacher is also like a journey. And there’s always possible to do something better, to improve practice and suggestions give us opportunity to improve it. And even bad experiences also teach, teach us a lot of things. Sometimes bad experiences teach us more than good experiences… bad experience, we will keep them, keep them in our mind, what was wrong with that and we, it will help us to stop repeating those things (Arjun, final interview, lines 1313-1319).

So practice may also lead to feeling successful, just as the feeling may emerge from the practice. They may occur in isolation but are likely interlinked.

Some research has already recognised that emotions become particularly important within practicum around the development of professional identity (Hastings, 2004; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012). They can be powerful agents of change. People do their emotions; they don’t just happen to them. That is, positive emotions are reflected in what is externally seen, just as negative emotions are reflected in subsequent behaviour. So a greater understanding of emotions, and the role they play in the experience of success, is likely to have important consequences for pedagogical practice.

**Conclusion**

As a result of my analysis of participants’ conversations, I have suggested that they position practicum success as a result of a number of key aspects. All these are interconnected in that they contribute to each other. Respect, self-confidence and the development of identity connect with each other. These are all fed by the ongoing feedback given by a closely-supportive associate teacher, and supported or hindered by the ability to communicate well. All this takes time. I have therefore suggested that success needs to be thought of as more than simply passing demonstrable behaviourally-based competencies. Instead, it can be
conceptualised as being both externally demonstrable and internally experienced, as well as occurring during the practicum and assessed at its conclusion.

In the next, final, chapter I build on this conceptual model of success and suggest how a successful intercultural practicum may look and function. I then examine the implications of these findings on current structural and assessment aspects of practicum for ITE institutions.
CHAPTER SIX:  
AN INTERCULTURAL PRACTICUM MODEL  
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter identified seven key areas which participants implied were important in my study of what counts as formative and summative success during practicum. On their own, each area has the potential to significantly contribute to the success of practicum for this group of students and their associate teachers. But, taken together as a group, they could heighten the potential for overall success. In this chapter, I suggest a model for a successful intercultural teaching practicum which brings all the themes established in my project together to show how they interconnect. The model focuses on the development of professional identity through the support of the emotional wellbeing and self-confidence of the student. This is done through the use of a supervision style that suits the needs of the student by the associate providing frequent, specific feedback. Success rests upon the ability of both participants to be able to communicate openly and honestly about their expectations and understandings of pedagogical practice, linking these to their personal teaching philosophies. These factors occur in the culturally-hybridised area of the third space (Bhabha, 1994). However, there is an acknowledgement that English language comprehension abilities may serve as a barrier to such reciprocal and reflective communication and meaning-making between associate and student. Because of the high emphasis on the need for such communication, additional time is likely to be taken to successfully navigate these discussions.

Following discussion of this model, I examine the implications my research findings have for ITE institutions. Implications include reflecting on current practicum structure, how it is assessed, and the support provided to both associate teachers and students to set them up for success in practicum before it even begins. I end the chapter by acknowledging the limitations of the current study, before concluding with a reconsideration of the initial research focus.
A model for successful intercultural practicum

My interpretation of the interview and video discussions revealed seven areas that participants associated with practicum success. They were respect, identity development, nurturing of student self-confidence, an alignment of understanding over appropriate pedagogical practice, supervision and feedback according to student need, English language capability, and the time in which to accomplish all this. I suggest that all these areas can be interwoven together in a way that suggests how a successful intercultural practicum may operate, as indicated in Figure 4. Each component of the model is discussed, in turn, during this chapter.

Figure 4: Model of Successful Intercultural Practicum

Personal and professional identities

At the heart of the suggested model lie the personal and professional identities of each of the two key participants in the practicum; the student teacher and the associate teacher. Their individual senses of who they are as people appear to impact all participants’ views of their
own role, as well as how they view appropriate pedagogical practices. Students look at themselves as both teachers and learners. They tend to predominantly focus upon emotional wellbeing and transmitting important knowledge during interactions with children. Associate teachers position themselves as role models and transmitters of pedagogical knowledge to students. They view successful interactions with children with a broader lens, reflecting the key elements of Te Whāriki and current New Zealand policy discourse, which emphasises broader sociocultural and ecological influences. The difference between the perspectives that each participant brings to practicum may consequently be significant to its ongoing success.

Understanding personal identity and its influences therefore becomes central to a successful practicum. Identity has been developed, and continues to develop, through the individual’s lifetime (Beijaard, et al., 2004). It represents the internal meaning of self as developed as a result of ongoing interaction with others (Benzies & Allen, 2001; Blumer, 1969). Self “is a construct that is given meaning through an actor’s choices, mediated by the relationships, situations, and cultures in which she or he is embedded” (Fine, 1993, p. 78). Throughout people’s lives they continue to develop a sense of who they are as a result of the experiences they have been a part of, the meaning attributed to those experiences, and the interactions they have had with family, friends and others. However, the cultural values and patterns of behaviour of a society are also apparent in these reciprocal interactions. So someone’s personal identity is a continuous construct of life experiences, family and cultural values, as well as the personal values developed as a result of these ongoing interactions (Nguyen, 2008). Both associate and student will therefore enter practicum having a deeply-held understanding of who they are as an individual.

Upon this foundation, however, the associate and student teacher also develop their own professional identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Schepens, et al., 2009). The professional self represents who the person considers themselves to be as a teacher. It also develops as a result of interactions with others, as meaning is developed about what a teacher looks and sounds like in practice. For the associate teacher, professional identity has developed over many years of teaching. It includes the time spent as a student in the tertiary classroom discussing and understanding the theory behind pedagogical practices, the time spent developing ongoing meaning around pedagogy in professional development opportunities, and the time spent in the myriad of interactions the associate has been involved in with children and whānau (family) over their teaching career. Their role as associate teacher is also influenced by the performance guidelines given by the ITE institution and the
interactions they have with student teachers while performing the role. Critical reflection about self is likely to be the fuel that drives this ongoing professional construction (Mezirow, 1990).

For the student teacher, however, their professional identity as a teacher of the kind for which they are studying is still likely to be in its infancy during their ITE. It is being constructed as a result of past interactions with teachers in their own country, previous interactions while on practicum, previous and ongoing interactions with lecturers, other student teachers and associate teachers, as well as the required performance competencies given by their ITE institution (Beijaard, et al., 2004; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Peeler, 2005).

In this model, I propose that these two entities, the personal and professional selves, are separate. One is founded upon the other. However, especially for the student teacher, aspects of their professional identity may conflict with their own personal identity, as indicated by the dotted line in the model. This may pose a considerable challenge for students, as well as produce a wide range of emotional responses. Extreme negative emotion is a common finding in research literature around the development of identity in ethnic-minority student teachers (Fan & Le, 2009b; Han, 2005; Jessop & Williams, 2007; Lim, 2011; Lu, 2005; Nguyen, 2008; Peeler, 2005; Tsui, 2007). Meaning around the appropriate role of the adult in relation to children will have already been firmly established as part of their personal identity. This will have occurred during their own childhood through the interactions they themselves had with teachers. However, the role of the teacher and position of the child in the New Zealand educational context may be different from that which they already know. A new understanding around what it means to be a teacher in New Zealand will have begun to be developed through interactions within ITE. However, it is only while on practicum that students face the actual realities of what this may look like. So, although they are given parameters as to their required professional behaviour in the form of assessment criteria, their personal identity may unconsciously influence their understanding and subsequent behaviour.

Blumer (1969) suggests that the struggle between the impulsive tendency of the ‘I’ and the socially expected behaviour of the ‘me’ results in the process of ‘self’. I have taken this notion one step further and suggest that the culturally-specific, socially-expected behaviour of our professional lives may act in accordance with our personal identity, but aspects of it may not. For those students who find these two parts of self in conflict to one another, the outcome can be emotional vulnerability and uncertainty. These emotions are as a result of the
contradictions in their internal meaning-making about who they are (Malderez, et al., 2007; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012).

I suggest that the practicum relationship is based upon two individuals who come to it with personal identities which have derived from the interpretations placed on multiple previous interactions with others in their lives. If from New Zealand, the associate is likely to have a reasonably stable professional identity which has been built upon their personal identity. However, the student has an evolving professional identity which may be at odds with their existing meanings about self. This makes the student more susceptible to emotional vulnerability during the practicum process.

**Reciprocal communication in the third space**

The next key component of the suggested model relates to the nature of the communication between associate and student. Both students and associates recognised the importance of effective communication in order to succeed. All students wanted to be taught about new pedagogical practices, and focussed heavily on this new learning as a key measure of success. Associates, too, focussed upon being able to pass on pedagogical knowledge and strategies. However, both identified that language differences meant that meaning could not always be successfully supported.

Within my proposed practicum model I suggest that, just as the fuel for the development of self is the ongoing interpretative process of critical reflection, so too the fuel for mutual understanding between associate and student is reciprocal intercultural communication. Yet authentic reciprocal communication and meaning-making is difficult when the parties bring different culturally-based interpretations of meaning and self. This was evidenced in the findings from the current study.

One useful theoretical framework for effective intercultural communication is the third space (Bhabha, 1994). It is also based upon the symbolic interactionist concepts of self, identity and meaning-making. In his work, Bhabha theorises that the third space is the liminal space between two individuals from differing ethnic backgrounds. It is the place where culturally-based understandings can be revealed, discussed and reflected upon. Flessner (2014) defines the third space as “a place of reflection, renewal, and change in which two supposedly oppositional worlds are re-imagined to identify tensions, conflicts, exaggerations of distance, commonalities across domains, sources of insight, and inspiration for action” (p. 236). But
this threshold position can be a strange place; with strong feelings of instability and lack of clarity about where individuals belong and what they should be doing in such a position (Barlow, 2007; Kalscheuer, 2008). As Bhabha (2008) himself suggests, “the third space is a challenge to the limits of the self in the act of reaching out to what is liminal in the historic experience, and in the cultural representation, of other peoples, times, languages, texts” (p. xiii). The third space concept aligns well with a symbolic interactionist perspective. There is recognition that the meaning of success needs to be co-constructed between both individuals, in a place where cultural understandings can be temporarily brought to the fore. From this space, a hybridised sense of understanding around success can be constructed. It is as a result of the tension from this sense of being in-between that cultural differences are unpacked, negotiated, and re-imagined. From this, “individuals often emerge transformed; a cultural hybrid… that is continually in transition and always incomplete” (Barlow, 2007, p. 245). It is in this place of discomfort and not-knowing that both the associate and the student can come together to explore their own perceptions and values in relation to the other. Practicum can then become a transformative experience, supporting the development of professional identity in both participants, student and associate.

Third space discussions are not easy to engage in or to maintain (Flessner, 2014; Han, 2005; Kalscheuer, 2008). They represent a conscious effort to acknowledge the unconscious values and expectations each participant has, in a language that participants may not feel confident in using. Both must step outside of what they think they know and be prepared to be challenged. The emotional impact of these challenges on both participants must be acknowledged and therefore supported accordingly. Compounding the difficulty of conversing and reflecting within the third space is language difference. Findings from this study strongly indicate that a language barrier between associate and student does exist. All participants recognised that language barriers made communication challenging, yet none fully entered the “hybrid learning space” (Fitts, 2009, p. 88) in which they truly sought to understand the view of the other. Alison only recognised her own potential learning after the practicum had ended. Upon reflection afterwards, she implied that the onus was on associate teachers to therefore work harder to comprehend students.

But I think probably when you’re dealing in another language that you, you perhaps have to be a little bit more forward thinking perhaps or a bit more
reflective. I don't know. I don't know if that’s necessarily the case. But you certainly have to be, I think, I think you have to be more aware because you are, there are differences, and there are subtleties in language (Alison, final interview, 948-953).

The impact of language difference on the effectiveness of meaning-making in the third space is an area for further investigation. The very limited existing research investigating language difference in the third space does suggest that meaning-making is likely to be compromised and learning opportunities may be missed (Fitts, 2009). In order to develop mutual respect between practicum participants, communication needs to be based upon reciprocity. This is represented by an exchange of knowledge, values, beliefs and previous experiences (McConnell, 2015). Reciprocity in an intercultural situation occurs in the third space (Fitts, 2009; Kalscheuer, 2008; Watkins Jr. & Hook, 2016). It could allow the student to learn about the values and beliefs that underpin the New Zealand education system, as well as how the associate teacher interprets these in their practice. Correspondingly, it could also allow the associate teacher to appreciate the basis upon which the student bases their practice, learn from it, and consider alternative perspectives in how successful practice is perceived.

Within the uncomfortable third space of such reflexive discussions, I suggest that three key aspects of practicum need to be unpacked and mutually understood. These are beliefs around appropriate teaching practices with children, expectations of themselves and each other in their respective roles, and the underlying philosophies each hold in regards to teaching. It is not about participants discarding their existing perceptions, but simply recognising their own beliefs, valuing others’ beliefs, and sharing ideas. These discussions require an increasing level of reflexive thinking and may take significant time to engage in and to process.

**Appropriate practice and teaching philosophies**

An important topic for mutual reflection within the third space is what constitutes appropriate teaching practice with children. Practice usually reflects the underlying personal teaching philosophy of the teacher, so this must also be made visible in ongoing reflexive conversations. Practice is the most visible element of unconsciously-held beliefs, and is the basis upon which the student is formally assessed for practicum successfulness.

My current study suggests that associate teachers held a broader range of views around what good practice should look like than their student counterparts. These views reflected key principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* and current sociocultural early childhood education discourse in New Zealand. In contrast, students mainly focussed upon child wellbeing and
knowledge learning as their key indicators of successful practice. I have speculated that these differences in foci originate from a diversity of cultural beliefs around the view of children and the role of teachers, as well as the ongoing impact of new theoretical learning from coursework.

Research confirms that both unconscious and conscious pressure exists for ethnic-minority students to disregard their own perspective around teaching and take on the view of the dominant ethnicity instead (Chen & Cheng, 2012; Heald, 2007; Heng, 2011; Watts Pailliotet, 1997). This is because the required performance criteria against which students’ successfulness is assessed by their associate teacher, visiting lecturer, or both, mirrors the cultural beliefs of the dominant majority in New Zealand. But feedback by associate teachers reflected their own worldview and teaching philosophy, and situated their own practice as the ideal for students to aspire towards (Hastings, 2010). Externally-imposed assessment criteria from the ITE institution appeared to be used only as a guideline by associate teachers. Their own frame of reference around successful practice became the dominant lens used to ascertain success.

The conflict between personal identity and appropriate professional practice appears to be at the core of the emotional distress encountered by students. I therefore suggest that the third space reflections with the associate teacher become particularly important as they allow both the student and associate to reflect upon the origins of their beliefs around appropriateness and develop a hybridised, combined sense of understanding.

Other studies involving ethnic-minority student teachers showed that they can recede into silence when confronted by culturally-challenging situations (Allen, 2008; Singh & Dooley, 1996), or simply wanted to be told what to do to pass their practicum component by their supervisor without understanding why (Graham, 1997). This appeared to occur for all the students in the current study. For example, Lien reflected on her work at the centre once her practicum had concluded. Although she considered it a successful experience, she was not able to articulate why she had not passed.

You know, in the last week I asked her if anything I need to improve. And she said, like, you just follow my instructions and ask question if you have. That’s all… But I feel that the things I did, when I came back to practice there, is nothing different to the things I did in my teaching placement… So I don't know, at the moment I don't know about her expectation to me or her standard… ‘Cos even though I failed, still, I want to know her standard of passing criteria (Lien, final interview, lines 419-448).
Lien framed her success in practice here as complying with her associate’s directions. Yet she did not understand how this had not allowed her to meet the practicum’s learning outcomes. She did not understand the reason behind the practices she was being asked to implement as she had not asked and Alison had not discussed them clearly enough.

The present study revealed that practice was framed as being successful predominantly through the associate teacher’s perspective. Feedback only went one way, although one associate, Alison, appeared to consider the practicum as a learning opportunity for herself. The others did not seem so, despite having the opportunity to learn and appreciate a distinctly different worldview to their own. Some recent research on practicum suggests that a slow shift is beginning to take place in recognising the role of the associate teacher as changing from being the problem solver and director of the practicum, to both student and associate working together collaboratively to jointly set goals, problematize, and solve issues (Keogh & Dole, 2006; McDonald, 2004). My study did not support this finding. Although associates seemed willing to begin with the practicum in such a way, their style changed. A hierarchical and directive, rather than collaborative, approach was eventually adopted by associates in response to perceived student need. Students also preferred receiving close instruction. It is possible this preference was in response to not fully understanding the reasons behind practice requirements and simply wanting to be able to reach the necessary level of competency in the time available.

Within the third space, feedback need not only go one way. If the associate teacher is willing to consider other ideas presented, then a truly collaborative relationship can develop. Practicum can then become a professional development opportunity for all parties involved (Faire, 1994; Graham, 2006; Hastings & Squires, 2002; Hawkey, 1998; Mecca, 2010). The third space becomes the opportunity to air personal teaching philosophies, reflect upon them, and reconstruct them based on this critical reflection and challenge. It allows both parties to recognise valid intercultural perspectives, which would be a benefit in New Zealand’s increasingly diverse society.

The teaching philosophies of the students did appear to change over the course of the practicum. Before the practicum began, they all described their teaching philosophies as being play-based and child-centred, which reflected new meaning-making they would have encountered during ITE. But following graduation from their course, they moved to one that more closely resembled the educational environment in which they had been raised. They had
developed a hybrid understanding of teaching. For example, both Jiao and Arjun discussed the need to combine values and practices from their home culture with new meanings developed during the practicum.

I think [direct] teaching is still very important and necessary way to learn. We can’t go directly from one point straight to [other] end. I try to focus on the combination of two cultures. I personally think New Zealand education is too loose for the children… sometimes make children doesn’t know where to go because the direction is too wide. They have enough space and room but is kind of too big for them; sometimes I need to narrow down. But the Chinese education is too narrow, I need to open it up… I try to find the balance between those (Jiao, final interview, lines 1180-1209).

I want to add something in this philosophy… Some of my friends’ children go to intermediate schools and they say there is nothing, other than they play… There’s no homework or anything… I don’t like that things… I believe it is very important for them, for success in life, for success in citizenship… Only few of them choose to go to university and work hard and go for the PhD and other technical levels… I would like to combine both these systems; Indian system and New Zealand system… I want both things in my time (Arjun, final interview, lines 865-894).

This may be because assessment pressure had been eliminated and they felt more comfortable to share their honest feelings. Or it may be because they had been exposed to a learner-centred philosophy and had found it lacking. Motivation behind this change was not explored and would be useful to investigate further.

In my proposed successful intercultural practicum model, a co-constructed, hybridised meaning around practice and personal philosophies could occur during reflective third-space conversations. Practicality currently dictates that external assessment criteria are universal across all students studying with each ITE institution. Each organisation develops their own list but consideration may not be given for differing teaching practices or life experiences by students. An in-depth awareness of why non-New Zealand born students’ practices may differ from those expected may lead to a more mindful and successful practicum.

**Expectations of roles**

Students and associate teachers appeared to have differing expectations about their own role and the role of their partner in the practicum. Students arrived with a preconceived understanding of what their own role in the practicum would look like, as well as an expectation of what they believed an associate would do to support them. All wanted to be viewed and respected as professional colleagues.
This finding is strongly supported by other research in the field (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Etherington, 2011; Haigh, 2001; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Martinez, et al., 2001; McConnell, 2015). But the actions of this group of students suggest that they also positioned themselves as learners. Correspondingly, their expectation was that their associate teacher would give them guidance as required, teaching them pedagogical skills in the moment.

I think feedback should be at the appropriate time. If everything is gone then it doesn’t matter whether she give feedback or not… If she, she will teaching me…during the activities it would help me to improve my practice. Otherwise, if my practice has gone, then what we can do with it? (Arjun, final interview, lines 1259-1268).

Earlier I discussed the origin of this teacher/learner dichotomy within identity and expectations as possibly being connected to differing cultural ways of being. The variation in student expectation could be difficult for associate teachers to ascertain specific support requirements as they change from situation to situation, moment to moment.

Associate teachers also came to the practicum with preconceived ideas as to what their identity as a supervisor would entail, and how the student would fit into that role. Some associates used the supervision style that had been successful for them when they were students. For instance, Alison confirmed that she tried to emulate positive experiences that she had when she herself was on practicum.

I had a couple of placements where I had absolutely superb associates and … what they actually did for me, probably more than anything else, I mean, yes I learned about curriculum areas and I learned about supervision and so on, but actually it was building my confidence (Alison, initial interview, lines 189-192).

Their meaning of what it meant to be an associate teacher was durable and had been reinforced over time. It reflects other research in the area that associate teachers may base their meaning on these past emotionally-driven interactions, rather than upon professional supervision guidance given by the ITE institution (Hamilton, 2010; Hastings, 2010; Rajuan, et al., 2007; Trevethan, 2013). Associates eventually positioned themselves as pedagogical role models and holders of valuable pedagogical knowledge that they needed to impart to students. This positioning implied that associates tended to view their own practice as normative, looking for a replication of their own style in students to be successful (Hastings, 2010). This persistent view may even overrule the success competencies from the ITE institution against which they may assess the student.
Associate teachers all mentioned before the practicum began that they preferred to use a looser style of supervision, allowing the student freedom to demonstrate initiative in practice. They did not want to have to tell students what they should be doing.

Like I think when you’ve got adult students coming in to do their practicums, I think that they’re, you know, they need the support and stuff but I don’t, I think they need to also be able to make their own choices and sort of be able to lead as well. Like if you’re telling someone what to do all the time, well you can’t really see what they’re, you know what I mean? Like if you’re telling someone: ok you’re doing that, now you’re doing this, and this, and this – you don’t, they, you never get to see them actually using their initiative (Lucy, initial interview, lines 347-354).

However following the practicum, all associate teachers commented on the more direct style of supervision they adopted in response to perceived student need, giving specific instructions and observing students more closely.

These findings suggest that there is an initial mismatch of expectations between student and associate teacher; both in how they see themselves and their preferred supervision style. It reinforces other practicum research about the tension that this mismatch in expectation causes (Graham, 1997; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hamman & Romano, 2009; Martinez, et al., 2001; McConnell, 2015; Rajuan, et al., 2007).

There are mixed research findings about the learning implications of this mismatch. Haigh and Ward (2004) suggest that having differing expectations as to their respective roles makes optimised learning impossible. Etherington (2011) instead indicates that in these situations, if expectations are made known, that participants will adjust their behaviour to meet the other’s expectations; the so-called “Pygmalion principle” (p. 259). But Rajuan (2010) suggests that such a mismatch allows for optimal productive learning opportunities for both student and associate.

Differences in expectation would, therefore, become a key topic of conversation in the third space. Both participants in practicum need to recognise their expectation about self and other, as well as understanding the perspective of their partner, so that a joint understanding can be developed. This takes time and the experience of the associate teacher to guide and support.

**Supervision, feedback & emotional wellbeing**

Another focus of communication between associate teacher and student is the acknowledgement and support for the student’s wellbeing and developing self-confidence.
All students expressed strong negative emotions during the practicum and sought to feel a sense of self-confidence. Associates, too, expressed a desire to support the development of student confidence. This was a strong, enduring theme throughout discussions with all participants.

The same intense emotional struggle is reported repeatedly in the literature on practicum for ethnic-minority students across a range of countries and disciplines (Campbell, et al., 2006; Duchesne & Stitou, 2010; Han & Singh, 2007; Lu, 2005). Universally, the literature has described the negative emotional fallout in terms of stress and anxiety when students are exposed to an educational context which conflicts with their own values and beliefs.

Within my proposed model, the support for emotional wellbeing is shown as occurring within the third space. As supervisor, it is the role of the associate teacher to support the student psychologically, not just in practice. However, it is recognised that associate teachers may also have an emotional response during an intercultural practicum. Following the practicum, Alison suggested that she had invested emotionally into her relationship with her student, Lien.

I’ve met people, and, I think about them. I don’t just, you know, they don’t just go. You know, people touch you in different ways… Like you know, Lien was very willing to share in the end. I learnt quite a lot about her. And so I think about her. I think about her now, you know, I’m still thinking about her. I do care what happens to her and I do care about what happens to them. It isn’t just something that I can say - yes, I’m an associate teacher, and somebody comes along and is there for five weeks and then, you know, see you later, and you don’t even give them a second thought. Cos, that’s just not the way I am really… I want her to make it, you know… I really care what happens from here on in (Alison, final interview, lines 722-743).

I suggest that the third space can become a safe environment in which to share perspectives, and corresponding confusion. In this way, both parties can suspend judgement about each other’s sense-making and accept it as a genuine perspective. However, it is the role of the associate to support the student through resulting emotions to allow for a resolution and possible change in identity. With the appropriate supervision style and level of feedback that meets the needs of each student, rather than a replication of supervisory practice with previous students, associate teachers hold the responsibility to support student’s self-confidence and demonstrate respect for their ideas. Support for their internal sense of wellbeing, therefore directly impacts upon their professional identity and subsequent professional practice.
However, associate teachers, too, may require emotional support in their role. Hastings (2004) suggests that associate teachers may experience a wide gamut of emotional reactions when they perceive the practicum as being unsuccessful. These emotions can include guilt, anxiety, disappointment, frustration, and stress. However in third space discussions, these too may be alleviated as the associate teacher has the opportunity to develop their professional understandings and increase intercultural awareness.

**Sufficient time**

The final key factor which borders my suggested model is the time required to engage in effective third space conversations between the two individuals who have come from differing cultural starting points. The associate teachers all recognised that the support needed for their students took longer than usual in comparison to New Zealand-born early childhood students. Students also valued their associate teachers answering their many questions, and providing detailed spontaneous and formal feedback. Indeed, some would have preferred to receive even more feedback than they had. When asked about what could have made her practicum more successful, Jiao thought that more time to discuss practice would have been helpful.

> Actually I think I just need more time for the asking time - for example, discussion time. Normally cos we are very busy, so I don’t have too much time to ask. And she doesn’t have too much time to answer. So we both ask the most important things in the day, but ignore the other specific, small questions. For example, if I have five questions for today, but during the break time I probably only have time for three questions and I don’t have time to ask the other two (Lien, final interview, lines 1082-1098).

This represents a significant investment of the associate teacher’s time, both in giving informal feedback throughout the day, as well as regular formal meetings. Within these discussions, meaning can also take longer to develop because of the language and cultural differences already discussed.

It may also take more time for the student to develop trust and for them to feel safe to engage in such conversations. For example, Lien suggested it took nearly the entire practicum period to trust her work colleagues.

> Before I’m sure that you truly want to make a friend with me, I won’t tell you something that very personally is, and I’m not sure if you would really interesting in that… and after that I know both that Japanese teacher and another teacher they knew very truly to, they want to make a friend with me. So I started to talk and if
something deeply with them. But that happened, I think in the last week (Lien, final interview, lines 287-295).

Within my suggested practicum success model I suggest that the more in-depth and reflective the third space conversations are, the more time is required.

**Implications for ITE**

As a result of the success themes identified and my subsequent practicum success model, I suggest that a number of areas within ITE need to be rethought to maximise the opportunity for ethnic-minority students to become successful in their practicum experiences. These include how the practicum is structured within the other theoretical components of the teaching programme, the support structures in place for student and associate, and how assessment of practicum is conducted.

**Practicum structure and length**

Sometimes the standard length of practicum courses may not be enough for all students to get the support required to achieve the required level of practice needed to pass. As already discussed, associate teachers suggested that a longer time period is required to support ethnic-minority students. ITE institutions may schedule a standardised length of time in which students are able to achieve a required level of professional competency. My research has identified that there is a need for practicum to be positioned as such within the programme to enable it to be flexible enough to be extended to allow for any additional support that is required by students to be given, reflected and acted upon. However, practicum is often a separate course within ITE, scheduled to begin and end on set dates, in order to fit between other courses. The implications of my proposed practicum model would be the recognition that some students may take longer than others to work through third space understandings.

Therefore, other formats of practicum need to be considered that could offer greater flexibility in length. I concur with Oprandy (2015), who makes the suggestion that frequent professional experiences could be woven throughout other coursework, rather than positioning practicum to occur at the end of the large theoretical components of the programme as some ITE institutions do. In this way, practice and theory could bounce off each other constantly through reflective discussions. Although they may be shorter, such practicum would be more frequent than usual. Possibilities could be a day a week, a week each month, or the like. In this way, in addition to the support from their associate teachers,
students could also have the support of regular class-based sessions in which to reflect upon their practicum experiences.

Another option may be to schedule coursework to occur sequentially, rather than concurrently. This would be particularly effective in an online delivery mode. With this format, practicum could be as long as necessary (within a reasonable timeframe) in order to optimise the chances of success. Only when successfully completed would the next course begin for the student.

Both these options are only possibilities. Whatever format is used, it appears clear from my research that a standard four or five week practicum format, twice a year, was not optimal for student success for the ethnic-minority students in this case.

**Associate support structures**

These findings have also highlighted the need for more support structures around associate teachers. They require professional support to be effective mentors, to guide third space discussions, to have an understanding of the impact their own cultural values have upon their practice, and support for their own emotional wellbeing.

ITE institutions need to provide intensive, frequent, specific, mentoring professional development. My findings suggest that associate teachers rely upon their own personal experience to support students, and are challenged when confronted with the unexpected. ITE institutions are required by the Education Council of New Zealand to offer ongoing support to associate teachers, but it is not compulsory for teachers to take this up. I recommend closer collaboration between ITE institutions and their associate teachers in order to focus on intercultural supervision skills and reflective work on how their own values impact on their pedagogical practice. In addition to ongoing, more frequent and specific intercultural supervision professional development sessions, other support formats could also be considered. One such format could be an online support forum specifically for associate teachers to share questions, issues and reflections of the supervision process. Any of these support structures would promote a closer, more collaborative relationship between the ITE institution and associate teacher in order to support the quality of supervision with students.
Student support structures

It is also apparent from my research findings that ethnic-minority students need to be better prepared before and during practicum for the new educational context in which they are practising and being assessed. My findings support a large research base which already makes the same recommendation. A range of options to do this have already been suggested and researched successfully. All rest responsibility with the ITE institution. Suggestions include separate courses either before mainstream courses begin, or running concurrently, to support students’ understanding of the educational context they are entering (Burns, 1991; Cruickshank, 2004; Fan & Le, 2009a; Nallaya, 2016; Spooner-Lane, et al., 2009), multiple familiarisation visits being made before practicum begins (Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016), peer support groups during practicum (Kailasanathan, 2013; Le Cornu, 2015; McCluskey, 2009, 2012; Nguyen, 2013; Trent, 2013), and non-assessed online journals and blogs to support reflective thinking (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Barlow, 2007; Fan & Le, 2009a; Flessner, 2014). All recognise that students require more than the usual provided support mechanisms in order to succeed in practicum. Such support structures provided by the ITE institution would therefore supplement and work alongside the supervision provided by the associate teacher.

Practicum assessment processes

A further area to consider in terms of practicum is the way in which it is assessed. My research suggests that success in practicum is perceived by both students and associates to be significantly greater than merely observed pedagogical practices. This calls into question the current summative assessment measures predominantly used by ITE institutions. Assessment processes tend to focus on externally-demonstrated, summative measures, rather than also taking into account ongoing formative or emotive measures. Recent research has certainly called into question the authenticity of current summative practices (Goulding, et al., 2015; Haigh, Ell, Mackisack, & Villers, 2013; Noor Davids, 2015).

Alternative, broader assessment forms may be more appropriate to use within practicum to take account of both the observable behaviour and internally experienced notions of success. One such possibility is using forms of ipsative assessment within practicum (Hughes, 2011). This is a form of personal assessment which compares existing performance with previous performance. In this way, “credit is... given for how far the learner has advanced since the previous piece of work” (Hughes, 2011, p. 353). Assessment can be more personalised, to address student needs, as well as standardised across all students. There was evidence of this
beginning to occur within my own research. For example, Lien described her practicum as being highly successful, despite not passing required learning outcomes. The issue though is that such feelings are not taken into account by the ITE institution. Current assessment formats using standardised external criteria are deeply entrenched in teacher education and may be aligned with required graduating standards. One possibility is to use a combination of formative ipsative grades with an externally-based standard. This would focus on ongoing individual progress and the development of internal motivation, as well as having an overall alignment of practice expectations for students.

The question arises as to whether it is feasible, or even desirable, to be assessing all the quadrants suggested in my conceptualisation of success model. Whatever form practicum assessment takes, however, it seems apparent from the understanding of success that participants have, that assuming success can only be measured in externally observable behaviours is very narrowly focussed. ITE institutions need to recognise that success is much more than is readily apparent, and greater emphasis needs to focus on the internal dimensions of how success is experienced since it is so important for successful identity formation.

**A focus on equity**

Literature investigating the experiences of ethnic-minority students in higher education goes back well over twenty years. In that time, recommendations for additional support have been repeated time and time again. The fact that this research has added to these recommendations is reassuring, but also very disturbing. My research suggests that, despite repeated calls for attention to this area, ITE institutions are still lagging behind in terms of equitable practice for ethnically diverse students.

My research adds to other calls for equity within ITE programmes (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Felton & Harrison, 2016; Gagné, Chassels, & McIntosh, 2015; Klenowski, 2015; Ortlipp, 2006). Equity has supposedly been the underlying principle of Aotearoa New Zealand’s education system since the 1989 Education Act (Simon, 2000). An equitable education system is one where educational organisations respond according to the “diverse needs and aspirations of students of all ethnicities, genders, ages, and socio-economic backgrounds” (Tertiary Education Commission, 2016, p. 1), in order to maximise learning outcomes. But there appears little evidence of it in terms of the support offered to the ethnic-minority students in my study, in order for them to achieve the required level of competency.
in ITE. However, as Cochran-Smith and others (2016) suggest, the underlying perception of education in an economically-based, market-driven ideology is at odds with the responsibility and morality which should underlie the teaching profession and training for it. Extra support costs money and time. While such a strong focus on costing persists, equity is likely to remain a distant dream.

Equity is not just a relevant concept for ethnic-minority students. Indeed, all students could benefit from such a focus. Therefore my suggested model around successful intercultural practicum could hold relevance for all students. The model recognises the need for successful professional identity development in the student through the allowance of sufficient time, mindful supervisory practices, and mutually respectful reflective discussions. Such a model enables a personalised approach to practicum to maximise its ultimate successfulness.

**Research limitations and future research possibilities**

The small size of this study is its primary shortcoming. It provides the perspectives of only these six particular participants. The fact that this study occurred over only one practicum is also a limitation. Furthermore, it only focussed on the relationship between student and associate teacher. The perspective of the visiting lecturer around practicum success was not accounted for within this design.

The ethnic difference between myself as the researcher and the student participants may have also impacted on this research. Confucian beliefs around unquestioning respect for elders and teachers suggest that students simply may have reported to me what they thought I wanted to hear, rather than being completely open or honest in their opinions (Guo, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). I tried to address this by spending a lot of time in the initial briefing and interview process developing a relationship with student participants. Two of the final student interviews were conducted after the students had completed all their course requirements, so I hope that the removal of assessment pressure also contributed to students being honest in their responses.

Language barriers may have also caused misunderstandings, but because of the IELTS language requirements for teacher education programmes (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.-c), this wasn’t as large an issue as it could have been in my interviews. There remained some very minor areas within Arjun’s interviews that I was unable to completely comprehend even after repeated attempts to discern his meaning from the audio
recording. I did spend time developing relationships with student participants and encouraged them to clarify anything they did not understand; either about the research process itself or during our interviews. They did this several times during our interviews, so I felt more confident that they were open in what they did not understand and felt comfortable having questions rephrased.

Any future research building upon this study could attempt to address some of these limitations. Data collection over a longer period of time, and with a range of different combinations of student-associate dyads, would contribute to a wider picture of how success is perceived and constructed. The use of more than one ITE institution would also enable a wider understanding of how different providers support and assess intercultural practicum and whether this impacts on success. Furthermore, understanding how other non-Asian ethnic minorities perceive practicum success by including a wider range of ethnicities could add weight to these current findings. Indeed, even using associate teachers and students who hold the same apparent ethnic backgrounds could provide evidence as to the usefulness of the proposed practicum success model.

**Concluding thoughts**

My research attempted to answer the primary question of what makes for successful practicum for Asian-born early childhood student teachers and their associates. Success has been found to be conceptualised as being experienced internally as well as demonstrated externally. Success has also been seen to occur throughout the practicum as well as being a goal to aspire towards at its end. Key aspects of practicum that participants positioned as contributing to success were the development of mutual respect, the progression of student professional identity, nurturing the self-confidence of the student, an alignment of understanding of what pedagogical practice looks like between student and associate, providing the supervision and feedback the student requires, having sufficient English language capability, and having sufficient time available to enable all this to occur. I have suggested that a practicum based on reciprocal communication in a culturally-hybridised third space could support success in an intercultural context.

As a result of these findings, I have made a number of recommendations around intercultural practicum to support their success:
1. Practicums need to be structured within the rest of the ITE programme in a way to allow students to spend more time in centres, and more frequently.

2. Associate teachers require significantly more intensive professional development around intercultural mentoring, including ongoing online support.

3. Students also need to be better prepared for the education system they will be working within before beginning practicum. Preparation could include separate courses before practicum, more familiarisation visits to centres, as well as peer support groups and online reflective journals during the practicum itself.

4. The assessment of practicum needs to be broadened to take into account the participant’s internal dimensions of success. Therefore, student assessment processes based on personal progress, rather than only on externally-observable practice, could be added to ensure that all success dimensions are acknowledged, encouraged, and assessed.

5. A continued focus on equity throughout the entire practicum process is required to ensure ethnic-minority students have the maximum opportunity to be successful.

6. The Model of Successful Intercultural Practicum (p. 132) could be used to support success for all students, irrespective of their ethnic origin, as it encourages successful professional identity development through thoughtful supervision and respectful discussions, within a framework of sufficient time to allow such development. It has a personalised focus to allow sufficient support to be provided to maximise successful practicum outcomes.

So finally, in reflecting back to the situation between Susie and myself that began my research journey all those years ago, I have realised one thing. Neither of us was in a position at that time to do anything different from what actually occurred. However, now, I recognise that if I had had better intercultural supervision support, Susie had had a better understanding of the context she was entering, and we had had more time to work together to appreciate the perspective of the other, we may have had a different outcome. At the time, I was worried that Susie didn’t ‘get it’. But that perception was wrong. Neither of us actually ‘got it’. My hope is that this research represents a step closer towards more students and associate teachers ‘getting it’: feeling and being successful during and after practicum.
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Countering Cultural Confusion:

**Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

The aim of this project is to investigate what makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood students and their Associate teachers. It is being conducted to complete a Doctorate in Education qualification.

Two types of participants are being sought through your teacher training institution:

1. **Students**
   a. Students must have been born in China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia or South East Asia, and be in their final year of study for an early childhood teaching qualification. They must have immigrated to New Zealand, and have had a maximum of two years secondary schooling in New Zealand. Students have the opportunity to benefit through the process of self-reflection and an examination of relevant cultural issues. Students will be recruited through notice board advertisements or in-class.
   b. A maximum number of 5 student participants are required. No compensation is being offered.
   c. Student teachers will be asked for their permission for their Associate teacher to be invited to take part in the research. Only those students whose Associate agrees to take part will be included in the project.

2. **Associate teachers**
   a. Associate teachers of students who have volunteered to be part of this research are invited to participate. They will be recruited through email or telephone. They can be of any age and any ethnic background, and must be fully registered teachers. No compensation is being offered.
   b. The Associate teacher will benefit professionally by reflecting upon their own supervisory style and cultural assumptions as part of their practice.
Participants in this project will be asked to:

- Be involved in an interview of about 45 minutes prior to practicum. They will be asked to think about their previous experiences in practicum, their definition of what makes a successful practicum, positive and negative experiences, and their goals for the upcoming practicum experience. They will be in full control of the information they wish to discuss during the interview.

- The student’s practice will be videoed during practicum in the centre for half a day. The purpose of the video is to give the student the ability to reflect upon the experiences throughout the day without trying to remember them. I recognise participants may feel uncomfortable during the videoing experience. However, the purpose of the video is not one of critique. Together with the student, I will edit this video down to about a 15 minute summary. Both the student and associate teacher will be invited to view the edited video and comment on the elements of success within the practice. Theseavings will take place separately so participants can speak freely. They will be videoed for later transcribing and data analysis.

- Be involved in an interview of about 60 minutes after practicum. This will follow a similar format to the first interview and will revisit the notion of practicum success.

Participants may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

Student’s practice will not be assessed during the researcher’s visit to practicum. It is requested that another tutor assess the student during a separate visit, as per the usual procedures of your training institution. No conversations about the participants will take place between the researcher and the tutor who assesses the student participants.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

- **Raw Data**
  - Interview audiotapes and transcripts along with videos will be produced.
  - Edited videos will be produced for the video stimulated conversations.
  - Personal demographic data will be collected purely for descriptive purposes to describe case study participants.

- **Access to Data & Data Security**
  - Data will only be available to the researcher and her two supervisors.
  - Transcribed interview data will be made available to the interview participant to verify its accuracy.
  - The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Raw data produced in this
study will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. After this it will be destroyed. All personal information about participants will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

- **What data/information will be reflected in the completed research?**
  - The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but pseudonyms will be used to help preserve anonymity.
  - Due to the nature of multiple case study research, and the brief demographic information published, it may not be possible to completely preserve participant anonymity.

- **Opportunity to correct or withdraw data?**
  - All participants will have the opportunity to view their own transcribed interview data to verify its accuracy.

**Research findings** will be made available in summary form to participants.

At no time in the study should participants experience duress. However this project does involve being videotaped and interviewed. This project involves an open-questioning technique and will include discussions about practicum, definitions of practicum success, cultural differences experienced in practicum, issues and how these were dealt with. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance. Although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that participants feel hesitant or uncomfortable they will be reminded of their right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that they may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

Participants may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

If participants have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, they can contact either:-

Sara Murray
NZ College of Early Childhood Education
Christchurch
03 365 3153
smurray@teacher.co.nz

and/or

Alexandra Gunn
College of Education
University of Otago
03 479 4261
alex.gunn@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Countering Cultural Confusion:

Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

CONSENT FORM FOR INSTITUTIONS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. The participation of this institution is entirely voluntary;
2. The institution is free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. The project involves the student participant and Associate participant being involved in two individual interviews and the researcher videoing interactions in the centre. Only the researcher and the participants will view the video of the student’s interactions. Participants will also be videoed during their viewing and discussion about the video of student’s practice. Only the researcher and her two supervisors will view this video.
4. Personal identifying information that links participants to a particular institution (audio tapes of interviews, video tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years.
5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand).

As the appropriate representative of: .................................................................

(Name of institution)

I approve Sara Murray, the researcher, to approach students and associate teachers from the early childhood programme for the purposes of the above research.

Name: ................................................................. Signature: .................................................................

Position: ................................................................. Date: .................................................................

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8250). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Two: Consent Forms for Students

Countering Cultural Confusion:
Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. It is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Education programme. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering this request.

The aim of this project is to investigate what makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood students as well as their Associate teachers.

Several types of participants are being sought including students who have been born in Asia, and have immigrated to New Zealand. This is why you are being approached as a potential participant.

As a potential student participant you will be asked to:

- Be involved in an interview of about 45 minutes prior to your practicum, at a location and time convenient to you, about your previous experiences in practicum, your definition of what makes a successful practicum, positive and negative experiences, and your goals for the upcoming practicum experience.
- Agree to be videoed while interacting with your associate teacher, children, and other staff.
- Watch an edited down version of the video with me and discuss elements of success within the practice.
- Be involved in an interview of about 60 minutes after practicum. This will follow a similar format to the first interview and will revisit the notion of practicum success.
Your practice will not be assessed during the researcher’s visit to your practicum. Another tutor will assess you at a separate time, as per the usual procedures of your training institution.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

- **Raw Data**
  - Interview audiotapes and transcripts along with videos will be produced.
  - Edited videos will be produced for the video stimulated conversations.
  - Personal demographic data will be collected purely for descriptive purposes to describe case study participants.

- **Access to Data & Data Security**
  - Data will only be available to the researcher and her two supervisors.
  - Transcribed interview data will be made available to the interview participant to verify its accuracy.
  - The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Raw data produced in this study will be retained for **at least 5 years** in secure storage. After this it will be destroyed. All personal information about participants will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

- **What data/information will be reflected in the completed research?**
  - The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but pseudonyms will be used to help preserve anonymity.
  - Due to the nature of multiple case study research, and the brief demographic information published, it may not be possible to completely preserve participant anonymity.

- **Opportunity to correct or withdraw data?**
  - All participants will have the opportunity to view their own transcribed interview data to verify its accuracy.

**Research findings** will be made available in summary form to you. There is space on the consent form for you to note an email address to which a summary may be sent.

**At no time in the study should participants experience duress.** However this project does involve being videotaped and interviewed. This project involves an open-questioning technique and will include discussions about practicum, definitions of practicum success, cultural differences experienced in practicum, issues and how these were dealt with. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance. Although the University of
Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that participants feel hesitant or uncomfortable they will be reminded of their right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that they may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

**Participants may withdraw** from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

**If participants have any questions** about our project, either now or in the future, they can contact either:-

Sara Murray and/or Alexandra Gunn  
NZ College of Early Childhood Education  
and/or College of Education  
Christchurch  
University of Otago  
03 365 3153  
03 479 4261  
smurray@teacher.co.nz  
alex.gunn@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8296). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. Personal identifying information (audio tapes of interviews, video tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years.
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes reflection about my involvement in practicum, my own definition of success, cultural differences experienced in practicum, issues and how these were dealt with. If the questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage.
5. My answers in this research will have no bearing on my final practicum result. My practicum will be assessed by another tutor in a separate visit.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity through the use of a pseudonym. Because this will be a multiple case study, personal demographic information, such as gender and ethnicity, will be disclosed in the final published report.

I agree to take part in this project.

Name: 
Signature:

Contact Email: 
Date:

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Three: Consent Forms for Associate Teachers

Countering Cultural Confusion:
Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. It is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Education programme. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you. Thank you for considering this request.

The aim of this project is to investigate what makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood students and their Associate teachers.

Several kinds of participants are being sought including associate teachers of students who have volunteered to participate in the study. This is why you are being approached as a potential participant.

As an associate of a potential student participant you will be asked to:
- Be involved in an interview of about 45 minutes prior to the student’s practicum, at a location and time convenient to you, about your previous experiences in practicum, your definition of what makes a successful practicum, positive and negative experiences, and your goals for the upcoming practicum experience.
- Inform the centre community (in accord with your centre policy) of the project and advise parents, other teachers and children that they may be videotaped interacting with the student teacher.
- On my behalf, obtain written permission from children’s parents for any video data that includes their children to be retained for the study.
- Agree to be videoed whilst interacting with your student teacher.
• Watch an edited down version of the video with me and discuss elements of success within the practice.
• Be involved in an interview of about 60 minutes after practicum. This will follow a similar format to the first interview and will revisit the notion of practicum success.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

• Raw Data
  o Interview audiotapes and transcripts along with videos will be produced.
  o Edited videos be produced for the video stimulated conversations.
  o Personal demographic data will be collected purely for descriptive purposes to describe case study participants.
• Access to Data & Data Security
  o Data will only be available to the researcher and her two supervisors.
  o Transcribed interview data will be made available to the interview participant to verify its accuracy.
  o The data produced will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Raw data produced in this study will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. After this it will be destroyed. All personal information about participants will be destroyed at the completion of the research.
• What data/information will be reflected in the completed research?
  o The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but a pseudonym will be used to help preserve your anonymity.
  o Due to the nature of multiple case study research, and the brief demographic information published, it may not be possible to completely preserve your anonymity.
• Opportunity to correct or withdraw data?
  o All participants will have the opportunity to view their own transcribed interview data to verify its accuracy.

Research findings will be made available in summary form to associate teacher and student teacher participants. There is a space on the consent form for you to note an email address to which a summary may be sent.

At no time in the study should participants experience duress however this project does involve being videotaped and interviewed. The project involves an open-questioning technique and will include discussions about practicum, definitions of practicum success, cultural differences experienced in practicum, issues and how these were dealt with. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance. Although the University of
Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the precise questions to be used have not been viewed.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?**
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**What if Participants have any Questions?**
If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>College/University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara Murray</td>
<td>NZ College of Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Gunn</td>
<td>University of Otago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03 365 3153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03 479 4261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:smurray@teacher.co.nz">smurray@teacher.co.nz</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:alex.gunn@otago.ac.nz">alex.gunn@otago.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Countering Cultural Confusion:
Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

CONSENT FORM FOR ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. Personal identifying information (audio tapes of interviews, video tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years.
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes reflection about my involvement in practicum, my own definition of success, cultural differences experienced in practicum, issues and how these were dealt with. In the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without disadvantage.
5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity through the use of a pseudonym. Because this will be a multiple case study, personal demographic information, such as gender and ethnicity, will be disclosed in the final published report.

I agree to take part in this project.

Name: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

Contact Email: ______________________ Date: ___________________________

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Four: Consent Form for Parents

Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to allow your child to have their interactions with the student teacher videoed and recorded. If you decide to give your permission, thank you. If you decide not to allow your child to take part, thank you for considering this request.

The aim of the project is to investigate what makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian early childhood students and their Associate teachers. It is being conducted to complete a Doctorate in Education qualification.

Some definitions:

- Student teachers are those who are currently training to become an early childhood teacher.
- Practicums are a very important part of training to become a teacher. They enable students to work for a few weeks in an early childhood centre to try out what they have learnt in their classes in real life.
- The student is supervised and mentored while working in the early childhood centre by one of the existing staff here. Their supervisor is called an associate teacher.

Should you agree to allow your child to be videoed and recorded, this is what will occur:

- The student teacher will be videoed during practicum in your early childhood centre for half a day. Sara Murray, the researcher, will visit the centre for a day before videoing so the children, the student teacher and staff get used to her being there with a camera. She’ll video as many interactions as possible that the student has with their associate teacher, children, parents and other staff over a half day period. Any discussion the children have with the student teacher will be recorded as part of the videoing process.
- As much as possible, the children’s faces will not be videoed. However it is recognised that this cannot be guaranteed.
The researcher and student teacher will together edit this video down to about a 15 minute summary. Both the student teacher and their associate teacher will be invited to view the video and comment on the elements of success within the student’s practice.

You are being asked to give permission for your child to appear on video only if they happen to interact with the student teacher during the period of filming. You are also asked to give permission for your child’s words to be published in the context of the discussion with the student teacher in the final results of the project.

Who will see the videos?

- The original and edited videos will only be seen by the student teacher, the associate teacher, Sara Murray, and her two research supervisors.
- They will be stored in such a way that only these people will be able to gain access to them. They will be retained for at least five years in secure storage. After this they will be destroyed.
- The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your child’s anonymity through the use of a pseudonym.

What if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Sara Murray and/or Alexandra Gunn
NZ College of Early Childhood Education College of Education
Christchurch University of Otago
03 365 3153 03 479 4261
smurray@teacher.co.nz alex.gunn@otago.ac.nz

I agree for my child:-
1. to be videoed and recorded during any interactions with the student teacher
2. to allow publication of aspects of their discussion together in the final results of the project

Your name: Signature:
Name of your child: Date:

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Five: Pre-practicum Information Sheets

Counterining Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

What to Expect at our Interview

The interview will be like a conversation.

I’ll ask you some questions about your experiences during teacher education. Please be as honest as you can. Don’t talk about anything you feel uncomfortable about. I’d like to find out your own views on what makes practicum/teaching placement successful for students like you.

I’ll be asking you questions about the following areas:

- Your background.
- Your likes and dislikes about university.
- Your experiences in previous practicum/teaching placements.
- What made some practicum more successful?
- What could have been done to make your practicum more successful.
- The relationships you’ve had with your previous associate teachers.
- The supervision style you’ve preferred from your associate teachers.
- The issues/problems that have happened in previous practicum.
- Your own teaching philosophy.
- The extent that you been able to put your own teaching philosophy into practice during previous practicum.
- Your own communication style.
- What kinds of feedback you find helpful.
- The similarities and differences between your own experiences of education in your home country, compared to what happens in New Zealand.
- Your own definition of successful practicum/teaching practice.

Thank you. I’m really looking forward to talking with you.

Sara
Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

What to Expect at our Interview

The interview will be like a conversation.

I’ll ask you some questions about your experiences as an associate teacher. Please be as honest as you can. Don’t talk about anything you feel uncomfortable about. I’d like to find out your own views on what makes practicum/teaching placement successful.

I’ll be asking you questions about the following areas:

- Your background.
- Your experiences in previous practicum/teaching placements.
- What made some practicum more successful?
- What could have been done to make the practicum more successful?
- The relationships you’ve had with your previous students.
- The supervision style you’ve preferred.
- The issues/problems that have happened in previous practicum.
- Your own teaching philosophy.
- The extent that you been able to put your own teaching philosophy into practice during previous practicum.
- Your own communication style.
- What kinds of feedback you find helpful for students.
- Your own definition of successful practicum/teaching practice.

Thank you. I’m really looking forward to talking with you.

Sara
Appendix Six: Pre-practicum Interview Questions

Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

Pre-Practicum Interview Outline - STUDENT

Participant’s Name: ________________________________

Date and Time: ________________________________

- Reminder about purpose of the research.
- Will be recording our discussion so I don’t miss anything.
- Reminder that you don’t need to talk about anything that feels uncomfortable.
- Reminder can withdraw at any time.
- Reminder that if you don’t understand what I’m saying, let me know and I’ll use other words instead.

1. First of all, I’d like to know about you. Can you tell me where you were born?

2. How long have you lived in NZ?

3. And how old are you now?

4. What made you want to become a teacher?
5. What do you enjoy about university?

6. What have you not enjoyed about university?

7. Thinking about just the practical part of your teacher education (TP/PTP), how many practicums have you been on? Tell me a little bit about each of these.

8. So of these, which ones would you say were more successful?

9. What happened to make them successful? What did you or your Associate do to make them successful?

10. What could have been done to make the practicum more successful?
11. Why do you think some practicum were more successful than others?

12. What relationship have you had with your previous associate teachers?

13. So what style of supervision has worked most effectively for you?

14. What issues/problems have happened in previous practicum? How did you deal with these?

15. How would you describe your own teaching philosophy?

16. To what extent have you been able to put your own teaching philosophy into practice during previous practicums?
17. So how would you describe your own communication style?

18. And what kinds of feedback to find helpful from associate teachers?

19. Tell me about what similarities and differences you’ve encountered on practicum compared to your own educational experience in your home country. How have you dealt with any differences?

20. So thinking back to everything we’ve talked about, how would you define success in terms of practicum/teaching practice?

Thanks so much for talking to me today.

- Organise time to video student on practicum.
Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

Pre-Practicum Interview Outline - ASSOCIATE TEACHER

Participant’s Name: __________________________________________

Date and Time: ____________________________________________

- Reminder about purpose of the research.
- Will be recording our discussion so I don’t miss anything.
- Reminder that you don’t need to talk about anything that feels uncomfortable.
- Reminder can withdraw at any time.

1. First of all, I’d like to know about you. Can you tell me where you are from originally?

2. How long have you been teaching?

3. How long have you been an associate teacher?

4. What makes practicum successful? What do you or your student do to make them successful?
5. What can be done to make practicum more successful?

6. Why do you think some practicum are more successful than others?

7. What type of relationship have you had with previous students?

8. So what style of supervision style has worked most effectively?

9. What issues/problems have happened in previous practicum? How did you deal with these?
10. To what extent have you been able to put your own teaching philosophy into practice during previous practicum?

11. So how would you describe your own communication style?

12. And how do you think students feel/react when receiving feedback from you?

13. So thinking back to everything we’ve talked about, how would you define success in terms of practicum/teaching practice for students?

Thanks so much for talking to me today.

- Organise time to video student on practicum.
Appendix Seven: Post-practicum Interview Questions

Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

Post-Practicum Interview Outline - STUDENT

Participant’s Name: _____________________________
Date and Time: ________________________________

- Reminder about purpose of the research.
- Will be recording our discussion so I don’t miss anything.
- Reminder that you don’t need to talk about anything that feels uncomfortable.
- Reminder can withdraw at any time.
- Reminder that if you don’t understand, I can rephrase the question.

1. Now that a week or so has passed since the end of the practicum, did you formally pass it according to your teaching institution criteria?

2. Overall, would you deem it to have been successful practicum?

3. Why?

4. What did you do to make it successful?

5. What did your associate teacher do to make it successful?

6. What could you have done to have made it more successful?

7. What could the associate teacher have done to have made it more successful?
8. I'm now going to read back some things you said in your first interview with me. In light of the practicum that has just finished, do you still feel this way? Can you add anything further? Have you modified your views? If so, how?

   a. Relationship with associate teachers (give quote)
   b. Supervision style (give quote)
   c. Teaching philosophy (give quote)
   d. Communication style (give quote)
   e. Giving feedback (give quote)
   f. Factors for success in practicum (give quote/s)

9. In summary, what do you believe makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian students and their associate teachers?
Countering Cultural Confusion: Successful Practicum for Immigrant Asian Students and their Associates

Post-Practicum Interview Outline - ASSOCIATE TEACHER

Participant’s Name: ________________________________
Date and Time: ________________________________

- Reminder about purpose of the research.
- Will be recording our discussion so I don’t miss anything.
- Reminder that you don’t need to talk about anything that feels uncomfortable.
- Reminder can withdraw at any time.

1. Now that a week or so has passed since the end of the practicum, did the student formally pass it according to their teaching institution criteria?

2. Overall, would you deem it to have been successful practicum?

3. Why?

4. What did the student do to make it successful?

5. What did you do to make it successful?

6. What could the student have done to have made it more successful?

7. What could you have done to have made it more successful?
8. I'm now going to read back some things you said in your first interview with me. In light of the practicum that has just finished, do you still feel this way? Can you add anything further? Have you modified your views? If so, how?

   a. Relationship with students (give quote)
   b. Supervision style (give quote)
   c. Teaching philosophy (give quote)
   d. Communication style (give quote)
   e. Giving feedback (give quote)
   f. Factors for success in practicum (give quote/s)

9. In summary, what do you believe makes for a successful practicum for immigrant Asian students and their associate teachers?