

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD:

How International Students on an intensive programme cope with a new National and Academic Culture where Few Host Culture Students Exist.

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ABSTRACT

The Work-Based Project (WBP) set out to explore how international students in a Swiss hospitality institution manage to cope with two quite different cultures to where they came from i.e. the Swiss national culture and the British academic culture. Previous research on international students have been in locations where the host culture student is in plentiful supply which is a way to help the international student adjust socioculturally. Within this WBP, the student body is made up of mainly international students and very few Swiss students. Concepts that were used to assist the exploration of this topic include: what influenced the choice of Switzerland and the institution as a place to study, along with how the information was searched for (Mazzarol and Soutar's, 2002 Push-Pull Model; The Model of International Students' Preferences by Cubillo, Sánchez and Cerviño, 2006). Hyde's (2012) adaptation of Oberg's 1960 stages of adaptation explored culture shock as a concept followed by Berry's (1997) acculturation and coping strategies. It investigated the use of friendship networks as a way to help students cope in this new environment (Bochner, McLeod and Lin, 1977; Schartner, 2015). These models were used to provide a framework for the questioning used in the gathering of the primary research.

The study is applied in nature and using a case study allowed for the exploration of the rich detail that was needed to understand how the international student feels in this environment and how they cope with it in an effort to instigate change as a result of the findings. Focus groups were used as a scoping tool to identify the key themes which were then developed into a questionnaire for distribution among the wider student body. The key findings indicate that reputation of Swiss hospitality education is influential in the decision making of the student. Word of mouth through previous students is a key way for the students to find out the information they believe they need. The findings revealed that the student views both the Swiss and academic culture of the institution as one and the same. The issue of culture shock is difficult to plot as there was such a mix of feelings identified when the decision to come to Switzerland is made and when the student arrives. The friendships that are generated have evolved since the creation of the

Bochner *et al* (1977) Model and Schartner (2015) identified a newer group which could be added to this model i.e. friends back home as a way to help with psychological adjustment.

The key conclusions drawn from the research indicate that the students use word-of-mouth to a great extent in preparation for their study abroad however, the information received is informal in nature. Those that used more sources of information felt they arrived more prepared. Friends were referred to throughout the study for many reasons however, the addition of the 4th group of friends i.e. friends back home, were used as a form of escape to cope with the challenges experienced (whether national or academic culture) due to both cultures being viewed as one and the same.

Implications of this relate to how information is provided to the potential student Dissemination of the findings to those that prepare the students for their venture e.g. agents and those that have to help the student adjust upon their arrival e.g. institution members so that the student can adapt more quickly in the 18 weeks that they have to feel comfortable in their new environment.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

International students traveling for third level education are not a new phenomenon and their numbers have been growing tremendously around the world. Maslen (2014) reported that nearly five million students would be studying abroad in that year and he described this as ‘one of humanity’s great mass movements.’ The reported top sources for international students are China, India and South Korea with one in six of the international students coming from China (International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) Monitor, 2014; Education Indicators in Focus, 2013; Coughlan, 2011). These reports indicated that the 53% of the students studying outside their home country are from Asian countries. A motivation behind universities increasing the number of international students is the economic contribution which international students make to the host economy. Other reasons that universities are interested in increasing recruitment of international students are related to becoming more aware of diversity, the networks that can be developed with regard to business relations and increased intercultural learning (Snow Andrade, 2006).

Switzerland, the location of this study, is one such location that attracts a substantial number of international students. A recent press release from the Office Fédéral de la Statistique (OFS, 2017) reported that in 2016, 19.5% of the students at higher education institutions in Switzerland were international students (with foreign school education). These statistics however, only reflect the Swiss University system i.e. Cantonal Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities for Teacher Education. Other private institutions also exist in Switzerland and attract a large international student body. Thorne (2011) indicated that Switzerland has a high concentration of hospitality higher education institutions drawing international students seeking qualifications and experience in a location renowned for hospitality education. The Swiss Hotels Schools Association (ASEH) an organisation that is ‘in charge of the quality control and promotion of traditional hotel management schools’ (ASEH, 2015) reported having

almost 5000 students in the hospitality institutions among the nine schools that are members of the association. Other institutions exist who are not members of the ASEH association and are also attracting foreign students. In February 2015 ASEH organised an event titled ‘Swiss made day for hospitality training’ which emphasises the importance attached to this field of education in Switzerland. This event, attended by many professionals from the hospitality industry, also attracted the president of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) who linked hospitality education to the future of travel and tourism in the country when he said ‘by capitalising on its hotel management schools, Switzerland has a real card up its sleeve. These schools represent an excellent opportunity to convey the image of Switzerland to other countries, and we must make the most of this’ (ASEH, 2015). The economic benefit to the host country created by these schools was reported by ASEH (2009, cited in Meza and Gazzoli, 2013) to be \$122 million in 2008 amongst the 12 (at the time) member schools of the association and over \$100 million of this income was generated from international students. The President of ASEH and Managing Director of the Ecole Hôtelière de Geneva indicated at this event in 2015 that individuals who have studied hospitality in Switzerland are attractive to the industry as employees and it is therefore important to monitor the education delivered in Swiss hospitality schools in order to maintain the excellent reputation that Switzerland has for this type of education.

Switzerland has a population of 8.1 million people. Geographically it is located between three large European countries; France, Germany and Italy and each of these has influenced the national language. The country has four official national languages. The fourth language, Romansch, is spoken by a minority number in the country (National Geographic, 2017). German is the language spoken by the majority in Switzerland (about 63% of the people), followed by French (about 23%) and then Italian (about 8%). Many of the cantons are multilingual. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA, 2015) reported Switzerland to be a country with one of the highest percentages of foreigners among the European countries. Of the total 8.1 million population, almost a quarter are foreign persons (23.3%) (SwissInfo, 2017). With the high percentage of

foreigners within the country, other languages are also commonly heard e.g. English and Portuguese are among the most common along with Spanish, Serbian, Croatian and Albanian (SwissInfo, 2017; FDFA, 2015).

In the past, surveys have been conducted in French speaking countries of Europe regarding the attitudes of the local population to foreigners in their country. Switzerland has not been part of many of these surveys, in some respects due to the country not being part of the European Union. However from the available information (Sabatier and Boutry, 2006), the Swiss are considered to be less concerned about people of different nationality or religion than other countries like France or Belgium, which might help explain why so many international students come here to study. Given the number of foreigners reported in the country and many identified as international students, this is a favourable finding. In relation to the international student in Switzerland, most of whom the WBP would describe as Third-Country Nationals, there are however, strict conditions applied in order for them to complete their studies. These include that they need to show evidence that they will leave the country after their education is completed (The Swiss Authorities Online, 2017).

Given the significant numbers of foreign students studying in Switzerland and the high reputation it is reported to have for hospitality education there is a strong onus on the education sector to deliver a quality education experience to the student. However, moving to a foreign location for study purposes comes with many challenges from not only a national culture perspective where things may be different, but also from an academic perspective where things will most likely be different i.e. given that many of the international students are moving from Eastern style education systems to Westernised education systems. There are many lessons that can be learned in relation to national and academic culture, which will have important implications for the many stakeholders of this WBP research i.e. the international students themselves and their parents, the institution they attend, the marketers / agents, the awarding UK university. Issues to be addressed through the WBP relate to what attracts the international student to Switzerland? Are they aware of the differences that exist in terms of both national and

academic culture? What do they want to find out prior to their planned study trip to Switzerland? How do they cope in their efforts to adapt to differences the experience? It is important to explore further how international students adapt to the new environment they find themselves in order to assist their timely adjustment. From the many questions that can be generated, this study is timely in that there is a dearth of literature on the specific type of situation that exists for this case study i.e. short intensive programmes within a foreign academic culture delivered in a foreign national culture where there are very few host culture students to assist the international student to cope with their new situation. The next section gives an overview of the literature that will be further developed in the literature review chapter.

1.2 Brief Review of Literature

Increasingly universities are including ‘internationalisation’ in their business strategies today (Ayoubi and Al-Habaibeh, 2006) and the case study that is the subject of this research is an example of this. The WBP case study fits squarely within a Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) description of one of the characteristics of the overseas collaborative provision of higher education i.e. ‘a formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another higher education provider, allowing for the latter to provide higher education on behalf of the former, typically leading to an award of credit, or a qualification, from the degree-awarding body’ (QAA, 2017). International students are a substantial source of income for UK universities (Guardian, 2009) and even though the UK University associated the WBP case study institution does not receive a full fee from the students, they do receive a franchisee fee per student enrolled on the programmes in the Swiss institute. One of the key driving factors for universities recruiting international students is the economic contribution that these students make to the university budget but also it increases the university’s international status (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008). Mazzarol, Soutar and Seng (2003) discussed ‘three waves’ of the internationalisation of education over the years i.e. (1) where the student travels to the place of the university; (2) universities export their service through different options (e.g.

alliance, twinning etc); and (3) creation of branch campuses in a foreign location. The notion of transnational education means that a student can now obtain a foreign qualification from a country different from the country of the awarding institution (Altbach, 2004, cited in Bodycott, 2009). In the WBP case study the student can obtain a UK degree without actually visiting the UK.

With this in mind, it is imperative that any UK institute be aware of the challenges faced by the students enrolled on the programmes offered in a collaborative partner’s institution. Failure to consider these challenges can impact the overall performance of the student and ultimately the performance (classifications of degrees awarded) of the university. As a result of internationalisation, students have more opportunities and choices available to them regarding where they will continue with their higher education. Multiple theories exist in relation to how students make their choice about where to study. Table 1.1 highlights examples of these theories and demonstrates the various factors influencing these choices. Although the focus of this WBP is not to elaborate on the area of decision-making there are important issues examined in relation to the aim of this WPB.

Table 1.1 Contributors to theory on factors influencing choice of study

Authors	Influencing factors
Gambetta (1996); Roberts (1984); Ryrie (1981)	Structural models examined how choices being made are influenced within the context of different constraints e.g. institutional, economic and cultural.
Becker (1975)	Economic models examined how decisions might be influenced by the rate of return gained from the decision made.
Hodkinson, Sparks and Hodkinson (1996); Hemsley-Brown (2001)	Examined how influence networks e.g. family, friends, culture, life history; personality and the subjective judgements of these networks can have on the decision made.
Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001)	Examined how decisions can depend on factors such as the context in which the decision is being made, the number of others that can influence the decision maker and the decision maker themselves.

Source: adapted from Maringe and Carter (2007:462)

Cubillo, Sánchez and Cerviño (2006) reviewed the intangible nature of educational services and the difficulty that this poses to the international student making the choice of

where to study. The framework reviewed by Cubillo *et al* (2006), presents the criteria that international students use with regard to making university choices and therefore is of particular relevance to this WBP. Broadly these criteria include personal reasons; country image effect; institution image and programme evaluation. This element of the decision making process and identifying what influences the students choice of destinations and institution is relevant to the practices at the WBP institution as the issue of culture may be identified by the student at this stage of the decision making process.

Within this framework the criteria that will be of particular interest to this study revolve around country image which includes elements such as cultural distance, time to get the degree, linguistic proximity or distance, safety and security, social facilities, international environment and university environment. The discussion pertaining to these elements by Cubillo *et al* (2006) does cover issues related to culture, however, it is imperative to explore more on whether the student researches more in relation to this at the pre-purchase stage of the decision-making process. The amount of research done could influence how prepared they feel when they arrive at the institution. They believed that the 'country image' is one of the key influencing factors in the student's final decision. This finding is particularly pertinent in the WBP case study as Switzerland is renowned for hospitality and tourism and this could be a major influencing factor on their choice for studying here. This is developed further in the WBP to explore how much research students have done prior to their study in Switzerland and identify if that has influenced the level of culture shock they experience and how they cope with it.

Culture is a phenomenon that has been explored for decades. National culture and academic culture will be considered in depth in this WBP because the purpose of the study is to help articulate how the student manages to acculturate to two new and different cultures existing simultaneously i.e. the Swiss culture and the British academic culture within (1) a short time frame and (2) with important career and financial ramifications for the student. Differences in national culture are very apparent at the surface level e.g. 'language, transport, housing, entertainment' (Harris, Brewster and Sparrow, 2003:16) and when students travel to different destinations for study, these

surface level differences, which in their home country they would not have to think about, will now have to be considered and evaluated by them at every turn. This is just the tip of the iceberg in relation to issues that are novel and perhaps difficult for them with regards to the host country's national culture. Various theorists have discussed the varied and complex dimensions of culture. Given that the literature surrounding the dimensions of culture is vast, and therefore cannot be reviewed in-depth, the dimensions of culture will be explored to the extent that they are relevant to this WBP in highlighting the difficulties that students in the subject case may be experiencing. Simultaneously with the change in national culture, the student experiences a new academic culture. Barnett (1990, cited in Twigg, 2005:87) discussed academic culture on two levels i.e. the 'academic community' and the 'level of the process of higher education itself which comes close to that of the student experience.' Within these two levels students experience difficulty in the study environment e.g. the idea of independency and learning by themselves rather than being instructed on what specifically to learn (O'Neill and Cullingford, 2005). This independency is very typical of the British higher education system and international students are often faced with the challenge of completely rethinking their way of study ... 'what worked back home may no longer be considered valid' (Vandermensbrughe, 2004:419). With this in mind, this WBP explores the difficulties that the students' face along with how they coped with the various challenges to ascertain ways in which the student can be assisted in settling in to their new environment.

'Culture shock' is a term that was first coined by Oberg (1954, 1960, cited in Winkleman, 1994:121), where it is described as 'feelings of loss, confusion and impotence resulting from loss of accustomed cultural cues and social rules.' This phenomenon is caused as a result of experiencing a new culture and has many different consequences. Previous researchers placed culture shock within two schools of thought i.e. the Disease Model of Culture Shock and the Growth Model of Culture Shock (Pedersen, 1995) both indicating that it is a process that people go through however the Growth Model emphasising a more positive outcome rather than a disease that could be

cured. Culture shock definitions reviewed also indicated that it relates to the removal of any familiar cues known to the person (Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel, 2005) and through the literature review, this has been explored with regards to changing education systems, which is the case with the international student moving to a foreign location for study purposes. The WBP explores challenges that international students experience as a result of new national culture (Swiss) and new academic culture (British).

A review of the literature relating to the various staged models of adaptation is developed through the literature and a study of particular interest to the WBP is by Schartner (2015) who used the seminal works of Oberg 1960 but applied it specifically to the international student to provide an approximation in relation to time and how long it may take to go through the various stages. The identification of time to adapt is an area that is not well addressed in these models but is particularly relevant to the WBP, given that the programme that the student is participating in is 18 weeks in length. The WBP is not concerned with measuring culture shock or the length of time it takes to adapt in the environment but it will be used as a way to identify if the students in this WBP case study feel that they experience such shock in any appreciable fashion.

Similar to the literature on adaptation and the staged models of culture shock, the WBP explores Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies (i.e. assimilation; separation; integration; and marginalisation), not with the intention of measuring acculturation but to explore if students in the case study view they have acculturated. The discussion from Berry (1997) highlighted that acculturation is influenced by (1) the importance that the individual places on their original culture and (2) whether there is a necessity for the individual to become involved in the society they find themselves within. Of interest to the WBP from this discussion is the fact that the case study institution is lacking Swiss students therefore what is the society are they acculturating to?

With regards to the lack of Swiss students in the case study institution, the literature review has revealed a framework established by Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977) known as the Functional Model of Friendship Networks and the WBP reviews this model in relation to how networks can be used as a way to overcome any challenges the students

face. Others have explored the Functional Model of Friendship Networks further with the identification of the same networks being developed by the student. The networks that students develop influences the adjustment that the student makes. The first of these networks value students with similar national cultural backgrounds (co-nationals), the second network involves host country students (host nationals) and the third network is the friendships made with other foreign students (other non-compatriot foreign students). This is a key area developed further within this WBP to explore how or if the host national student is substituted. A fourth network of friends has been identified though a study by Schartner (2015) i.e. friends back home and the WBP intends to explore why this network exists as Schartner's (2015) study did not reveal the function of this new network. It is suggested through the literature that those students that have more interaction with host country students experience less feelings of alienation and better academic and social adjustment. The WBP explores the friendship networks the students' develop and how these networks assist them in coping with challenging situations they face while dealing with the two different, national and academic, cultures they are experiencing.

This brief review of the literature has provided the outline of some of the key theories and concepts that have guided the study starting from the factors that influence a student to study abroad, how aware they are of culture when making this choice, whether it is national or academic culture? From this, exploring if shock is felt in either of these cultures when the student arrives in the foreign location and how do they cope with challenges they experience in either of these cultures. The next section highlights the motivations behind this as a WBP topic worthy of further exploration with regards to the specific context of this case study institution.

1.3 Context and Motivation for the Research

This research takes place in a Swiss hotel school. It takes into consideration the situation / phenomenon that exists in many Swiss hotel schools, namely the experiencing of two foreign cultures i.e. a new national culture and a new academic culture. Having

been in both a management and lecturing position within the institution, it was quickly brought to my attention that students faced many challenges in both these areas. It was also noticed that within the short time frame of their programme (18-weeks) the students barely ventured out of the institution so the academic and Swiss cultures that they were trying to adjust to became one and the same.

Switzerland is renowned for hospitality and is an attraction point for many international students. Many institutions have been established in the country using a model of the typical sandwich courses that are available in other countries, however in Switzerland the time frame is typically short in the academic environment (18-24 weeks) followed by 4 - 6 months within the working environment doing an internship. The work / internship that students undertake very often happens within Switzerland.

The initial area of interest for this study was to examine how the student can manage in such a short time frame to fit in to both of these cultures so that they can obtain the qualification that they came here to achieve? The readings for this WBP started around culture shock and academic shock which then expanded into the Functional Model of Friendships Network by Bochner *et al* (1977). Given that one of the primary pillars of the network model, namely the host country student network, is mostly unavailable to the students in the WBP sample, it naturally falls to the other networks (same culture friends or other culture friends) to compensate for this void as a coping mechanism. Therefore, the need to gain a deep analytical understanding of the role of the other networks became evident to the researcher

As stated above, much of the literature related to culture shock, has been conducted in English speaking locations with the top destinations for international students being USA, UK and Australia and little of this research focuses upon the length of time it typically takes to adapt to a new environment. The few studies that were found to address this issue indicated that this would take up to nine months to happen. The literature revealed that the host culture friendship network played a big part in the sociocultural adaptation of the international student but in the case study institution, that critical network is missing. The student body in this study is composed mainly of international students

with the majority of those coming from South East Asia. Again, it is stressed that there is rarely any contact with a host student population and minimal contact with the local Swiss community. Thus, the research for the WBP centres on an area that has been largely neglected by the Anglophone academic community, but which is highly relevant to the institutions operating in Switzerland and by extension, Anglophone universities offering their revenue-making programmes through these institutions. The nature of the research is to analyse the area of culture shock, a topic that has been researched by many and to examine it in relation to the manner in which international students cope with a 'foreign' education system and a 'foreign' national environment without the benefit of a host national social network.

To summarise, it is intended through the literature review in this WPB to critically analyse the key concepts expressed in this section namely, the internationalisation of education, the concept of culture shock (both national and academic) and the impact it has on the international student, in addition to friendship networks and how these are used as a way to help cope with the new environment. Two significant gaps in the literature relevant to this study are: the time related to adjusting and situations where the host culture network of students is not present. The following aim and objectives have been created as a way of guiding this study.

1.4 Aim

An investigation of how international students on an intensive 18-week programme cope with both the national and academic culture that exist within a Swiss Hospitality School where few host national students exist, with the objective of assisting in their adjustment to their new environment.

1.5 Objectives

1. To critically review literature pertaining to international students and the challenges faced within both a foreign national and foreign academic culture.
2. To evaluate the literature on culture shock and acculturation to review how international students cope with challenges faced.

3. Using a sample of students from a Swiss Hotel School, investigate the challenges they face in both cultures and how they cope with them.
4. Based on the analysis, identify ways in which the international student can be assisted in adjusting to their new environment via dissemination of findings to the many stakeholders.

1.6 Value of the Study

With the WBP being applied in nature, the intention of the study is to share the findings with those key stakeholders involved in influencing the student experience so that practices can be reviewed and change instigated. The WBP should contribute to the current body of research in relation to culture shock and adaptation, friendship networks, how or why these form and how they can be used as a way to help overcome challenges. The findings are of particular interest to the researcher in her day-to-day dealings with international students in the classroom environment and the wider lecturing staff within the institution (implications for practice). This study will also be of interest to those in management positions within the institution to discover more about the challenges faced among their student body in order to help them adjust faster (if that is possible) or to help them arrive more prepared for their time in Switzerland. The awarding British University will also benefit from the findings obtained as it is in their interest to look at performance indicators and not adjusting quickly may influence the performance of the student in the Swiss institution. Key beneficiaries of this research will be the student and their parents as the findings reveal the specific challenges related to this particular environment and should help them be more prepared prior to their arrival at the institution. On a broader note, other institutions that are of a similar structure may also benefit from this research in terms of helping students come more prepared for their study abroad period. As Switzerland is renowned worldwide for hospitality and its hospitality schools, it is a highly attractive destination of international students. The hospitality education sector is therefore a lucrative industry and it is in the Swiss government's and ASEH's interest to maintain the sector's revered reputation. Therefore, the findings of this research will be

of importance to these bodies. Chapter 6 of the WBP will revisit the many stakeholders and discuss the intentions for dissemination more specifically.

1.7 Overview of the WBP

This chapter has given a brief overview of the nature of the study that is being conducted. The key theoretical models that have been used to drive the research have been outlined, important gaps in the literature have been highlighted, aims and objectives have been clearly stated and the value of the research to a range of stakeholders has been presented. The following chapter, the literature review, evaluates the extent to which these theories, concepts and models outlined in this chapter have influenced this research and how they have been used in the collection and analysis of the primary data in the WBP case study. Chapter 3, the methodology chapter highlights the methods used and justifies why these choices were made. Chapter 4 presents the findings and results. The findings illustrate what the investigation discovered and is followed by an analysis of these findings from the sample used in the study. Chapter 5 synthesises and summarises different threads of the WBP in light of the discoveries made and outlines conclusions and recommendations for the various stakeholders. Chapter 6 uses the findings and conclusions drawn to influence the dissemination strategy chosen to share the findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the theoretical frameworks of the WBP in an attempt to achieve the objectives that have been introduced in the previous chapter. The approach that was adopted for this chapter was an ongoing process until the completion of the WBP. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2003) compared this process to an ‘upward spiral’ where you begin with the research questions, define the parameters, generate key words, search and evaluate. These stages continued until the eventual critical review of the available literature on the key concepts identified, namely; national culture, academic culture, culture shock, academic culture shock, acculturation and coping strategies and friendship networks. The search for literature was quite broad to begin with but then narrowed to focus on students studying in foreign institutions. The chapter identifies the gap in the literature that forms the position for this research (Hussey and Hussey, 1997) and will be further examined in the analysis chapter.

Having a deeper understanding of the knowledge that currently exists helps in the exploratory nature of this research. As the WBP is constructivist / interpretivist in nature (see Chapter 3), the literature review chapter allows the author to see the differing opinions researched on the phenomenon of culture shock and ways of coping with it so that it can be used as a way to discover the meaning behind it. This was necessary to have, so that a comparison could be made in the results and analysis section of the WBP. The literature was fundamental in the production of the research instruments as gaps identified in the literature provided an avenue for further exploration among the WBP student body.

As mentioned previously, the search for the literature was quite broad to begin with to help position the research. The chapter begins with a review of the literature on decision-making, to illustrate which part of this process is important in relation to culture shock. Following this is a discussion on culture with particular reference to culture shock in the context of national culture and culture shock in the context of academic culture. One of

the key questions being investigated in this WBP concerns the manner in which the student deals with this shock. Thus this chapter discusses the various coping strategies that have been identified in the literature. Two key gaps identified through the literature relate to the context of the WBP study i.e. (1) the intensity of the course that the WBP student is on is not considered in previous research; and (2) the WBP student rarely has access to a host culture student within the institution. Table 2.1 intends to guide the reader on the key theories and concepts from the decision making process of the student in deciding on a university, whether culture is noticed as an area of concern through to how they deal with challenges they face. Are the challenges for the WBP student similar to those identified in the literature given that their time frame is intense? Given this time frame, what friendship networks do they use to help cope with challenges (if any)? Are these friendship networks the same for the WBP student given the lack of host culture student? The chapter examines how this literature influences the case study institution's educational practices and practices within the wider Higher Education context. A conclusion of the main issues is given at the end to remind the reader what is being brought forward to the analysis with the primary research gathered. Although a substantial review of literature was conducted and included in this chapter, Table 2.1 provides an overview of the key theories and concepts that guided the literature.

Table 2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion of Concepts

Authors	Key Models / Theories Concepts	Inclusion	Exclusion
Maringe and Carter (2007)	Decision-making model when choosing a university.	Stage 1 and 2 to discover how much information is researched prior to a new culture.	Stages 3 to 5. The key was not to examine how the student evaluated their decision.
Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)	Push-Pull Factors.	To identify if these factors helped the student to identify cultural issues.	
Azmat, Osborne, Le Rossingnol, Jogulu, Rentschler, Robottom and Malathy (2013)	Aspirations V's Expectations.	To examine if expectations are generated by the student in stage 1 and 2 of the decision-making model by Maringe and Carter (2007).	The model was not explored in full. Used to examine if expectations were identified among the students upon arrival in Switzerland.

Authors	Key Models / Theories Concepts	Inclusion	Exclusion
Cubillo, Sánchez and Cerviño (2006)	Model of International Students Preference.	To examine criteria students consider when making the choice to study in Switzerland and explore if cultural issues are identified when making decisions.	
Wang, Taplin and Brown (2011)	Preparedness.	To examine opinions on whether the students felt prepared upon arrival.	
Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001)	Intercultural Contact.	To explore if the student is influenced by the dimensions covered e.g. purpose of visit, time-span, outcome of the contact.	
Oberg (1960)	Culture Shock.	To discover if the student felt culture shock and when.	It was not intended to measure adjustment.
Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998)	Psychological and Socio-cultural adjustment	To discover if students felt they adjusted emotionally or to the environment.	It was not intended to measure how long it took to adjust.
Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013)	Questioned whether the honeymoon stage existed	To compare with the students experiences.	
Berry (1970)	Acculturative Stress	To explore if students felt their experience of culture shock is seen as negative or as an opportunity.	
Berry (1997)	Acculturation Strategies: Assimilation / Separation / Integration / Marginalisation	To examine how students felt they adapted to the two cultures: national and academic.	It was not intended to measure these but to build background knowledge.
Cortazzi and Jin (1997)	Academic Cultures / Cultures of Communication / Cultures of Learning	To explore how students experienced these dimensions in relation to 'shock'.	No measurement of these dimensions was considered.
Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977); Furnham and Alibhai (1985); Hendrickson, Rosen and Aune (2011); Schartner (2015)	Functional Friendship Networks Model	To examine the friendships developed among the students through their experience. Question how they use the networks they establish as a way of coping.	

2.2 Choosing a University

The field of consumer behaviour has produced a substantial amount of research on the topic of decision-making and this process has been applied to the area of education and choosing a university. As identified in the introduction chapter, there is more pressure on today for students to develop cultural skills (Cubillo *et al*, 2006), which has led to them

thinking more and more about studying abroad. The desire to better understand the decision-making process that international students go through has prompted a reasonable amount of research which in turn has helped inform those responsible for marketing of educational institutions. It was argued that a brief discussion on this topic was necessary for the WBP as some of the key questions developed for the primary research examined the research that students undertook prior to arrival at the WBP institution constituting the first two stages of the decision-making process as per Table 2.2.

From the consumer behaviour theory base that exists, decision-making models consist mainly of 5 basic stages (Kotler, Wong, Saunders and Armstrong, 2005; Maringe and Carter, 2007). Others have divided this process into 3 stages i.e. pre-purchase, service encounter and evaluation post-purchase (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). Regardless the number of stages, the process begins with experiencing a need through to making the purchase and evaluating the purchase (Kotler *et al*, 2005) Table 2.2 shows the five stages, which are the basics of the process that people go through when making a choice on a purchase. In the case of education, where a service is being purchased, the same process is undertaken however, there is more risk involved given the intangibility of the service. Maringe and Carter (2007) gave an example of the various stages of the decision process for a product versus choosing educational services as highlighted in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Decision-Making Process as applied to the Purchase of Educational Services

Kotler (2003)	Maringe and Carter (2007)
1. Identification of a problem needing a solution;	1. Pre-search behaviour involving early and sometimes passive thoughts about future progression;
2. The search for information;	2. Active search behaviour where choices are prioritised and short listed;
3. An evaluation of alternatives;	3. The application stage in which students develop and submit application to institutions of choice;
4. Making the purchase decision;	4. Making the choice decision making acceptance or declining of the offer;
5. Evaluating the purchase decision.	5. Student reflects on whether the decision was the right or wrong one.

Source: Maringe and Carter (2007:460)

In the case of the WBP, the stages of the decision-making process that were considered in more detail in the analysis were stages 1 (*'identification of a problem needing a solution' / 'pre-search behaviour involving early and sometimes passive thoughts about future progression'*). It is at this stage that the international student identifies the need or desire to study abroad and prompts the following stage. 2 (*'the search for information' / 'active search behaviour where choices are prioritised and short listed'*). The search for information is viewed by many as a major contributing factor in this decision process (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) but it has been argued that in the case of searching information about products consumers tend to search for limited information (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen, 2009). However, given the risk involved in purchasing educational services this stage is seen as particularly relevant. More time may be invested in this stage than with searching information for products. The main sources used by international students to search are (1) internal sources which are seen as controllable by the institution e.g. institutes website, brochures; (2) interpersonal sources e.g. family, friends, alumni; and (3) external sources not considered as controllable by the institution e.g. reports generated by a third party (Oliveira and Shares, 2016). Regardless of the source of research, the information that is provided is required to inform so that the best possible decision can be made by the student. The inclusion of these stages were relevant to the WBP to examine the efforts made by the student while researching the choice of destination and institution. Exploring the sources used to discover the information needed and question the type of information that was searched to examine how prepared the student felt for their stay in a foreign location was deemed important. At these stages in the process it is when issues of culture may be identified whether it be national or academic culture issues.

In relation to these two stages, a considerable amount of research has been done on the factors that influence the choices that international students make when they are deciding where to continue with their education. Much of the research available in this field mainly examined choices the student makes in relation to the institution but fewer have examined the choices that are made in relation to the destination of study (Cubillo *et al*,

2006). The destination of study is particularly relevant to the WBP as it is conceivable that national culture factors may become apparent at the research stage of making the decision to travel for education purposes. Key contributors in this field of study are Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) who conducted many studies on the factors that influence the choices that students make in relation to the destination of choice and the institution they attend. They developed the 'push-pull' model of motivating factors and their studies were carried out over the period of 1996 to 2000. It included a sample of 2,485 students who were studying in Australia and who came from four different countries; Indonesia, Taiwan, China and India (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). It is argued that the samples that they used in their studies suited this research as the student sample in the WBP come from similar nationalities i.e. those from the Asian continent. In addition to this they conducted further studies to fill a gap in the literature which explored the choice of a particular institution once the student had made the initial choice of the destination country of their study. An exploration of the factors influencing the students' choice of foreign institution revealed four key dimensions namely; '(1) resources and courses, (2) offshore marketing, (3) entry and advertising and (4) future employment' (Mazzarol, Soutar and Thein, 2000:49). It is argued in relation to the WBP, this was of importance as it is at the choice of institution stage that the student should be able to question the difference in the academic culture (possibly influenced by the 'resources and courses' dimension above) that exists in the chosen institution and that of their previous institution.

As the decision to study abroad is of considerable importance to both the student and their parents, part of the primary research for this study investigated how much research was done by the student prior to arriving in Switzerland to do their study i.e. exploring their pre-search behaviour both passive and active. The primary research for the WBP will question whether the student actually considered culture (either national or academic) as an important factor in making their choice to study at the case study institution in Switzerland.

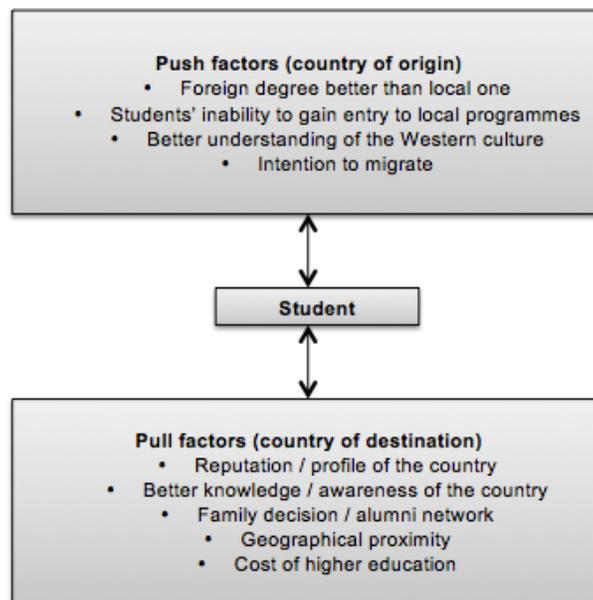
An influencing factor in choosing a study destination is the similarity of the language in the host country (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). This is a factor that was of considerable importance in the WBP as studying or living through a foreign language is an element that can potentially lead to frustrations. For example it may lead to students' feeling of irritation if unable to communicate due to poorer language ability (see Section 2.5 e.g. Lillyman and Bennett, 2014; Ramachandran, 2011 for discussion on language in the institution) .

Push factors are those factors within the students' home country that influence the choice to move abroad to study e.g. state of education in the home country, economy etc. and pull factors are those factors in the host country that attract the student to that location. Several of these can be seen in Figure 2.1 (Azmat, Osborne, Le Rossingol, Jogulu, Rentschler, Robottom and Malathy, 2013). The findings and analysis of the WBP will return to Figure 2.1 at a later stage to ascertain whether any of the pull factors existed for the student sample when going through the first two stages of the decision-making process. It is the pull factors that are particularly relevant to an analysis of the potential culture shock on the part of the students.

The study of Azmat *et al* (2013) was primarily focused on the aspirations and the expectations of the student in relation to their choice of study destination and institution. The paper presented an interesting discussion on the difference that exists between the definition and meanings of these two terms. Briefly (and simply) put, aspirations are likened to dreams and personal ambitions that the students have (linking to the push-pull factors by Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) whilst the term expectations refers to the concept of having ideas of something that will take place (Azmat *et al*, 2013). Expectations are considered more *real* than aspirations. In their research they investigated these two concepts in relation to choices that students' make when deciding on whether to study abroad. In order to do this they used Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model. This literature gives understanding to how expectations may be generated through the research stage of the decision-making process, which will be explored in part through the primary research of the WBP. The sources used to gather the information needed, how

trustworthy and accurate they are (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) can influence whether expectations are met. In addition to this, it is argued that failure to meet international students' expectations quickly leads to feelings of disappointment. Thus, students whose initial expectations were positive in relation to where they had chosen to study (which is argued is influenced through the sources of information used), found on arrival that their expectations were not fulfilled, and this had the significant impact of affecting the dynamics of group interaction (Griffiths *et al*, 2005).

Figure 2.1 Mazzarol and Soutar's Push-Pull Factors



Source: Azmat et al (2013:100)

This finding is relevant to the WBP, as Azmat *et al* (2013) indicated that expectations are more controllable than aspirations and that the educational institution can influence the expectations that the student has via the communication methods that are used for example, their marketing methods, the alumni, agents etc. Therefore, with regard to the sample chosen for the WBP, even though their expectation and aspirations are not being directly investigated, expectations will nevertheless be generated by the student during their research conducted prior to making the final choice of where to study (both destination and institution). The WBP sample were asked about the amount of research they did prior to coming to Switzerland; about how they felt upon arrival; and to explore

whether their research had influenced how they adapted to their new environment. Thus, the literature review helped formulate the questions for the focus group and questionnaire, which attempted to sound out how research influenced expectations, which arguably, in turn influenced the degree of culture shock.

Whilst it has already been stated that the decision-making process is not the focus of this WBP, there are other concepts in the associated body of literature, besides those already addressed, that are relevant to the aim of the WBP. These relate to factors that influence the student's selection process. It is argued that the intangible nature of educational services presents itself as a difficulty to the international student making that choice of where to study (Cubillo *et al*, 2006). The criteria presented in Figure 2.2 suggested what international students use regarding university choices. The framework presented is based on a review of existing literature where four broad criteria were identified namely; personal reasons, country image effect, institution image and programme evaluation (Cubillo *et al*, 2006). Substantial literature has been produced on each of these four broad criteria which resulted in 19 different variables included in Figure 2.2 that influence choice and underlines complexities involved in the decision that is being made by the student and parents.

Of the criteria in Figure 2.2 those that are considered to be of particular relevance to this WBP revolve around country image which also includes elements such as cultural distance, time to get the degree, linguistic proximity or distance, safety and security, social facilities, international environment and university environment. City effects are also of interest here as the location of the study (a small Alpine village in Switzerland) can be quite an adjustment in itself given that many of the students come from metropolises such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul etc. It should be noted that the discussion by Cubillo *et al*, (2006) with regard to these elements did not seem to indicate whether culture shock is a factor that is considered at the pre-purchase stage of the decision-making process however, 'country image' is one of the key influencing factors in the student's final decision. It is argued at this point that the issue of culture should be

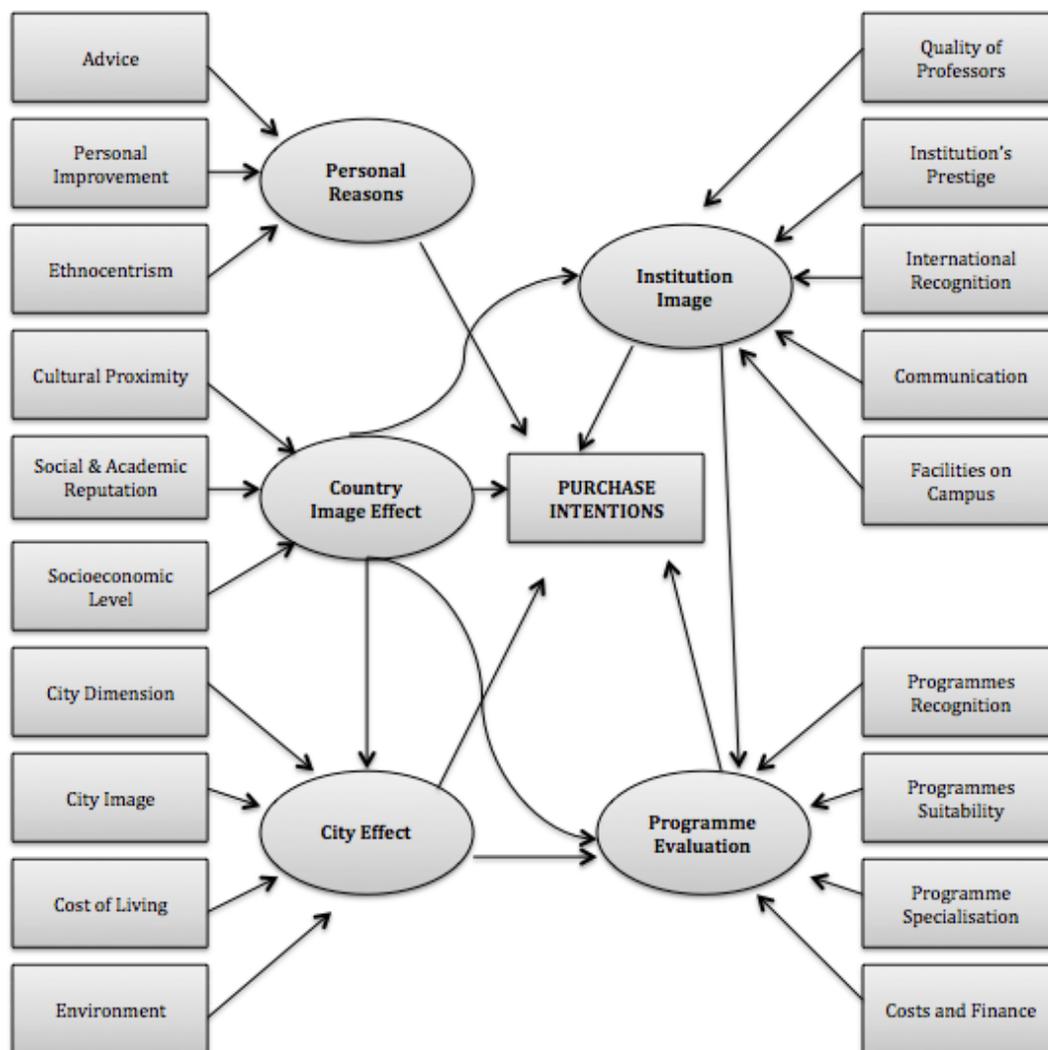
highlighted specifically to the student given the way in which it could lead to difficulties in adapting to the new environment.

These findings related to country image and city effects are particularly interesting in the WBP as the location of this study, Switzerland, is renowned for hospitality and tourism and this could be a major influencing factor on their choice for studying here. It will be interesting to develop this further in the WBP to see how much research students have done prior to their study in Switzerland and see if that has influenced the level of culture shock they experience and how they deal with it.

A further strand of literature which bears relevance to the WBP is that relating to the level of preparation prior to a period of study abroad and its impact on the student experience (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang, Taplin and Brown, 2011). Wang *et al* (2011) in exploring the importance of being prepared prior to undertaking a period abroad to study, examined Chinese students' satisfaction levels of studying in Australia. They used the social learning theory i.e. 'social learning theory proposes that behaviour is predicted by the extent that, if a person behaves in a certain way, that person will be rewarded by the extent that the person values the reward' (Wang *et al*, 2011:266) and linked this to internal and external locus of control i.e. the view that a person has on what they can control in their life. Their study included the criteria of 'culture', 'technical teaching' and 'preparation' to investigate the satisfaction level of the student, where culture and technical teaching are not within the control of the individual but where preparation is within their control. In both studies, Ramburuth and Tani (2009) and Wang *et al* (2011) preparation linked to being prepared prior to their study through pre-university education (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009) and organised programmes prior to the foreign education but undertaken in the home location (Wang *et al*, 2011). The findings from these show that those who prepared more tended to be more satisfied with their study experience abroad. However, it is questionable as to why issues of culture and technical teaching might not be considered under the control of the student to a certain extent as per the study by Wang *et al* (2011)? As identified through the information search stage of decision making, information related to culture and technical teaching

could be sought out in an effort to further prepare for the experience abroad, making it more within the control of the student. This could also link with the control of the institution when expectations are being created (Azmat *et al*,2013). This is in line with the idea of 'country image' (culture) and 'programme evaluation' (technical teaching) mentioned above and links back to the question of whether research conducted by the student prior to their arrival influences positively on the degree to which they view they have adapted to their new environment.

Figure 2.2 A model of international students' preferences



Source: Cubillo *et al* (2006:107)

Those that do more preparation should be able to develop (i.e. skills and knowledge needed) in such a way as to help them adjust to the new environment (Twigg, 2005).

Thus it can be seen from Ramburuth and Tani (2009) Wang *et al* (2011) and Twigg (2005) that their findings with regard to prior preparation are relevant to the WBP as is evidenced by questions in the focus group and questionnaire relating to prior research and preparation.

In short, literature relating to the consumer decision-making process was insightful insofar as it directed the research to investigate pull factors such as country image, city effect, personal reasons and institutional image. It explores the search for information that is undertaken which influences the degree of preparation prior to travelling in the context of potential factors affecting the degree of culture shock. In order to better understand culture shock, it is first necessary to explore the overriding concept of culture. This is done in the following section.

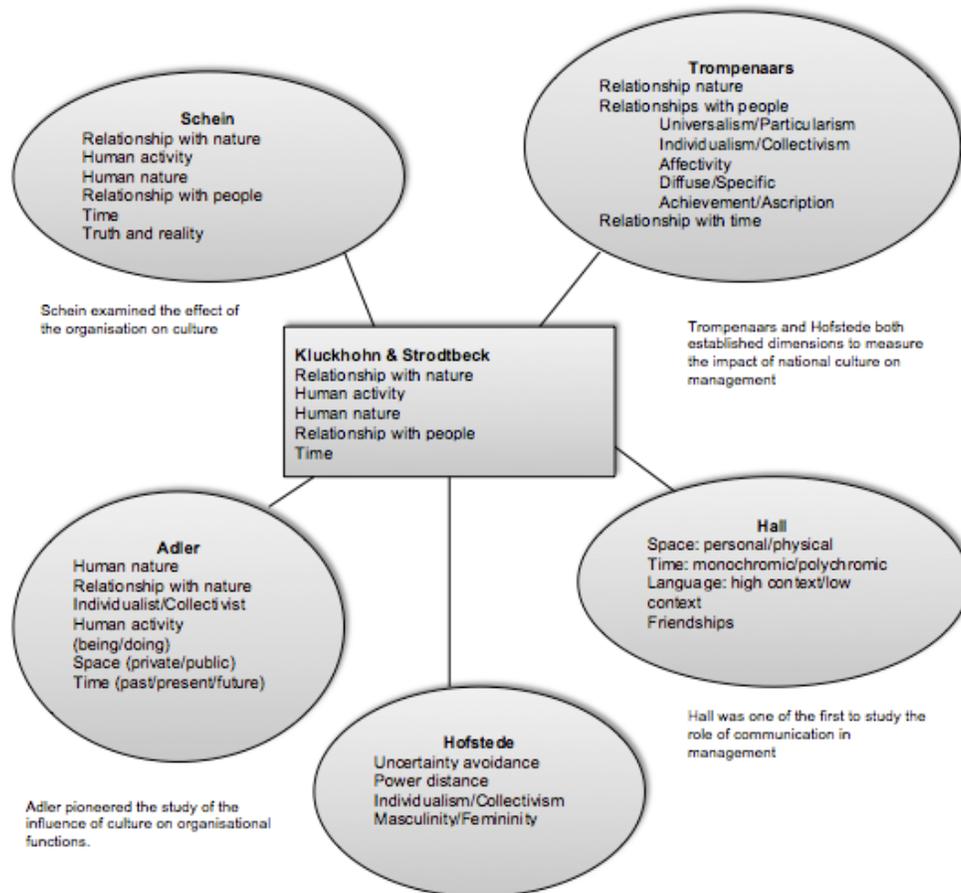
2.3 Culture

Culture is a phenomenon that has been discussed by academics for many years. Figure 2.3 gives an overview of some of the key contributors in this area with a brief outline of their focus (Schneider and Barsoux, 2003). From their research in 1952 Kroeber and Kluckhohn (cited in Ting-Toomey, 1999) found there to be 160 definitions for ‘culture’. This research revealed that the term associated everything from external attributes e.g. architecture to internal attributes e.g. values that large groups of a community share. The vast number of definitions that have been produced emphasises the consideration that this topic has been given over the years and yet there is no consensus on a definition. Equipped with a sound understanding of the concept of culture, it is possible to comprehend why or how culture shock can occur.

As can be seen from Figure 2.3 the outcome of research has helped ‘to define the cultural profile of people and discover the preferences that cultures have in relation to their environment’ (Browaeys and Price, 2011:5). Of relevance to this WBP is a branch of that research, which has extended a focus to the impact of culture on the specific

environment of the organisational setting. Examples of the previous research as seen in Figure 2.3 is Hall who investigated the area of culture and the role that communication played in management and Schein who examined the impact that the organisation has on culture. Table 2.3 highlights the various elements included in culture as researched by Brodley (1994, cited in Browaeyns and Price 2011). It explores how culture is influenced by history and influences behaviours, how norms of society come about and how societies' value systems are created. Given the myriad of definitions and for the purposes of clarity, one definition has been chosen for this study, that offered by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) who discuss how culture is a programming of the mind that takes place at a very young age where most of the learning of values, beliefs and norms takes place.

Figure 2.3: Key Dimensions of Culture



Source: Schneider and Barsoux (2003:34); Browaeyns and Price (2011:6)

It is this definition that will be used through the remainder of the work as it encapsulates the key themes identified through Table 2.3. It is important to realise that through social learning these values and beliefs become ingrained in an individual at a subconscious level and are not necessarily thought about in great detail as people interact with each other. Ting-Toomey (1999) highlighted the key points from D'Andrade's (1984) definition of culture to emphasise that culture has shared systems of meanings, that these systems of meanings are conveyed among members of the culture through generations and that these shared meanings help individuals to survive in the environment that they find themselves in. In addition to this though Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede (2002) indicated that although the research on culture shows how people of differing cultures share meanings within that culture, differences still exist among individuals within that culture as a result of individuality e.g. experiences and personality.

Table 2.3 Diverse Definitions of Culture

Topical	Culture consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organisation, religion and economy.
Historical	Culture is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations.
Behavioural	Culture is shared, learned human behaviour; a way of life.
Normative	Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living.
Functional	Culture is the way humans solve problems or adapting to the environment or living together.
Mental	Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals.
Structural	Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviours.
Symbolic	Culture is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society.

Source: Brodley (1994, cited in Browaeys and Price, 2011:3)

It is arguable in the WBP, given the mobility of the student sample, previous experiences that they have generated may influence the coping strategies that they use in efforts to adapt to their new environment. An understanding of the differences that exist within cultures helps elucidate why problems or challenges may occur when different groups come in contact with each other. In short, what materialises from a review of the culture literature is the importance of examining how significant the difference is between cultures and how individuals view the difference that exists. Once there is a greater insight with regard to this, it is argued there is potential to influence the way in

which a person will deal with intercultural contact with a view to ensuring it is an optimal experience, which is a goal of this WBP.

2.3.1 Intercultural Contact

Once values, beliefs and norms have become established within the mind, having to become accustomed to another culture becomes challenging. What was once learned and become habitual now may have to be unlearned so that something different can be learned in order to ‘fit’ (Hofstede, *et al*, 2010). Bochner (1982) divided the phenomenon, intercultural contact, into two categories; contact that happens as a result of being a resident of a culturally diverse society or as a result of a traveller (e.g. student or tourist) going to another country for a particular purpose (e.g. to study or to holiday). The latter is the category that applies to the international student and is therefore the focus of this research.

Literature in relation to intercultural contact found that there are four key ways in which this concept has been treated, namely: ‘(1) the groups in intercultural contact (e.g. tourists, foreign students, migrants, expatriate workers etc.); (2) dimensions of intercultural contact (e.g. purpose, time-span and type of involvement); (3) the outcomes of intercultural contact (e.g. the impact or consequences that are experienced as a result of the contact); and (4) theoretical perspectives on intercultural contact (e.g. historical and contemporary approaches)’ (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001:19). The following discussion examines the international student body as the group and how they are influenced by the various dimensions mentioned above and also how these might influence the consequence of that intercultural contact. Students are viewed as a group that will eventually return to their home country therefore the commitment to the contact in the host country tends to be low. If this is the case however, how might the low contact in the host country influence their ability to adapt to a new environment?

Much research has been conducted on the area of intercultural contact and a researcher that explores this in relation to two issues is Halualani (2008). Her study was one that was qualitative in nature and conducted over a period of three years to identify how the international student *themselves* defined what is meant by the term intercultural contact.

She critiqued previous studies insofar as they did not search for the student perspective on this concept and also critiqued the methods that were used in these previous studies. The researchers who conducted the previous studies adopted an etic approach with regard to what constitutes intercultural contact and the necessary conditions needed in order for a positive contact to be experienced. The researchers used methodologies whereby it was attempted to create a controlled environment allowing for experimentation whereas in reality ideal conditions do not necessarily exist in contexts of intercultural contact. The conclusion from Halualani's (2008) study indicated that when students are left to define what intercultural contact is, the mere fact of attending a multicultural university (where her study was conducted) meant that intercultural contact was happening on a daily basis. She found that the friendships that the students had (even though they were multicultural in nature) were not thought of as intercultural contact. However her findings revealed that intercultural contact existed more for the students when there was an interaction with someone that is seen as a stranger with different nationality or ethnicity. For the WBP, it is argued that in the case of the international student, intercultural contact happens in order for them to adjust to the new environment. This recognition that intercultural contact takes place in real-life, unpredictable, uncontrolled environments was noted for the purpose of the methodological approach of this WBP. The findings from Halualani (2008) provided support for the choice of using a case study where the context of the study and the student views need to be considered rather than creating an artificial environment (Yin, 2003). In some respects, intercultural contact is happening on a daily basis within the WBP case study institution (similar to the research by Halualani, 2008) and given the lack of host culture students on campus, is there a desire to contact the wider host community given that this group tends to have lower commitment towards contact with the host culture (Ward *et al*, 2001)?

Ward *et al* (2001) reviewed literature in relation to the outcomes that occur as a result of intercultural contact. This research was categorised into outcomes that are experienced at group level and outcomes that are experienced at individual level. As the sample for the WBP is not being focused on as a group but rather individuals and their experiences,

it was the individual level that was of most interest as effort was made to explore how students felt in relation to the new culture that they found themselves within. With regard to the individual outcomes of this intercultural contact, four themes emerged from the research and are highlighted in Table 2.4. This table shows that the outcome can range from someone who totally integrates with the new culture, whilst rejecting their own (Passing) to an individual who totally rejects the new culture that they enter into reverting to their own (Chauvinist). It also highlights that some are comfortable in both (Mediating Persons) or alternatively uncomfortable in neither (Marginal Syndrome).

Table 2.4 Outcomes of Individual Intercultural Contact

Researcher	Outcome
Stonequist (1937)	Passing: tend to cast away their original culture and join the culture of which they have entered into.
Tajfel and Dawson (1965)	Chauvinist: tend to reject the culture in which they have entered into and revert back to their original culture.
Park (1928)	Marginal Syndrome: tend to go back and forth between their original culture and the new one they have entered into but feel comfortable in neither one of them.
Bochner (1982)	Mediating Persons: tend to be people who feel comfortable within both cultures and can integrate into either.

Source: Ward et al (2001:31)

These findings from Ward *et al* (2001) are pertinent to the WBP insofar as they alert the researcher to various degrees of possible integration and rejection of both foreign and host cultures. This will be discussed further in Section 2.4.2 Acculturation and Coping Strategies. However within the context of the WBP and the lack of host culture student present, in addition to questioning whether there is commitment (from the student) to have contact with the wider host culture, will this complicate the outcome of intercultural contact? For example, *Passing* if there is little contact with the host culture either through host culture students or the wider community, what culture are they joining? The next section delves deeper into the subject of culture shock with an exploration of it in the context of national culture.

2.4 Culture Shock in the context of National Culture

At its simplest, culture shock can be explained as the feelings that a person will experience when they are faced with an ‘unknown’ or ‘foreign’ environment (Marx, 2001). As identified above, it is when intercultural contact occurs that this feeling of the unknown may manifest. Uncertainty prevails where a person moves from a situation in which they felt totally comfortable to a situation in which they do not know what is expected of them (and in which they know not what to expect). The experience can create anxiety and frustration but can also create a sense of excitement and exhilaration. The way in which a person experiences culture shock is extremely subjective in nature hence the positive / negative feelings that are associated with it. This further supports the observation by Hofstede *et al* (2002) where individuality and differences even within the same culture may influence the outcomes of intercultural contact as reviewed by Ward *et al* (2001)(see Table 2.4). According to Pedersen (1995:1) ‘culture shock is the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment’. The definitions of culture shock have also incorporated any change that a person encounters that removes the familiarity of a situation e.g. changing job, or new relationships, that is to say, not just that of entering a new cultural setting. The subjectivity of this concept adds complexity to this WBP and it is hoped that the findings will provide extra insight into how the issue of culture shock is viewed by students (i.e. frustrating /exhilarating or other); how this influences their ability to adapt to the ‘foreign’ environment (see Section 2.3.1 and Section 2.4.2) in which they find themselves; and what element(s) of the situation it is that causes the emotion whether positive or negative.

Juffer (1987, cited in Li 2012:71) discusses five main reasons of culture shock:

1. ‘Culture shock is caused by confronting a new environment or situation.
2. Culture shock is caused by ineffectiveness of intercultural or interpersonal communication.
3. Culture shock is caused by a threat to the emotional or intrapsychic well being of the sojourner.
4. Culture shock demonstrates the need to modify behaviour adequately and to regain positive reinforcement from the new environment.
5. Culture shock is caused by a “growth experience”.

It can be seen from this that culture shock is often perceived in a negative way. However the fifth and last point highlights a positive aspect, namely the growth opportunities that can occur as a result of the strain or pressures that a person has endured.

Pedersen (1995) in his book *The Five Stages of Culture Shock* presented an insightful introduction to the key contributors to the field of culture shock. It is an area of study that has been researched since 1955 when Lysgaard conceptualised the U-Curve hypothesis. Theoretical frameworks on culture shock reviewed in the past indicated that prior to 1950, this concept was viewed more from a medical perspective but after this time it was viewed more from a social and psychological perspective (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman, 2008; Ward *et al*, 2001). The discussions from Pedersen (1995) begin with the identification of how people in a foreign location go through this U-Curve (Lysgaard, 1955) and how various schools of thought exist on this. Originally and quite often today culture shock is associated with negativity and illness which helps explain why it was viewed from a medical perspective and the schools of thought discussed by Pedersen (1995) ranged from the Disease Model of Culture Shock to the Growth Model of Culture Shock as detailed in Table 2.5. Regardless of the school of thought, all of these authors believed this to be a process that people had to go through, however with the Growth Model of Culture Shock, the process did not always end up with a negative experience.

The Disease Model of Culture Shock was linked to emotional problems that could be mended. Culture shock was seen as an illness, hence the link that was made to the medical research. Oberg (1960, cited in Li 2012:70) ‘described culture shock as an ailment with distinct symptoms and cures’. In his early works Oberg (1960, cited in Marx 2001:5) discussed different facets of culture shock namely; ‘strain, sense of loss and feelings of deprivation, feeling rejected, confusion, anxiety and even disgust/anger and feelings of helplessness’. It is easy to see from the terminology that is being used to describe the feelings associated with culture shock, why it is viewed negatively by so many. In addition to Oberg (1960) other researchers have coined terms related to culture

shock as highlighted in Table 2.6. As is evidenced by this terminology, there is still a highly negative association with it e.g. fatigue, shock and ambiguity.

Table 2.5 Contributors to literature on Disease Model and Growth Model of Culture Shock

School of thought	Authors	Key contributions
Disease Model	Gudykunst and Hammer (1988)	The key train of thought
	Stephan and Stephan (1992)	among these researchers was
	Stephan and Brigham (1985)	culture shock was an illness
	Juffer (1987)	that could be treated.
Growth Model	D'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989)	
	Sodowsky and Pake (1992)	The key train of thought
	Levine and Padilla (1980)	among these researchers was
	Berry (1980)	that culture shock was viewed
	Kealy (1988)	as an opportunity to learn
	Ruben and Kealy (1979)	from and that growth could be
	Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen (1992)	the outcome.
	Furnham and Bochner (1986)	

Source: Pedersen (1995:4-9)

The Growth Model of Culture Shock still observed this as a process but viewed it as something that people go through and that the outcome could be more positive in nature agreeing with the view presented by Juffer (1987, cited in Li, 2012). It was viewed in relation to the development that occurred as a result of going through these challenges.

Table 2.6 Terms used for Culture Shock

Terminology	Contributor
Culture fatigue	Guthrie (1966, 1975)
Language shock	Smalley (1963)
Role shock	Byrnes (1966); Higbee (1969)
Pervasive ambiguity	Ball-Rokeach (1973)

Source: Pedersen (1995); Church (1982)

Pedersen (1995) in his review noted that there did not seem to be any focus on skill development as a result of moving to a new culture until the research conducted by

D'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989). Nevertheless, it is argued that if careful consideration was given to the process through mindful communication there was potential for many positivities to be gained from this experience of intercultural contact e.g. 'a sense of well-being and heightened positive self-esteem; cognitive openness and flexibility; emotional richness and enhanced tolerance for ambiguity; competence in social interactions; and enhanced self-confidence and confidence in others' (Ting-Toomey, 1999:246). Arguably, it is a necessary process to go through in order to benefit from some of these positive points and potentially cope in a new environment. In comparing both the Disease and Growth Models, culture shock is the start of the process of adapting to a new environment (Li, 2012). Individuals being affected by this (and most are affected to different degrees), should be made aware of both positives and negatives and not just one or the other so that adaptation can happen with less effort. Furthermore, in relation to this point of being made aware of positives and negatives it is argued for the integration of trustworthy and accurate information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) at the 'search for information' stage of the decision-making process that the student undergoes (Kotler *et al*, 2005; Maringe and Carter, 2007). Pertinent to the WBP is exploring if the student connects their feelings to negative or positive feelings and how this influences their ability to adapt.

2.4.1 Adaptation

There has been substantial work conducted on the various stages of adaptation starting from Lysgaard (1955) U-Curve. However Brown and Holloway (2008), in their review of the various staged models of adaptation produced over the years, indicated that there still seems to be little consensus as to what it actually is. The term adjustment is bidimensional as there are two different types of adjustment that people go through; (1) psychological adjustment which focuses on emotional satisfaction of the individual and (2) sociocultural adaptation which focuses on the individuals' sense of 'fitting in' to the new community in which they have found themselves in (Ward, Okura, Kennedy and

Kojima, 1998). Various staged models have been created based on this concept of adaptation as is highlighted in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 Contributors to research on the staged models of culture shock

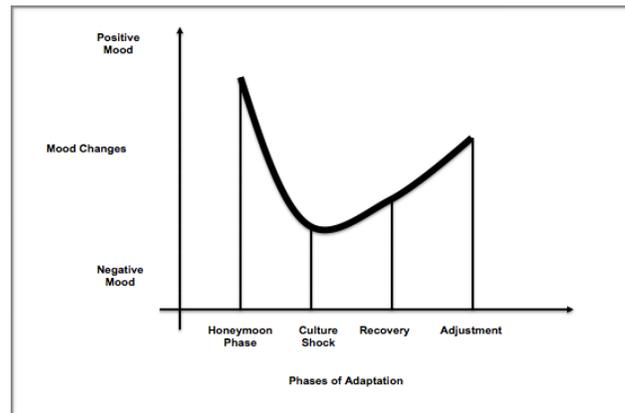
Author	Model	Stages
Lysgaard (1995)	U-Curve - 3 stage model	Adventurous; Loneliness; Adjustment
Oberg (1960)	U-Curve - 4 stage model	Honeymoon; Culture Shock; Recovery; Adjustment
Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963)	W-Curve - U-Curve in foreign location and U-Curve at home location	Honeymoon; Culture Shock; Initial Adjustment; Mental Isolation; Acceptance and Integration
Adler (1975)	Model of Transitional Experience - 5 stage model	Contact; Disintegration; Reintegration; Autonomy; Independence
Torbin (1994)	4 stage model	Fascination; Shock; Satisfaction; Adjustment
Hyde (2012)	Stages of Culture Shock	Survival Period; Honeymoon Period; Negotiation and Resolution Period

Source: Quan, He and Sloan (2016:330)

The U-Curve by Lysgaard (1955) had stages, starting with positive feelings, turning to negative feelings and then adjusting. Oberg (1960) had four stages beginning with the honeymoon phase (positive feelings); the crisis stage (negative feelings); recovery stage (starting to balance the positive and negative and getting used to the new environment); and finally the adjustment stage (feeling comfortable in the new environment). This time-effect curve is typically illustrated as per Figure 2.4. The W-Curve by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1960) was an extension of the U-Curve to take into consideration the extra stage that many sojourners go through when they return to their home location.

The commonality with these staged models is the recognition that the beginning stages (upon arrival) are feelings of excitement, which move towards anxiety or frustrations until the individual starts to understand the new environment more and moves towards recovery (Quan *et al*, 2016). Many critiques have been put forward of the different staged descriptions of adaptation. One of the critiques identified was the issue of whether the first stage of culture shock is actually excitement (Quan *et al* 2016; Brown and Holloway, 2008; Searle and Ward, 1990, cited in Brown and Holloway, 2008).

Figure 2.4 Stages of adaptation (Oberg, 1960)



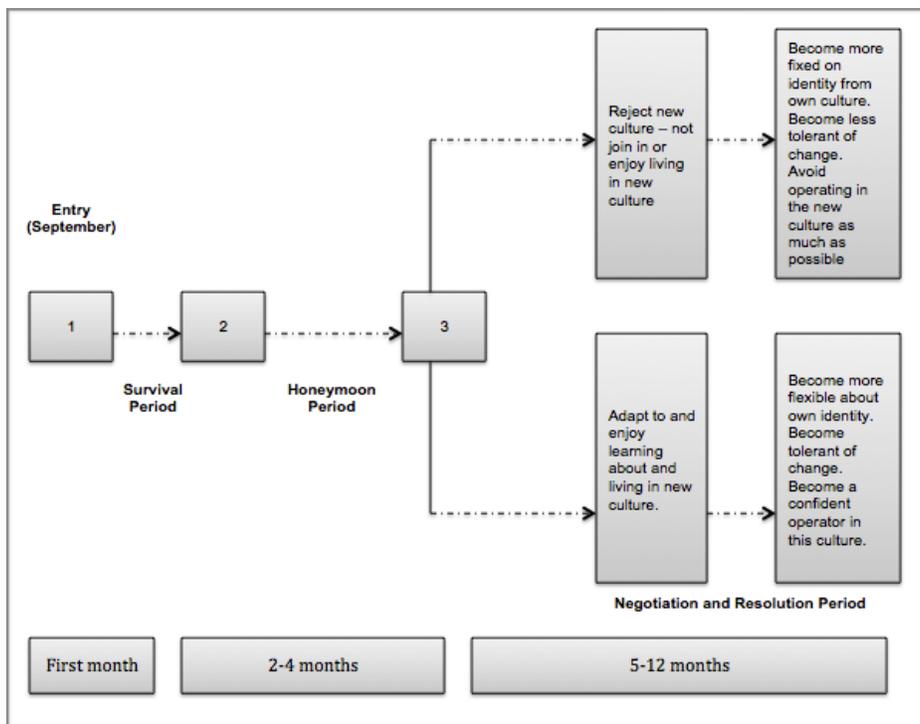
Source: Marx (2001:9)

This transition to a new environment is a change process and change generally comes with anxieties and concerns about the unknown until more becomes known about the situation and the anxieties reduce as time goes on. Much of the past research indicated that for international students there is ‘more culture shock and stress at the very beginning of their sojourn, and that there was no honeymoon phase for the sojourners’ (Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013:551). Furthering this research, Quan *et al* (2016) identified excitement as a feeling prior to arriving in the new location and upon arrival. In support of this critique on excitement being the initial stage of a foreign stay, a staged model by Hyde (2012), seen in Figure 2.5 (survival period, the honeymoon period and the negotiation and resolution period) identified the first stage for the international student as a survival period rather than showing excitement. It is within the negotiation and resolution period that the international student either rejects the new culture and focuses on maintaining their own culture or they adapt to the new culture and become more tolerant of differences and open to changes which is in line with the outcomes of intercultural contact (Section 2.3.1) and the acculturation strategies (Section 2.4.2).

Church (1982:541) in his review of the different models, asked some interesting questions e.g. ‘is the order of the stages invariant? Must all stages be passed through or can some be skipped by some individuals? The U-Curve has been critiqued by many with studies exploring how morale of international students varies along the academic

year (Selby and Woods, 1966, cited in Church, 1982) e.g. pressure times like assignment submission or exams. Ward *et al* (1998) indicated through their study of the U-Curve that with psychological adjustment there was more difficulty relating that to the curve as it was at the entry stage to a new culture that stressful situations arose; that the stressful times for international students varies for students as they progress through the academic year. The U-Curve can change into more of a wave-like picture with many high's and lows though the academic year.

Figure 2.5 Typical stages of culture shock



Source: Hyde (2012:197)

Pertinent to the WBP, this discussion influenced questions in the focus groups particularly exploring how students felt when they arrived in Switzerland. What were the prominent feelings they experienced? In addition to this however, exploring more in relation to Quan *et al* (2016) in this WBP on how students' felt once they had made the decision to come to Switzerland to study i.e. prior to entry to the new environment. As identified in the section on choosing a university (Section 2.2), the student goes through

many thought processes in trying to make this choice, so once the decision is made, do they really start thinking about what it might be like to study in the new culture?

A phenomenon not explored to a great extent in the staged models of adaptation is that related to time i.e. how long does it take to reach that stage of adaptation? Will it take the same length of time for each individual? Oberg (1960, cited in Church 1982), mentioned the notion of time i.e. that the honeymoon could last anything from a few days to 6 months depending on when the individual realises that it is no longer ‘exciting’ to be in the location. Torbiorn (1994, cited in Brown and Holloway, 2008) in his model gave some indication of a time frame for example, in this model it is suggested that after a few months the culture shock stage will turn to be more positive and by the end of the first year in a new location the individual adjusts. With Hyde (2012), there is an estimation as to when each stage might be experienced. This is to help students’ visualise what is to be expected over the academic year (see Figure 2.5). Quan *et al* (2016) and their process-based model, explored time in relation to how long it took students to work through the difficulties and highlighted that it took almost to half way through semester two (of a three semester programme) to start the adjustment phase. With all of these studies, they differ from the context in this WBP as their research was conducted in universities where the typical ‘year’ for a student starts in September and finishes in May / June. The sample in the WBP case study, the end of four weeks is already almost a quarter of the way through their programme. This influenced questions in relation to how do the sample students deal with the difficulties that they experience (if any) in such a short period of time in order to adapt? The following section will explore what it means to adapt and the various coping strategies that are employed to do so.

2.4.2 Acculturation and Coping Strategies

An insightful overview of the evolution of the word acculturation and how it is interpreted amongst the various research disciplines is provided by Sam (2006). The word ‘acculturation’ has been and is often regarded as having the same meaning as ‘assimilation’ i.e. acculturation by the anthropologists and assimilation by the

sociologists. Anthropologists view it in relation to the changes in society from savagery to civilisation (McGee, 1898 cited in Sam, 2006) and sociologists view it in terms of the adjustments that happen as a result of two different races coming in contact, considered a two-way process (Simons, 1901, cited in Sam, 2006). The main force behind the literature on the concept of acculturation is focused on the ‘process of change’ (Ward *et al* 2001:98). This focus on acculturation being a ‘process’, is in line with the discussion on the Disease and Growth Models of culture shock both being identified as a process that people go through (Pedersen, 1995). However, the focus on ‘change’ could be viewed more in line with the Growth Model perspective of culture shock where the process is worked through and a change takes place. A question that could be posed is; is the outcome of this process of change viewed positively (Growth) or negatively (Disease)? Therefore to encourage more of a positive outcome of this process of acculturation the earlier discussions on search for information in the decision-making process (Kotler *et al* 2005; Maringe and Carter, 2007), receiving both accurate and trustworthy information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) and being prepared (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang *et al* 2011) need to be readdressed. It is argued that highlighting more specifically how things might change for an international student becomes paramount in their acculturation. A substantial amount of the research in this area is drawn from the field of psychology, i.e. the Social Identification theories which review the unobservable factors that change e.g. internal mental process that result in change rather than some of the external behaviours engaged in. Tajfel and Turner (1986, cited in Samnani, Boekhorst and Harrison, 2013:168) refer to Social Identity theory as focusing on an individuals ‘sense of belonging and identification with their cultural group.’ Those that have a low association with their cultural group tend to have less difficulties in accepting the differences that exist between themselves and other cultural groups they encounter.

Berry (2005:698), one of the key contributors to the research on acculturation described this concept as ‘the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members’. An interesting question asked by Berry (1997:6) is:

‘What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context? If culture is such a powerful shaper of behaviour, do individuals continue to act in the new setting as they did in the previous one, do they change their behavioural repertoire to be more appropriate in the new setting, or is there some complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society?’

Essentially, the concept of acculturation can be considered on two levels; the population level (the larger group) and the individual level (Berry, 1990). This is similar to the way in which Ward *et al* (2001) identified that the outcomes of intercultural contact were categorised into these levels. It was important to make the distinction between these two levels because it has been shown that changes that occur in the larger group level are not always seen in changes at the individual level. This distinction between the two levels derived from the concept ‘psychological acculturation’ that was first discussed by Graves (1967, cited in Berry 1990). It was felt that influences from the larger group will influence the changes adopted by the individual internally and this in turn can also influence the outcome of the intercultural contact as indicated in Table 2.4.

Sam (2006:14) broke down the concept of acculturation into 3 building blocks indicating that in order for acculturation to exist there needed to be: ‘(1) contact, (2) reciprocal influence; and (3) change.’ In terms of *contact*, the discussion focused on the need for interaction between different cultures first hand and not indirectly through others that have been interacting in the new culture. Of relevance here is questioning how prepared then can an international student be if contact is needed first hand even if both trustworthy and accurate information is provided? With regards to contact, questions arose over the length of time that this contact needed to be in order to constitute acculturation e.g. a tourist on a short trip or a sojourner who is in the new culture for a longer period of time e.g. an international student. The outcome of this discussion was that it most likely depended on the change that occurs as a result of the contact had rather than the length of time involved in the contact. Contact happens among different groups that have been researched and the factor influencing the reason for being in the new culture varies between these groups which in turn influences the contact had e.g. refugees involuntarily come in contact with the new culture but for the international students, this

is considered as voluntary contact. In the case of the WBP, it is assumed that the student sample have made the choice to come to Switzerland to study themselves and that the contact is considered as voluntary. This influenced questions in relation to who was involved in the decision-making process in choosing the destination and institution to explore if this influenced how they dealt with acculturation.

In relation to *reciprocal influence*, Sam (2006:11) referred back to the definition by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936), which indicated that changes can take place in all cultures involved in the contact and that one culture can influence the other. A discussion with regard to the idea of reciprocal influence hovered around the assumption that it is the non-dominant group that changes as a result of the contact with the dominant group but this assumption does not hold true as changes can be seen in both groups that come in contact with each other. In this regard, the WBP seeks to explore how the local culture of Switzerland influences acculturation given that there are very few local Swiss students on the programmes (a topic that will be discussed in Section 2.6: Friendship Patterns).

The last element of *change* referred to the outcome of the contact (i.e. what changed as a result of that contact) and the process of change (i.e. how does the change occur). Examples of change at group level are: physical, biological, political, economical, social and cultural or can be a mix of any of these. The change that occurs at the individual level has been termed the ABC's of acculturation (Affect, Behaviour and Cognitions) (Ward *et al*, 2001) and Table 2.8 gives a brief overview of the key theoretical areas in which Ward *et al* (2001) and Zhou *et al* (2008) highlighted that the ABC's of acculturation is drawn. Affective explored how individuals need to develop coping strategies in a new cultural setting; Behavioural examined how individuals need to learn cultural skills in a new setting; and Cognitive considered the concept of change that takes place as a result of being in this new setting. Given the numerous ways in which change can occur it was viewed important to highlight the overview of contributors to this field of study (Table 2.8) so as to present where the focus of the WBP is situated. The area that will be given most attention in this WBP crosses over affective, behavioural and

cognitive e.g. support available, contact with host nationals, friendship networks, acculturation models. These areas were used to develop questions in both the focus group and questionnaires distributed to the student sample in the WBP. It is argued that the context of the WBP being different may influence the way in which students adapt i.e. how do the students view the support that is available to them, does it influence their ability to adapt or how important are the friendship networks to them in their ability to adapt?

A summary of the early contributors to research of the outcomes of individual intercultural contact can be seen in Table 2.4 (Ward *et al*, 2001) and in 1997 Berry also developed acculturation strategies. These arise as a result of two major issues that people face when they interact with other cultures (1) how important is it to the individual to keep their original culture; and (2) how necessary is it for the individual to become involved in the society they find themselves or can they stay separated from this.

Table 2.8 ABC's of Acculturation

	Conceptual Framework	Influencing Variables / Research Contributors
Affective Stress and Coping Approach	Cross-cultural travellers need to develop coping strategies to deal with stress.	Degree of life change (Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979); personality factors (e.g. Ward and Kennedy, 1992); situational factors such as social support (Adelman, 1988)
Behavioural Culture Learning Approach	Cross-cultural travellers need to learn culturally relevant social skills to survive and thrive in their new setting	General knowledge about a new culture (Ward and Searle, 1991); length of residence in the host culture (Ward <i>et al</i> , 1998); language and communication competence (Furnham, 1993); quantity and quality of contact with host nationals (Bochner, 1982); friendship networks (Bochner, McLeod and Lin, 1977); previous experience abroad (Klineberg and Hull, 1979); cultural distance (Ward and Kennedy, 1993a, b); cultural identity (Ward and Searle, 1991); acculturation models (Ward and Kennedy, 1994); temporary versus permanent residence in a new country (Ward and Kennedy, 1993c); cross-cultural training (Deshpande and Viswesvaran, 1992)
Cognitive Social Identification Theories	Cross-cultural transition may involve changes in cultural identity and inter-group relations.	Acculturation and identity (uni-dimensional conceptualisation of acculturation, Olmeda, 1979; bi-dimensional balanced model of acculturation, e.g. Ramireq, 1984; Berry, 1994, 1997 complex categorical model); social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981);

Source: adapted from Ward et al (2001:48); Zhou et al (2008:65-67)

From these two issues, Table 2.9 explains the acculturation strategies that were developed by Berry (1997). Bringing these together with the study by Ward *et al* (2001) it can be seen that similarities exist in the following way: Assimilation (Berry, 1997) / Passing (Stonequist, 1937); Separation (Berry, 1997) / Chauvinist (Tajfel and Dawson, 1965); Integration (Berry, 1997) / Marginal Syndrome (Park, 1928); and Marginalisation (Berry, 1997) / Mediating Persons (Bochner, 1982).

Both directionality and dimensionality are considered as an underpinning to Berry's (1997) strategies. Directionality relates to whether the change is uni-directional or bi-directional i.e. the uni-directional perspective meaning that 'change takes place in one direction, namely one group moving uni-directionally towards another group which is 'stationary'' (Sam, 2006:17). But, within the bi-directional perspective, both cultures can change, however, it is not generally towards a mid-point between the two. In relation to dimensionality there also exists the uni-dimensional and bi-dimensional perspectives. Uni-dimensional relates to the belief that one or the other culture will become dominant e.g. assimilation leading to a move towards the new culture and leaving the original culture behind or separating from the new culture to maintain the original culture. With the bi-dimensional perspective there is more integration where elements of both the new and original cultures are maintained. Within the WBP, although the purpose is not to measure acculturation, this information has been used to examine how well the students feel they have managed to adapt to their new environment and explore if any movement between cultures does take place.

Table 2.9 Acculturation Strategies developed by Berry (1997)

Acculturation Strategy	Explanation
Assimilation	This is where the individual wants to become part of and fit with the new culture that they have found themselves in.
Separation	This is where the individual wants to maintain their own culture and does not want to integrate with the new culture that they have found themselves in.
Integration	This is where the individual does not want to lose their own original culture but also wants to integrate with the new culture that they have found themselves in.
Marginalisation	This is where the individual does not want to (for whatever reason) maintain their original culture or integrate into the new one.

Source: Berry (1997)

With the research on both directionality and dimensionality, it is questionable whether the WBP sample will move uni-directionally towards the 'stationary' culture as there are so few Swiss students to influence this move. Questions asked in the focus group and questionnaire reflected how the student viewed their own adaptation. Following on from this, the 'stress' that is experienced via the move that students make to a foreign location will be explored in more detail in an attempt to discover how adaptation can be achieved.

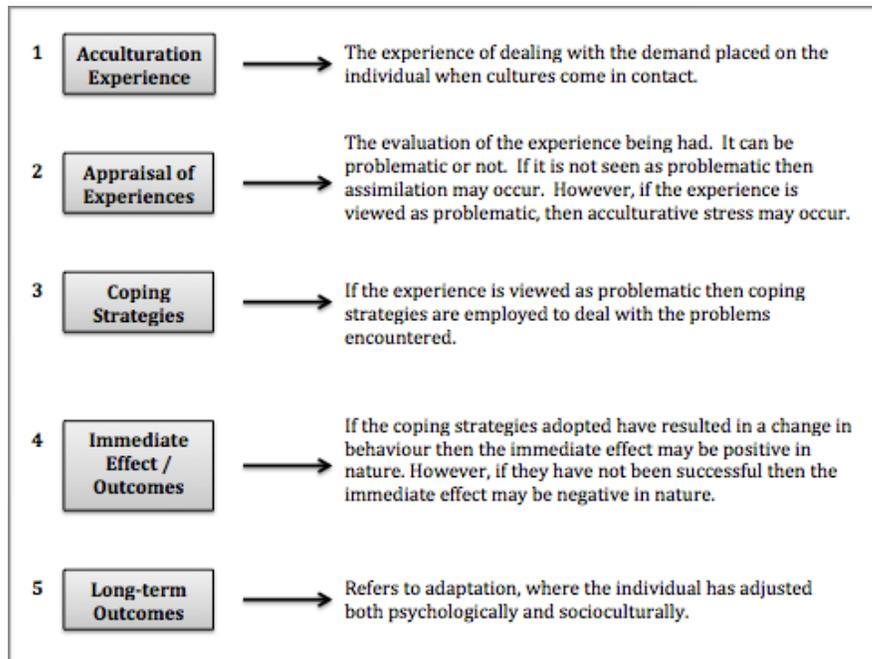
2.4.3 Acculturative Stress

It has been identified already that the changes associated with moving between cultures can be stressful. This contact according to Sam (2006) needed to be first hand and not via a third party i.e. the contact needs to be experienced by the individual rather than just being 'told' about the new culture to be experienced. This transition is seen as stressful due to the movement from the known to the unknown; the removal of the familiar cues can lead to culture shock. The term acculturative stress was proposed first by Berry (1970 cited in Berry, 2006). This happens as a result of going through the process of acculturating and experiencing difficulties throughout the process (Crockett, Iturbide, Torres Stone, McGinley, Raffaelli and Carlo, 2007). The concept of acculturative stress is the result of the individual experiencing problems in everyday situations. The acculturation process is likened to the term adaptation, where the individual needs to find ways in which they can cope with the new environment (Mukminin, 2012). The concept of acculturative stress is likened to the term culture shock however, Berry's (2006) preference was to use the term 'acculturative stress'. The reasons for this are related to the negativity associated with the word *shock* and like the Disease Model of Culture Shock identified earlier, it may result in difficulties when cultures come in contact (Berry, 2006). However, the term 'stress' is rooted in literature related to how people cope with stressors in their lives and this idea could relate to the Growth Model of Culture Shock identified earlier. It is a process where people can possibly deal with the difficulties and it can result in positive outcomes for the individual. The second reason why acculturative stress is preferred as a term is related to the idea

that the challenge comes as a result of two cultures interacting together and not just as a result of one culture or another. It is the ‘interaction between the different cultures that causes the challenge rather than uniquely in one or the other’ (Berry, 2006:44).

The acculturation process framework developed by Berry (1997) is highlighted with a brief explanation in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 The Acculturation Process



Source: adapted from Berry (1997, cited in Wei, Liao, Heppner, Chao and Ku, 2012:97) and Berry (2006:46)

The process operates at both the group level and the individual level and there are many factors that can influence the acculturation at both levels. From Figure 2.6 the key area of interest for the WBP lies in the third step of the acculturation process i.e. coping strategies. Figure 2.7 is the broader picture of both levels (group and individual) and what influences the acculturation process (Berry, 2006).

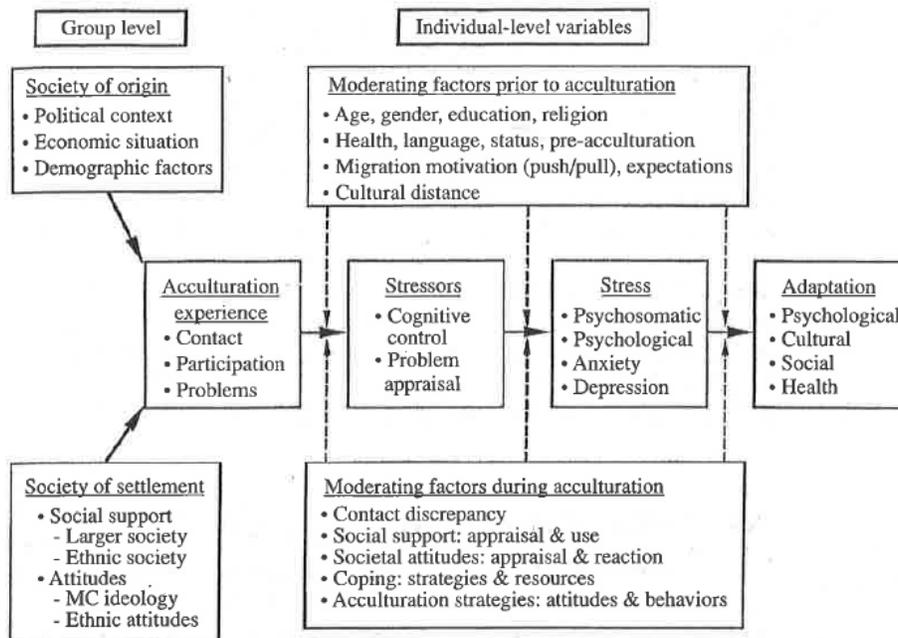
Substantial research has been conducted with regards to the different influencing factors highlighted in Figure 2.7. For example, prior to acculturation the individual has many characteristics that may influence how they adapt to the new environment e.g. age, education, reason for making the move etc. During the acculturation period, there are

also factors that influence the adaptation which is why the U-Curve (see Section 2.4.1) was exclaimed by Church (1982:452) as being ‘weak, inconclusive and overgeneralised’. These factors (see Figure 2.7) influence throughout the acculturation period by the support that is available and the strategies the individual adopts to cope.

The outcome of this acculturation process is to adapt either in the short or long term. This process is different for everyone and the influencing factors are a key reason for this (Mukminin, 2012). It is the individual level that is the main focus of the WBP and some of the influencing factors, such as, push-pull factors, support, coping, will be revisited in Chapter Four.

Having a greater understanding of acculturative stress and the process of acculturation, the next section will explore in more detail the literature on coping strategies in an effort to discover how the student sample in the WBP cope.

Figure 2.7 Factors Affecting Acculturative Stress and Adaptation



Source: Berry (2006:45)

2.4.4 Coping Strategies

The WBP wished to investigate if there are any similarities with regards to how students face challenges. Much work has been done on the topic of coping and the literature is generally linked to stress and the management of it. Key contributors in the development of theory related to coping are Folkman and Lazarus (Folkman, 1984; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980, 1985 cited in Endler and Parker, 1990) who developed two coping scales that are frequently referred to in the literature; The Ways of Coping Checklist and The Ways of Coping Questionnaire. A key issue in relation to adaptation and how stress is dealt with is the dimension of change (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985) and that coping is necessary with regard to the outcomes experienced i.e physically and emotionally (Akhtar and Kröner-Herwig, 2015). The process of change was also a concept that was highlighted in the acculturation literature (see Section 2.4.2).

However Folkman and Lazarus scales were criticised as being too simplistic in nature. The outcome of the measuring tools were two ways of coping i.e. problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, 1989). ‘Problem-focused’ meaning the root of the stress can be tackled and possibly changed and ‘emotion-focused’ meaning that the emotions linked to the stress can be managed in some way. They were considered simplistic insofar as coping can be a mix of both problem solving mixed with emotions and not just mutually exclusive. The literature in relation to coping is largely situated in health related studies and many researchers have made contributions to both theory and measurement as can be seen in Table 2.10. It could be argued here that with the provision of accurate and trustworthy information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) to the student when they are searching for information during the second stage of the decision-making process (Kotler *et al* 2005; Maringe and Carter, 2007) recognising what might influence stress could help in identifying how to cope with it?

Regardless of the way in which researchers tried to measure coping (see Table 2.10) ‘most approaches distinguish between problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies’ which are derived from Lazarus and Folkman 1984 (Akhtar and Kröner-Herwig, 2015:4). The development of the Problem-focused Style of Coping by Heppner, Cook, Wright and

Johnson (1995) however, tried to address the critique of the simplistic nature of the Ways of Coping Questionnaire by combining both emotional and problem in their instrument. In their efforts they gave consideration to cognitive, behavioural and coping strategies that are used to help change the way in which individuals deal with problematic / stressful situations (Heppner *et al*, 1995). They believed that it was possible to use emotion in solving problems and the two were not easy to separate. For example the previous coping inventories examine the activities that individuals engage in while dealing with a problem and the choice 'talk to a friend' is an option, but Heppner *et al* (1995) described this as lacking clarity given that the activity of talking to a friend (emotion-focused) could also be an activity used to help solve a problem (problem-focused). The more recent literature also discussed the influences that exist in relation to coping e.g. psychological and environmental factors (Parker and Endler, 1996) examples of which can be seen in the moderating factors identified in Figure 2.7 (factors affecting acculturative stress and adaptation e.g. language, support, coping) . It is important to note however, that even though much of the literature has focused less on personal variables that these variables cannot be ignored (Parker and Endler, 1996).

A more recent development in the coping literature relates to a gap that was identified i.e. culture and how it has not been given the necessary consideration (Heppner, 2008). Much of the research on problem solving and coping has 'acted in a culture-blind manner (Heppner, 2008:806). Through his initial research he identified that up to this stage (early 2000's) practically all of the research had been conducted with European / American samples. He developed the collectivist coping style and identified differences in the way Eastern samples responded or coped in challenging situations. Concluding remarks in Heppner's (2008:812) paper indicated that 'there is ample evidence that cultural norms, customs and values affect what are considered to be (a) problems and stressors, (b) allowable coping strategies, (c) acceptable solutions, and (d) indicators of psychological adjustment.' For example, the ways of dealing with interpersonal conflict were different among individualist groups and collectivists groups. The cultural values greatly influenced the way in which the challenge was dealt with e.g. among the Taiwanese

sample the study conducted revealed that saving face, harmony among the group and respect influenced the coping strategies adopted. Given the emphasises of the Asian population in Heppner’s (2008) study it is argued that his findings are highly pertinent to this WBP.

Table 2.10 Contributors to Coping Literature

Researcher(s)	Contribution
Pearlin and Schooler (1978)	Identified three major coping styles: (1) Responses that change the situation; (2) Responses that change the meaning or the appraisal of the stress; and (3) Responses aimed at controlling feelings.
Billings and Moos (1981)	Identified three coping styles similar to Pearlin and Schooler (1978): (1) Active-behaviour coping; (2) Avoidance coping; and (3) Active cognitive coping.
Folkman and Lazarus (1980)	Developed the Ways of Coping Checklist, which identified two distinct types of coping: (1) Problem-focused coping; and (2) Emotion-focused coping.
Billings and Moos (1984)	Extended their research from 1984 and again identified three coping styles: (1) Appraisal-focused coping; (2) Problem-focused coping; and (3) Emotions-focused coping.
McCrea (1984)	Used the Ways of Coping Checklist by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) along with other specific questions for their study.
Folkman and Lazarus (1985)	Revised and renamed the Ways of Coping Checklist to The Ways of Coping Questionnaire, resulted in eight coping scales: (1) Confrontive Coping; (2) Distancing; (3) Self-Controlling; (4) Seeking Social Support; (5) Accepting Responsibility; (6) Escape-Avoidance, (7) Planful Problem Solving; and (8) Positive Reappraisal
Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989)	Developed the COPE coping scale with includes two formats: (1) Dispositional; and (2) Situational.
Endler and Parker (1990)	Developed the Multidimensional Coping Inventory (MCI), which identified three coping styles: (1) Task-oriented; (2) Emotion-oriented; and (3) Avoidance-oriented coping.
Heppner, Cook, Wright and Johnson (1995)	Developed the Problem-focused Style of Coping (PF-SOC), which consists of three subscales: (1) Reflective Style; (2) Suppressive Style; and Reactive Style

Source: adapted from Endler and Parker (1990); Heppner et al (1995); Parker and Endler (1996); Akhtar and Kröner-Herwig (2015)

In addition to Heppner’s (2008) consideration of culture in coping, came the Cultural and Contextual Model of Coping (CCMC) where Heppner, Wei, Neville and Kanagui-Muñoz (2014:84) argued that ‘coping is an act that occurs within a cultural context.’ As identified earlier, cultural norms and values are what help an individual make sense of their environment and influences how they act in certain situations (see Section 2.3). It is argued that cultural norms and values will apply also in solving problems and the CCMC

is a model that looks at the individual and the environment they exist in (Heppner *et al*, 2014). In contrast to this however, it is questionable whether this too is simplistic in nature. It is not simple to categorise large cultural groups as one, as stress and coping is very much felt on an individual basis and is not especially culturally specific (Sovic, 2008). For example, not all collectivists will deal with stress situations in the same way. This resonates with Hofstede *et al* (2003) when they indicated that even though cultures share similarities, it is not safe to assume all are the same in the way in which they behave. As with Heppner's (2008) study, Sovic's (2008) work is reflective of the sample population in terms of questioning cultural influence on coping strategies. This informed questions that were part of the focus group and questionnaires used in the WBP.

Skinner, Edge, Altman and Sherwood (2003:217) conducted a review of 100 assessments of coping over the previous twenty years to try and construct 'category systems for classifying coping.' Their review indicated that there is very little consensus on how coping can be measured or conceptualised. The commonality highlighted though this review is that coping strategies are the ways in which people will deal with situations they are presented with that cause stress. The knowledge that was gained through this literature search is used to assist in the exploration of how the sample students in the WBP deal with stressful situations within the new academic and national cultural setting. None of the existing questionnaires were used in the gathering of the primary data for the WBP however exploring the issues highlighted assisted in the development of questions for the focus group and later the questionnaire.

From the review so far on culture, culture shock and coping strategies, the WBP aims to explore when shock is experienced by the student (if at all), how this influences the way in which they cope with their new situation and whether culture as identified by Heppner (2008), Heppner *et al* (2014) and Sovic (2008) influence these coping strategies in any way. The following section moves towards the concept of culture shock but within the context of the academic environment which is also new to the international student in the WBP.

2.5 Culture Shock in the context of Academic Culture

For a student progressing to university level is a big transition. Home students are no different to international students in this respect. This transition involves changes such as the student becoming more self-sufficient and independent. In addition to this, similarities exist between home and international students from an academic perspective in that they are both expected to work hard, in conditions that are not always favourable and deal with new and complex material (Furnham, 2004). A new identity is being created for a student moving to this level of study where they are negotiating between the old life they had and the new life they are about to journey through. The social environment in this new situation and the support that can be found through the community in which the student now exists is important to them. If the support systems are new and unfamiliar then anxieties can occur (Wilcox, Winn and Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). What home students have in their favour however, is the fact that their basic assumptions and understanding of the education system is present. For an international student, these basic assumptions and understanding of the education system are missing. Even the language of instruction changes which may greatly influence their success (Woods, Poropat, Barker, Hills, Hibbins and Borbasi, 2013). Roth (1990, cited in Twigg, 2005) examined social behaviour and how children grow to adults, how they get accepted into society as they learn the rules of that society, what is and is not acceptable behaviour and compared the international student to a growing child. However, the international student has to rethink the rules of the new society that they have entered (both the national and academic setting) to work out how they can integrate and differentiate themselves.

As highlighted previously by Mazzarol *et al* (2003) (see Section 1.2) there have been three waves of internationalising education (host country delivery, exporting the service to a foreign location; and the creation of branch campuses in a foreign location). Very often in the literature the international student is researched as a group of students that travel to the location of the delivering university e.g. UK, USA, Canada or Australia where the majority of the research has been conducted. However, there is also the consideration of those international students who stay in their home countries and the

delivering university comes to them through a variety of delivery options e.g. franchised programmes, offshore campuses, twinning programmes etc. (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005). This context is an area of research that seems to be neglected but is just as important, given that the number of universities using this as a mode to internationalise (referred to by Ramachandran, 2013 as transnational education programmes) is increasing. It is argued that the term culture shock does not necessarily just incorporate the need to travel to a foreign location but ‘applies to any new situation, job relationship or perspective requiring a role adjustment and a new identity’ (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005:26) and this can also lead to stress and needing to cope. Even though their study was conducted among Singaporeans studying at an Australian university in Singapore, they also identified in their conclusion that within these foreign locations where delivering universities choose to establish themselves, the student body is also becoming more international e.g. ‘student populations in offshore programmes are increasingly heterogeneous and increasingly likely to reflect a variety of nationalities and ethnicities’ (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005:40). The arguments by Pyvis and Chapman (2005) are particularly relevant to the context of the WBP as the students are studying a British degree but within a location that is neither their home country nor the awarding institutions’ home country.

Ramachandran (2011) included students in their home countries who are on UK programmes in his study and identified that these students faced as many academic challenges as those living in the UK but, the challenges were different. Language was an issue for the international student studying in their home environment. They did not feel as if they could improve their language skills as tutors were only present for short periods of time. Support for this was not readily available like it would be for the international student studying in the location of the university. Their academic life was heavily influenced by their everyday life at home, which is not as apparent for the international student studying within the location of the university, as they have removed themselves from their home life to a certain extent. There seemed to also be a feeling of isolation from the main university campus as tutors would only be available for short timespans so

the whole international university experience was missing (Ziguras, 2008). There are similarities with both Ramachandran (2011) and Ziguras (2008) to the WBP in that the language of instruction for the student sample is English, the local language of the region is French and the the variety of languages among the student body is significantly different due to the many different nationalities.

Challenges reported by international students at university in a foreign location are plentiful. Singaporean students researched in Australia did not feel as if they were valued and that the teaching and learning needs were not well catered for (Ryan and Hellmundt, 2003). It is argued that the challenges for international students started at home before they even leave for the foreign university (Ramachandran, 2011). It is at this stage (before actually arriving at the host university) that the international students experiences a mix of excitement and anxiety (Amaechi, Bennett, Ganyu, Kayit, Lillyman, Okeke and Paciente, 2013). Interesting with this finding is how it further supports the culture shock and adaptation discussion (Section 2.4 and Section 2.4.1), questioning whether the first stage of the typical U-curve is honeymoon or survival (Ward *et al* 1998; Hyde, 2012; Quan *et al* 2016). Language is a challenge that has been given a great deal of attention in the literature and even though the international student may make the IELTS score required for entry level into the university, it does not necessarily help with integrating into groups for group work with host students because of the use of certain terminology, slang etc. There are many negatives that may occur as a result of the lack of language proficiency i.e. anxiety in relation to participating in class or in groups, concern over level of understanding the content of the programme etc. (Lillyman and Bennett, 2014). A simple example given in Ramachandran's (2011) study was the use of the word *Tube* for the underground that host students in the UK are familiar with but the international student would have to work this out. This use of local language influenced levels of understanding when trying to communicate with class members or lecturers. Given that three different 'languages' exist within the context of the WBP study, this will be explored further to identify if these challenges exist for the student and how they cope with it. In addition to there being very few host culture students, it is questionable

whether the host location influences the academic environment given that both languages are different. Are there other challenges associated with language given the lack of host culture language?

Cortazzi and Jin (1997) examined the area of communication and learning in an intercultural environment and they identified that very often the area of culture is overlooked as a result of hidden assumptions that are made. They identified three ways in which ‘hidden assumptions about culture infuse communication and learning’ (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997:76). They structured their discussion according to three areas namely: (1) academic cultures; (2) cultures of communication; and (3) cultures of learning. In relation to academic cultures, Table 2.11 highlights some of the differences that exist in terms of what academics expect of students and what international students expect of the academics based on the academic cultures from which they come. They identified that in reviewing the outcome of the study that clear differences do appear. The findings need to take into consideration that not all international students (from within the same culture) have the same expectations and also even though clear direction is shown in each case, each group may value elements of the others’ expectations to a certain extent. The expectations of one group on another seem to be quite opposite e.g. lecturers wanting active involvement and the international student preferring passive participation, lecturers wanting discussion and ideas to be challenged, with the international student preferring harmony and agreement (see Table 2.11). Interesting to note though, in looking at these opposites, they may indicate the goal that each party expects to achieve but it may not always happen in that way. The way in which these expectations come to realisation (or not) is through the cultures of communication. In light of this discussion, the context of the WBP has similarities to Table 2.11 whereby the programme being delivered in the institution is awarded by a British university and heavily influenced by the British academic culture.

The cultures of communication refers to ways in which people communicate and how others interpret what has been communicated. An example of this would be the use of non-verbal language within the encounter e.g. eye contact, gestures, body language and

the use of silences etc. Each person involved in the encounter will have their own non-verbal language that may cause offence to the person on the receiving end, however most likely not meant to be offensive. An example could be where a lecturer within a British university expects active involvement within the classroom (as per Table 2.11) but the international student likes a little time to think before they speak to make sure that there is no loss of face as a result of what they say, i.e. a silence may be used as a way to gather their thoughts. The idea of saving face was also given as an example when highlighting how coping is influenced by cultural factors (Heppner, 2008), is being asked to participate in class viewed as a stressor for the international student? This time of silence for the international student may give them the chance to articulate what they want to say without losing face themselves but also not to be seen as contradicting or arguing with the lecturer so that they also do not lose face, which may be influenced by the hierarchical relations that exist within their own familiar academic culture (as per Table 2.11).

Table 2.11 Academic Expectations of British Staff

British academic expectations	Academic expectations held by Chinese and other groups
Individual orientation	Collective consciousness
Horizontal relations	Hierarchical relations
Active involvement	Passive participation
Verbal explicitness	Contextualised communication
Speaker/writer responsibility	Listener/reader responsibility
Independence of mind	Dependence on authority
Creativity, originality	Mastery, transmission
Discussion, argument, challenge	Agreement, harmony, face
Seeking alternatives	Single solution
Critical evaluation	Assumed acceptance

Source: Jim, 1992; Jim and Cortazzi, 1993 cited in Cortazzi and Jin 1997:78

With the many nationalities of students in the WBP it is argued that they face similar challenges in their new academic environment, which is explored further through the questioning in both the focus group and questionnaires conducted with the students.

participate. It refers to 'beliefs and values about teaching and learning, expectations about classroom behaviour and what constitutes 'good work' (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997:77). The example of British lecturers and the Chinese students was used to highlight some of the differences that exist e.g. the international student viewed the lecturer to be an expert and that their role is to learn by listening and respecting the lecturer. In contrast to this, the lecturers viewed their role as a facilitator in guiding the student to search for answers and they expected the student to develop research skills and critical thinking skills.

Clearly unless the issues of culture and learning are made explicit it is no surprise that international students face so many challenges. Exploring this discussion in the WBP intends to eventually inform practice in relation to student and lecturer expectations in the classroom environment. The issue of being prepared prior to arrival (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang *et al* 2011) and how differences in cultures of learning are shared prior to arrival may influence the way in which a student copes with their new environment.

Mukminin (2012) focused his study on Indonesian students studying in the USA and he chose just one group to research as he felt that it is not possible to just group regions together e.g. to include Indonesians in the Asian category as even within these regions there are vast cultural differences (similar to the discussion by Hofstede *et al* 2002 and individuality). His study highlighted that the key academic challenges that they faced were similar to those mentioned above but indicated that these challenges seemed to be more apparent in the first semester. The Indonesian students indicated that the amount of work expected of them in comparison to home was greater, where one student discussed the need to do three assignments a week in comparison to three or four assignments per semester in their home country education system. With regard to this finding, timing is of relevance to the WBP as the student has only 18 weeks to deal with multiple assignments therefore is workload viewed as challenging?

Lecturers tend to have high expectations of the students; the students experienced performance anxiety and despite working hard still feared failure (Mukminin, 2012). This resonates with the study conducted by Cortazzi and Jin (1997). Language appeared again as a challenge in terms of listening in the classroom. Accents and pace of speech of

the lecturers influenced understanding. The students' lack of confidence in speaking in front of class members when English is not their mother tongue heightened their anxieties and this combined with the difficulties they had with 'questioning' the opinion of a lecturer meant that they tended to sit quietly in class rather than interact. The expectation in the US education system was very different for them. Again, there were similarities here with the British education system studied by Cortazzi and Jin (1997).

The uncertainty experienced in moving to a new academic environment highlighted similarities to culture shock (see Section 2.4) and so the term 'learning shock' was coined demonstrating that all the 'familiar routines and reference points are lost' (Griffiths *et al*, 2005:278). The study was conducted on postgraduate students in a UK university who were returning to education after having time away from it. One of the key issues was related to language, the idea of not being able to read non-verbal cues, understand local jokes etc. caused frustrations. Similarities can be seen here with Cortazzi and Jin (1997) in relation to the cultures of communication. Language crosses many boundaries in that it is key in relating to other people through how thoughts are expressed and influences how learning takes place (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009). From this it can be argued that even though these issues relate to integrating on a social level, they can also impact on the ability to work in groups for academic purposes. Even though the sample in the study by Griffiths *et al* (2005) was on those returning to education (a mix of international students doing an MBA programme in the UK) the learning shock was similar to that of the international student in other studies as identified previously. Being used to a particular learning style e.g. non-questioning of the lecturer (as identified by Mukminin, 2012) was a problem identified with Griffiths *et al* (2005) also, whereby seeing others critique and discussing topics with the lecturers made the international students in their sample annoyed or angry.

An interesting view discovered from this study (Griffiths *et al*, 2005) was the issue related to working in groups for assignments. A finding from one of the respondents pointed out that the idea of working in groups was bizarre for her so understanding why it existed in the first place was a challenge. Trying to work out who is part of the group and

the function that each played within it caused anxieties. It took quite some time to work out what was expected and the challenges were heightened with the issue of language, not fully understanding the discussions being held, what was the expectation, getting feedback on work submitted and even understanding the feedback. This experience led to depressive tendencies. Poor experiences also included contributions by individuals stopping due to the feeling that the contributions are not being valued. Some people tend to take charge and others just seem to follow. Many of the challenges identified through this research are pertinent to the WBP where it is argued that given the timeframe that the sample students have to settle into their new environment, understanding the particular challenges they face should assist in helping them to adapt in the new academic setting.

The concept of 'critical thinking' has been identified by researchers as an area that international students struggle with. There is a vagueness associated with the term (Vandermensbrugge, 2004). It is assumed that this ability to think critically is paramount in order to succeed within the academic setting and has been given so much importance among the Anglo-Saxon university systems (as can be seen in Table 2.11 - critical evaluation as an expectation from British lecturers). Defining it is complicated and what is argued by Vandermensbrugge (2004) is that the context in which it is used needs to be clarified for international students. The idea of not just 'being given the answers' was a struggling point for many international students. Comments like 'we are supposed to be taught, and not to teach ourselves' (Griffiths *et al*, 2005:286) are frequently heard among international students. Maybe this is the reason why students in Mukminin (2012) study identified that there was more in terms of the workload, there is the expectation that students need to read more rather than just be handed the answers. It could be argued here that part of this clarification of differences in education systems could be made more explicit in the information that is made available to students when they are searching for information regarding their decision to study abroad.

Self-learning is an area that is new to many international students that have come from education systems where the lecturer just shares their knowledge with the students and there is no need to read further and spend hours trying to discuss a topic, where the

lecturer in the westernised universities are seen mainly as facilitators to this learning process (Zhou *et al*, 2008). The type of rote learning and memorising that is associated with many international students is seen as problematic by academics rather than questioning their own particular practices in the classroom and using the wealth of differences that exist in the classroom setting to encourage learning. It is questionable whether the different types of learning should be seen as just that i.e. different and not just negative (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004). It is questioned whether the assumption that the surface type learning that is associated with Asian education systems is positive or negative (Biggs, 1990, cited in Ramburuth and Tani, 2009). Many programmes have changed to suit the needs of practices within the work setting however, are those that truly think critically and question the status quo what organisations are looking for today (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004)?

There are several key issues in the literature on culture shock in terms of academic culture that are highly relevant to the WBP. As identified above, there have been similarities identified between culture shock and learning shock which are difficult to separate as both involve a process of change where the international student needs to deal with unfamiliarities in the situations they find themselves. For the case of the WBP, the international student fits into the category described by Pyvis and Chapman (2005) and Ramachandran (2011) where they are located in a UK university system but within the Swiss culture. This is a double-edged sword for the international student in the WBP sample whereby they have two cultures to adjust to. This could be heightened by the fact that the language of instruction in the WBP institution is not the same as the local language of the region. The same expectations as identified above in terms of language, workload, group work are present and it will be interesting to examine what kind of coping strategies are adopted by these students. Given the many challenges that the sample students in the WBP may face, the exploration of these issues may have implications for daily practice among the lecturing team and how they assist with the adaptation of the student. Section 2.4.2 (acculturation and coping strategies) explored both acculturation and coping strategies and the remainder of the chapter will focus on

the Functional Model of Friendship Networks (Bochner, McLeod and Lin, 1977) to examine how the students in the sample use these networks as a way to cope with the various challenges they face.

2.6 Friendship Patterns

One of the seminal works of the friendship patterns of international students is by Bochner *et al* (1977). They developed the Functional Model of Friendship Networks, which identified that there are three main groups that students befriend during their stay in the foreign location. Table 2.12 highlights these three groups, each of which will be discussed in greater detail.

Table 2.12 Functional Model of Friendship Networks

Friendship Group	Function
Co-nationals	To provide companionship and emotional support and to enhance self-esteem and cultural identity.
Other non-compatriot foreign students	To provide recreational as well as mutual social support based on a shared foreignness.
Host nationals	Largely instrumental, to provide help with academic and professional difficulties.

Source: Bochner *et al* (1977, cited in Sang and Ward, 2006:259)

Their study used a questionnaire to identify the culture of the 'best friend' that international students had and also discovered the friendship groups that the international students would prefer to befriend in given situations. Co-nationals emerged as being the largest network that international students join followed by host nationals and then other non-compatriot foreign students. A critique here in relation to the order of the friendship networks was that host nationals appear in second place because of the sheer number of this group available to befriend in comparison to the numbers of possible other non-compatriot foreign students. According to Bochner *et al* (1977) the situation itself influenced the friendship network chosen e.g. host nationals for language and academic issues, co-nationals for personal issues, shopping and partying.

A critique of the Bochner *et al* (1977) study was the fact that the sample was not very extensive (30 Far Eastern foreign students and 6 host national students in Hawaii) so

Furnham and Alibhai (1985) extended this model among a sample of 140 foreign students from each continent in a University and other colleges in London. The same research instrument in relation to 'best friend' and 'preferred friend' was distributed and the results agreed with that of Bochner *et al* (1977). The outcome of Furnham and Alibhai (1985) supports Bochner *et al* (1977) in that the co-national friendship is one that quite possibly should be nurtured and not interfered with but 'shaped to become more open to bi- or multi-cultural influences' and the host national friendship network should be 'expanded to reach beyond their initial task-oriented and instrumental function' (Bochner *et al*, 1977:292).

Hendrickson, Rosen and Aune (2011) also examined the Functional Model of Friendship (Bochner *et al*, 1977) and found that their sample of international students did not seem to have the co-national network as primary group of friends but rather the host national group. Through their discussion however, they link this finding to the methodological differences that existed between their study and those that went before them e.g. the 2011 study asked for an 'exhaustive list of their whole friendship networks, where each friend was from, and the strength of each friendship. Previous research designs included asking participants to list their five best friends' (Hendrickson *et al*, 2011:289). Limiting the international students to choosing their five best friends possibly forced them to think more seriously about their choices. A general challenge identified through studies on friendship networks was the interpretations that come with the term 'friend' for example, an acquaintance or a true friend?

Schartner (2015) in her research used a longitudinal qualitative study in an effort to add depth to the predominately quantitative studies that went before her. She also used the Functional Model of Friendship Network by Bochner *et al* (1977) to 'investigate the dynamics and functions of social ties' (Schartner, 2015:225) by using interviews with 20 international students (carried out on three occasions) in a university in the UK. Her findings revealed that the three friendship networks still existed within the sample but the 'functions' of the networks change over the time of the study. There were 'complexities' involved with the co-national friendship group, 'frustrations' associated with the host

friendship group and her study highlights the importance of the non-compatriot foreign students as a friendship network that gained more attention as time progressed for the international student through the academic year. So, from her study, the 'order' of the friendship networks were different to that of Bochner *et al* (1977) i.e. non-compatriot foreign friends, co-national friends and then host national friends. This seems to challenge the critique of Bochner *et al* (1977) in that even though there are substantially more host national students to find friends, the growth of the international student body today makes it easy for international students to choose from the other non-compatriot foreign friendship group. The difference in the function that each group provides e.g. non-compatriot foreign friends can also provide emotional support and it moves beyond just recreational needs of the student. The non-compatriot group also assisted in academic support (Schartner, 2015). It is arguable then if the recommendation by Bochner *et al* (1977) should be considered i.e. that the co-national group should not be interfered with due to the importance it had in terms of support.

So far the research all points to their being three groups of friends that students can use however within the context of the WBP there are mainly two groups i.e. the co-national group and other non-compatriot foreign students. The WBP institution receives very few host national students. This led to questioning on the networks of friends that the WBP students use to help them cope with challenging situations experienced. For example, who takes the place of the host national student who provides assistance with academic and professional issues? It is also interesting to consider if the different networks of friends help in dealing with problem-focused, emotion-focused or a mix of both types of challenges (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985; Heppner *et al* 1995).

In their study, Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) used the Identity Negotiation Theoretical (INT) Framework to discuss issues, both positive and negative, related to how an individuals' identity is affected through the experiences they have while trying to adapt to a new cultural setting and interacting with others of differing cultures. The theory has ten core assumptions as highlighted by Ting-Toomey (2005). These were narrowed into five identity discussions as can be seen in Table 2.13. These are in brief:

1. 'Security - vulnerability' refers to the feeling of security that an individual experiences within themselves when interacting with others who are different.
2. 'Inclusion - differentiation' refers to how included or excluded an individual feels within different groups they encounter.
3. 'Predictability - unpredictability' links to behaviours that are shown in various interactions e.g. interacting with similar others leads to more predictability as similar values exist between those involved in the interaction.
4. 'Connection - autonomy' refers to relational issues related to issues of communication e.g. verbal - non-verbal and emotional expressions. Privacy is also a consideration within this boundary e.g. collectivists versus individualists.
5. 'Consistency - change' examines over time whether cultural norms are maintained or changed.

Within these boundaries, and in order for an individual to feel accepted in a new environment, intercultural negotiation skills are a must. Those that have these skills should experience better adjustment within the new location (Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013; Ting-Toomey, 2005). Cultural identity is defined by Ting-Toomey (2005:214) as 'the emotional significance we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger culture.' This however, she believed is two-dimensional; content and salience. Content refers to the values that people show through their behaviours and links this to the cultural dimensions coined by Hofstede (2001) e.g. individualism and collectivism.

Table 2.13 Identity Dialectics: Five Boundary-Crossing Themes

Identity Security	-----	Identity Vulnerability
Identity Inclusion	-----	Identity Differentiation
Identity Predictability	-----	Identity Unpredictability
Identity Connection	-----	Identity Autonomy
Identity Consistency	-----	Identity Change

Source: Ting-Toomey (2005:119)

Understanding these dimensions will influence how people interact with each other. Salience on the other hand refers to the strength of the association that exists between a person and their larger cultural group, for example if a person feels a strong membership to their larger cultural group there is a higher likelihood that those cultural norms will be evident in their interaction with others. It is this idea of content and salience that may influence the outcome of intercultural contact or the acculturation strategies adopted (Ward *et al*, 2001; Berry, 1997) (see Table 2.4 and Table 2.9). Ting-Toomey (2005:217)

simply defined identity negotiation as a ‘mutual communication activity’ meaning that the identity of both parties involved in the communication is presented with each party questioning or supporting the identity of the other. Within this interaction some are mindful and others are more mindless in the communications.

Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) used this INT framework in a qualitative study among international students studying in the USA to investigate how the students give meaning to their identity and what the outcome is e.g. feelings of inclusion or exclusion. Within the INT framework they examined the different friendship networks developed by Bochner *et al* (1977) and the role this played in adjusting to the new culture. Interesting themes developed from their study. They found that the adjustment patterns varied (e.g. U-Curve, M-Curve, One-hill Curve, Upward Trend, Downward Trend), identity adjustment and communication styles changed (e.g. the feeling of having to change in some way), time within the context of developing friendships varied (e.g. not enough time to develop real lasting friendships), and identity shock and friendship dialectics (e.g. feelings of being visible / invisible; closedness as opposed to openness in friendships; and feeling like a guest or an alien). The friendships that the international student develop can greatly assist in coping with the demands that are associated with new complex higher education systems (Rienties, Héliot and Jindal-Snapt, 2013). The findings from Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) are pertinent to the WBP as it was hoped to discover how the students in the WBP sample feel with regard to friendships that are made within the short time-frame that they have on the academic programme i.e. is there enough time to make friends that can help with academic issues? Is there a feeling that in order to adapt there is a need to change in some way?

The following section will look at the different friendship networks developed and how they might help or hinder cultural adaptation.

2.6.1 Co-Nationals

The first group that international students tend to befriend are others from their own culture; co-nationals (Bochner *et al*, 1977). As can be seen from Table 2.12, the key purpose of this group of friends is to surround themselves with support from people of

the same culture so as to try and maintain cultural identity. As identified earlier, the international student faces many challenges with moving to a new culture and adjusting to the environment that they find themselves. Adjusting to the new environment can be exhausting as a result of the complexities involved (Paige, 1990). Due to this, the co-national friendship network can help as a way to alleviate the pressures. However, in contrast to this, other pressures may appear from within this group of friends as indicated by Bochner *et al* (1977:279) i.e. international students face pressure from within this group to encourage the maintenance of their own cultural identity and to not become ‘too westernised.’ With the difficulties involved in dealing with the various pressures, it is possible that this may influence the outcome that is experienced at individual intercultural contact level as previously mentioned by Ward *et al* (2001) (Table 2.4) e.g. *Chauvinist*, where the host culture is rejected in order to maintain home culture identity, *Marginal Syndrome*, where an effort is made to move back and forth between both host and home cultures but feel comfortable in neither; or *Mediating Persons*, where the student can integrate both cultures and feel comfortable in both. In the context of the WBP student however, what is considered as the host culture? The social context and relational pressures of the group need to be given consideration with regards to the acculturation strategy used (Samnani *et al* 2013). For example, in line with acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997 / Table 2.9) and consequences of individual intercultural contact (Table 2.4), the pressures experienced can influence the behaviour that the individual shows and how they end up 'acculturating' to the new environment. Although the study by Samnani *et al* (2013) was not conducted among the international student group but on immigrants coming to work in a new cultural setting, the outcome of their findings is relevant to the international student. Pressure can come from ‘family, friends and ethnic enclave members’ who may be present in the society that exists in the new culture already (Samnani *et al*, 2013:173). Depending on this pressure from family or friends it can encourage a newcomer to separate or integrate into the new environment. It is argued that for the international student in the WBP institution, the ethnic enclave members could be considered as the co-national group of friends. The outcome of the intercultural

contact or the acculturation strategy used by the international student also influences the perceptions that the host culture student may have of the international student e.g. 'foreigners' (Paige, 1990), and may hinder the development of the host culture friends.

A study conducted on French students studying in the USA (Matusitz, 2005) emphasised the security and vulnerability discussion (Ting-Toomey, 2005), i.e. those that felt more vulnerable in situations tended to stick together more (with co-nationals) as they did not feel as if they could develop relationships with the host culture students. The inclusion - differentiation discussion from Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) who used the INT is also apparent in various studies (e.g. Brown, 2009; Lee, 2008) which show international students who do not feel accepted or welcomed in the new culture tend to use the co-national students as a support mechanism.

Mixed feelings towards having co-nationals as friends have also been identified i.e. wanting to have co-national friends but at the same time wanting to avail of the opportunity to make host national and other national friendships. It was argued that if only co-nationals friends were made it could be harmful in the long run (Schartner, 2015). This further exacerbates the pressures and complexities associated with developing friendship networks mentioned by Bochner *et al* (1977). Through this longitudinal study, time assisted students to move from the co-national group to make more of an effort to meet with others that were different to them. With the context of the WBP students, it is questionable if they have the time to take to develop other networks of friends in which to gain support? Interesting from this study was the fact that international students seemed to try and keep touch with friends and family in their home country through the use of technology.

This group of friends can also be important for the international student as a way to help ease re-entry issues when the student returns to their home culture. Marx (2001) indicated that this is more problematic than is first thought and is not as simple as 'just going home'. Many things will change for the international student during their stay abroad (i.e. being influenced by the host culture) which they may not necessarily be aware of, and at the same time, things are changing at home, home is not at a stand-still.

There are personal and professional readjustment issues at the stage when the international student decides to return home. It is questionable whether they are aware of this issue during their stay abroad but it could also be a reason why the co-national group of friends is important to have.

This discussion on the co-national group as a friendship network helped inform the questioning of the students in the WBP. What is the feeling towards this network of friends? Do they help in challenging situations or is the opposite view taken where this network could hinder the development of opportunities that can be gained through having other friendship networks? Does it assist in the adaptation of the student?

2.6.2 Host Nationals

One of the main reasons why students travel to be educated in a foreign location is that the location provides the qualification that the student desires (Bochner *et al*, 1977). This echoes the Push and Pull Factors identified by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), for example, a push factor being that the foreign degree is seen as more valuable than that in the home country, or a pull factor being the reputation or profile of the country. The fact that the host country where the education is taking place has the ability to satisfy this need of the student, influences the friendship network with the host culture students. This network of friends is mainly important in helping to ‘facilitate the academic and professional aims of the students’ (Ward *et al*, 2001:148). However, in the context of the WBP, the host student is lacking. Is this group substituted in any way? Initially these friendships are seen as professional in nature and are not expected to develop into anything more but often they can and do develop into something more long standing even after the international student leaves the host country. Research on the influence that host culture friendships have, has been varied suggesting on one hand that there is a positive link between having host culture friends and overall satisfaction and better adjustment; and on the other hand a strong link with the home culture has resulted in better adjustment of sojourners and the need for a connection with the host culture did not necessarily lead to better adjustment (Ward and Rana-Deuba, 2000).

A myriad of studies have been conducted on the difficulties that are associated with integrating with the host culture students. The dimension of security-vulnerability greatly influences if this group will be befriended. The timing involved may also influence whether the effort involved in making host culture friends is worth it as the stay in the host culture may be short-term in nature and the commitment to knowing the host culture may not be present (Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013; Ward *et al* ,2001). The international student has a high expectation to integrate with this network (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009). However, the international student tends to have very little contact with host culture students and spend much of their time with co-nationals and the contact they have with the international student is quite superficial (Kazuhiro and Simkin, 2003). In light of the challenges that international students have in establishing networks with host students, research on interventions aimed at assisting with the development of this friendship network has emerged. For example, Todd and Nesdale (1997) conducted an experiment in Australian colleges where they intervened and promoted intercultural contact between international students and Australian students in one group and monitored intercultural contact in another group that had no intervention (i.e. a control group). They found from the beginning of their study that international students (in both groups) more so than the Australian students (in both groups) were interested in developing intercultural contacts however the conclusion of the experiment indicated that it was the Australian students (from the non-control group) that gained more from the interventions in relation to intercultural contact, knowledge and acceptance.

The authors provided a number of reasons as to why the international student did not gain as much from the intervention however they found that each of their reasons were not very plausible e.g. the international student did not need the contact in order to survive socially as there were sufficient numbers of culturally similar others present that could help with this, however, the same applied to the Australian student, so why did it work more for them? A more likely reason given by the authors was that quite possibly the international students had already 'higher levels of intercultural acceptance than the Australian students' (Todd and Nesdale, 1997:73). Regardless of the reason, it raises the

question, if international students desire to have host culture friendship networks to help facilitate their academic and professional goals (Ward *et al* 2001) why did the interventions not work particularly well for these students? Todd and Nesdale (1997) tried to rationalise this by questioning the choices they made in relation to those involved in the interventions e.g. the mentors, the lecturers etc. and also the way in which the research instrument was interpreted by both the Australian student and the international student in relation to understanding terminology e.g. 'contact'.

Although slightly different in focus, a study by Woods *et al* (2013) experimented with intercultural development programmes in order to deal with this issue that international students face with regards to the lack of host contact. Their intervention did not however just include mentors in the programme that were host culture students (i.e. Australian) but also 'other' international students on a higher level of the same programme of which the new international students were part. The development programme trained the mentors how to mentor a new international student. What was discovered from the programme was that the international students did seem to benefit from the increased efforts made to improve intercultural contact. What is not clear from this research however is whether it actually increased the particular network of friends i.e. host culture friends. What *can* be drawn from these two studies nevertheless, is the fact that intervening to help facilitate the development of this friendship network may be worth considering but attention needs to be given to who should be involved in the mentoring process. In addition to this and in agreement with discussions by Ward and Rana-Deuba (2000), consideration should be given to the quality of the interactions with the host culture and not just quantity of interactions in relation to adjustment issues. They discovered in their study that the quality of interactions with the host culture helped alleviate the feelings of loneliness. However, this appears to be opposite of Zimmerman (1995 cited in Hendrickson *et al*, 2011) who indicated that frequency of contact with host students is what was of importance in adjusting to the American culture.

Given that the sample in the WBP do not have the same accessibility to the host culture student it is intriguing as to who substitutes this friendship group given the

literature indicated the network as important in professional and academic matters. It is questionable whether the sample students have high expectations of integration with the host culture given the length of time of their programme. Are they even aware of the lack of host culture student prior to their arrival? The third and last group discussed in the literature is the non-compatriot foreign students who are explored in the next section and a group that is very accessible to the WBP student group.

2.6.3 Other Non-Compatriot Foreign Students

As indicated in Table 2.12 non-compatriot friends share the feeling of being foreign in the new location and as a result of this foreignness the group is used as a support system (Bochner, Hutnik and Furnham, 1985). The research by Bochner *et al* (1985), which was conducted in a residential setting in an Oxford student residence highlighted that even though there were a mix of nationalities (host, and foreign) the majority of the international students in the sample chose to be friends with either co-nationals or other non-compatriot foreign students despite there being a similar number of host culture students in the residence. Although the reason why this happened is not developed in their work, it is interesting to note that even in close settings where the possibility to mix with host national students is present, the host is still not a big part of the friendship network that the international student establishes. Although non-compatriot foreign students have a specific function (Bochner *et al*, 1977), the network is sought out as a result of the difficulties involved in making friends with host nationals and the need to gain support (Schartner, 2015; Rienties *et al*, 2013). It is also sought out by students who want to share knowledge and avail of learning opportunities based on similarities in attitudes regardless of the culture of the individual (Rienties *et al*, 2013). Benefits associated with having this network of friends has been discussed in the literature. For example, simple things like difficulties with accents in speaking the host language causes intimidation therefore it is less stressful to speak to other foreigners who also have accents. Having this group of friends from all over the world can help widen social networks for after the university period when students move on to other places and it also

allows for students to learn more from other cultures and not just that of the host culture (Yeh and Inose, 2003; Yum, 2001 cited in Hendrickson *et al*, 2011). It is argued that those with more extensive networks of friends (including non-compatriot friends) have more social resources available to them to help with adjustment than those that had more narrowly defined friendships (Hendrickson *et al*, 2011).

Students, despite not having host culture friends and having non-compatriot friendships for support have managed to adjust socioculturally (Kashima and Loh, 2006) and this finding is in contrast to findings from previous research conducted. They questioned this finding and related it to the measures that were used in the different methodologies and indicated that further investigation was needed around the area of quality vis-à-vis quantity of interactions. Their findings however, supported previous literature in relation to those that had more contact with host culture students tended to adjust more psychologically.

The discussion in the literature with regard to the friendship networks developed by international students is going to be used in the WBP to investigate how dynamics might be different i.e. how the co-nationals and non-compatriot networks compensate for the lack of the host national network. The research on ‘interventions’ (Todd and Nesdale, 1997; Woods *et al*, 2013) is enlightening and influences questions with regard to support that the student may need in assisting their adjustment given the short nature of their programme.

2.7 Implications for Practice

The literature explored in this chapter has many implications for daily practice in the classroom setting as well as within the wider context of higher education with regards to attracting international students to study in foreign locations and facilitating their preparedness and adaption. From the beginning when the student makes the decision to travel to a foreign location to study, whether they recognise cultural differences when making the choice (Cubillo *et al*, 2006) (see Section 2.2) may be significant in the preparation that is done prior to travel (Wang *et al*, 2011) and eventually influencing

whether expectations have been met and finally their adjustment to the location. With the research discussed with regards to culture shock, specifically Hyde (2012) (see Section 2.4.1) it is hoped to recognise whether students that arrive in the classroom are in the survival or honeymoon period. It is argued that the timeframe suggested in the model is not fitting with the intensity of the programmes offered in the institution of the WBP. Whether the student arrives anxious or excited combined with the discussion in Section 2.5 (Culture Shock in the Context of Academic Culture) will have implications on how the lecturing team deliver. For example, the questioning of their own practices (Zhou *et al*, 2008), how they figure out student expectations, how material is delivered (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997), how group work is set up (Griffiths *et al*, 2005), how to balance the variety of learning preferences that exist in the one classroom? Reflecting on these discussions has further implication with regards to how the student attempts to cope with the situation they are in i.e. how do the friendship networks (Bochner *et al*, 1977) influence this (see Section 2.6). Should there be interventions to help encourage the various networks? Can knowing the friendships established by the students assist in the classroom setting e.g. working in groups, language used in group discussions held in class time? Will this assist the student to feel comfortable more quickly given that they have a shorter time to settle and there is a void with regard to the host culture student to support with academic issues? Will the lecturer need to provide extra support?

In the wider context of higher education, understanding the daily issues that are experienced in the classroom should influence the communication practices of institutions with potential students. Particularly institutions that operate the intense programmes such as the one in the WBP, of which there are many. For example how do the marketers influence the expectations of the potential student (Azmat *et al*, 2013) (see Section 2.2) so that the student feels that they arrive more prepared with regard to what to expect from an academic and national culture perspective (Wang *et al*, 2011)? The awarding university has a vested interest in these marketing practices of the partner institution as the end result, how the student performs can influence the overall statistics from the awarding institution. One of the outcomes of the WBP is to be able to

disseminate the findings to many stakeholders which is discussed further in Chapter 6 but more discussion will be had on how the findings have already influenced the daily practices with a view on how these can be shared further within the wider context of the institution and higher education.

2.8 Conclusion

The intention with this chapter was to evaluate the theoretical frameworks that form the underpinning of the WBP. Key areas that were identified through this chapter being brought forward into the analysis are recapped on in this section. The international student is influenced by many different factors when they decide to study in a foreign location. The situation of this research i.e. Switzerland, is renowned for hospitality and it is hoped to identify how much this influenced the student's choice to study in the location of this study. From the model developed by Cubillo *et al* (2006), International Students' Preferences, it is hoped that this study will identify any culture related factors that the student may have researched prior to making the trip to Switzerland. The Push-Pull model by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and the International Students' Preference model by Cubillo *et al* (2006) have been used as a guiding framework to help focus questions in the data collection. What are the key considerations when deciding on studying in Switzerland and what are the key issues that are taken into consideration when looking for a place to study abroad? Preparation prior to coming to the foreign location was an area that Wang *et al* (2011) explored in their study and this is being used to see if the students in the sample felt as if they were prepared prior to their study in Switzerland. Issues of expectations will be analysed also based on studies by Azmat *et al* (2013) who indicated that managing expectations can be influenced by the institutions' communication channels. What were the sources that students used in order to research to help them make their choices to come to this institution, how did it influence the expectations they had and did this help them feel prepared for the venture that they were undertaking? How accurate and trustworthy (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) was this information that they found?

From the discussion on culture and culture shock within the national and academic context, a key area of interest that is being brought forward in this WBP is the issue of time. Was culture shock experienced and when was this experience? The discussion highlighted various opinions from authors in relation to what is felt at the entry point to the new culture with some viewing this as positive through excitement and others viewing this change to cause anxieties with more negative feelings. This study hopes to identify what is experienced by the student. The study will also identify if the challenges experienced by the students in the WBP are similar or different in terms of the new academic culture that they find themselves, given the short nature of the programme and the nature of delivery i.e. the branch campus of the UK partner being located in Switzerland.

With regard to the discussion on acculturation, there are many factors that influence this and based on Sam's (2006) breakdown of this concept i.e the need for contact, reciprocal influence and change, the WBP intends to look at the need for contact as an issue. Combined with the research in relation to the sources that the students used to gather information on Switzerland, it is hoped to discover if this first hand contact is something that influences the students' ability to cope with the new situation they find themselves in. The WBP does not intend to measure acculturation as per the strategies proposed by Berry (1997), however, they will be used to compare with statements that the students make in relation to how they try to cope with their new environment. These statements will be developed further to investigate coping strategies that are used.

The final key discussion in this literature focused on the Functional Model of Friendship developed by Bochner *et al* (1977). There were various discussions on the three groups of friends that international students befriend and given that the student in the sample for the WBP do not have the host culture friend network to interact with, it is hoped to discover how the friendships developed help the students cope with their new environment.

To sum up, the key questions that are being brought forward in this work based on the literature discussions are:

1. What are the deciding factors that influence the students choice for coming to Switzerland?
2. What do they try to find out about the new location, both destination and institution?
3. How do they research the information they need?
4. How do they feel once they have made the decision to come to Switzerland and the institution and how do they feel once they arrive in the destination and the institution?
5. Did they experience any challenges with regards to the national and academic culture they encountered?
6. Based on the research that they did prior to coming, did it help them in any way to settle in to the new environment?
7. What did they do to deal with the challenges they experienced, if any?
8. How or did they use the friendship networks as a way to cope with difficulties?
Who were the friendship networks? How was the host culture network substituted?

It is hoped that through the discovery in the primary research that the outcome of the findings will assist the various stakeholders (see Figure 3.1) involved with the international student to better inform them of the challenges so that the international student can be assisted to cope better with the new academic and national cultures they encounter. The intentions with the findings is to not only disseminate the information but also to inform every day practice in the classroom. The next chapter explains the methodological choices that were made in order to conduct this research and justifies why these choices were made.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter is one of great importance, as it provides the detail that is required to demonstrate how the WBP was completed. The chapter reveals the choices that were made in relation to achieving the objectives that were set in chapter one. It gives the specifics in relation to the choices made and justifies them as opposed to the various alternatives that were available. It was important from the outset to place the research within the right type of context so the discussion begins with highlighting how the WBP fits within applied research. The discussion then moves to discuss ontology and epistemology and is followed by methodology. Detail on how secondary data was gathered and how this led to the creation of the primary research tools is deliberated. The chapter also deals with the challenges that were faced in the collection of the data and the ethical issues that needed consideration.

3.2 Nature of the Research

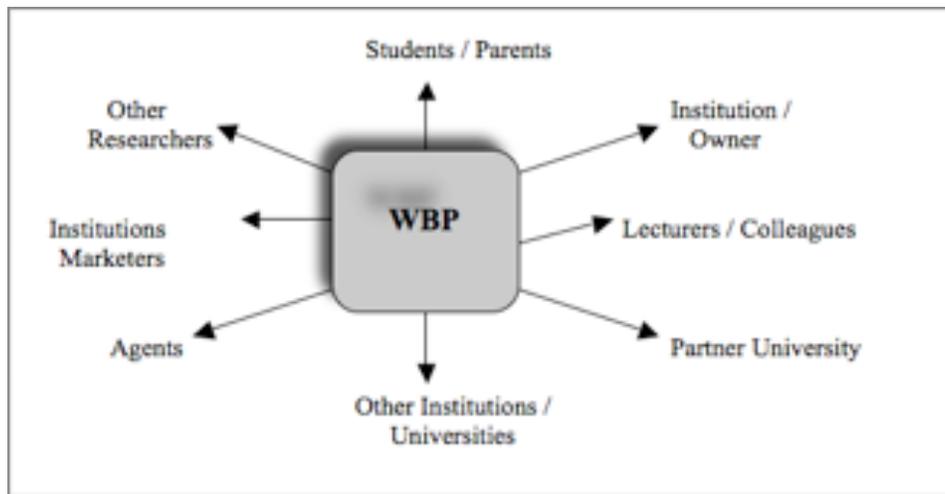
As mentioned above, it is important to understand where the research fits within the larger scheme of things. This research for this WBP is based in a practical setting, the author's place of work, i.e. a university environment (academic) but also a private institution (business). A discussion exists relating to the divide between pure and applied research and relevance of the knowledge that is created as a result of the research undertaken (Binkman and Rog, 2009; Saunders, *et al*, 2003; Hodgkinson, Herriot and Anderson, 2001; Starkey and Madan, 2001). Pure research producing knowledge without an end user as a focus and applied research producing knowledge primarily with an end user in focus i.e. can the knowledge produced lead to improvement in practices? (Saunders *et al*, 2003). As applied research is concerned with the practicalities of the knowledge gained, Bryman and Bell (2003:6) identified a number of interesting questions to help establish the purpose of the WBP research, which was the starting point for this work.

1. 'What is the aim or function of business research?
2. Is it conducted primarily in order to find ways of improving organisational performance through increased effectiveness and efficiency?
3. Or is it mainly about increasing our understanding of how organisations work their impact on individuals and on society?
4. Who are the audiences of business research?
5. Is business research conducted primarily for managers and, if not, for whom else in organisations is it conducted?
6. Or is it done in order to further the academic development of business and management as a field or even as a discipline?'

Being a project that is situated within an educational establishment, it was felt that it crossed the lines of pure and applied research. From the list of questions posed by Bryman and Bell (2003) it becomes apparent that for the WBP, the academic focus is not the only driving factor. The rationale behind the use of applied research evolved from the consideration of how the research needs to contribute to solving some of the issues that are faced by the student body. The desire to discover the issues being faced by the student body motivated the choice of a qualitative study, though the use of focus groups and questionnaires. The research within the case study institution is required to go beyond the creation of knowledge. The intention is to reflect on practices in light of the findings from the research and disseminate findings to the wider community. Applied research differs from pure research in its purpose and it intends to use knowledge in helping to understand the issue in question rather than just to expand knowledge. The need to understand was in line with the qualitative choice. The context of both pure and applied differ i.e. for the applied researcher the context is complex where controls are not easy to establish and the scope of the research is considered wider than that of the basic research (Binkman and Rog, 2009). Considering these descriptions, a case study of the WBP institution was embarked upon as it was not desired to create controls nor would it have been easy to do so given that the two different cultures that the students' experience exist simultaneously.

The topic of dissemination will be revisited in the final chapter of this work for examples of how this study had impacted the researchers' practices to-date and how dissemination is to be done on a wider scale. There are a number of stakeholders that have been identified who would benefit from this WBP research as indicated in Figure 3.1. Based on the findings and analysis, these stakeholders are grouped together in order for ideas to be linked on how the knowledge can be shared (see Chapter 6, Dissemination).

Figure 3.1 Audience for dissemination of information for the WBP



3.3 Research Design

In carrying out any research it is important to get the design of it right. The introduction chapter and the review of the literature in the literature review chapter has indicated that the research conducted is more qualitative than quantitative, given that culture shock and ways of dealing with it will be different among people. The WBP is an exploration of how and why type questions related to the students' and their methods of coping in the different cultural settings that they find themselves in. These types of questions are best suited to qualitative questioning and are appropriate in a case study research such as this WBP (Yin, 2009). There have been many criticisms made by quantitative researchers of qualitative research. Qualitative research has been criticised

as not being generalisable and being very specific to a particular situation or specific group or specific time, however it has also been praised for its usefulness in informing practice (Campbell *et al*, 2003; Davide, 1999; Newman *et al* 2006; and Popay, 2006 cited in Thomas and Harden, 2008). As this research is part of the researchers' place of work (the case study institution) and the sample being used having very differing views on what culture shock might be (the phenomenon being explored) or differing ways in which they deal with challenging situations, the data will be mainly qualitative. With this in mind, quantitative designs tend to separate the researcher from the research (Gray, 2009) but as the researcher is considered as an insider, a person who is attached to the place of research (Sikes and Potts, 2008) it was difficult to separate from the research being undertaken. Given the nature of the topic and the trust that was needed in order for the students to participate, being part of the research was considered necessary in order to gain access to the way in which the student views the phenomenon under discussion. Lyons (2007:4) identified that there are many methods of gathering qualitative data but something that underpins them all is the assumption that 'reality' is not objective and there is no one 'universal truth'. This is in line with the interpretivist nature of this WBP. She indicated that the different methods suggested that the process involved in the creation of knowledge is specific to the context in which it happens. This further supported the decision of using a case study strategy where the boundary between the context of the study and the research questions is unclear (Yin, 2003).

The use of qualitative research in the field of psychology (where much of the literature on culture shock has come from) has gone through a tremendous change over the years where once it was considered that research in this area needed to be scientific in nature and measurable (Coyle, 2007). This can be seen from the review of literature that has been conducted previously where comments were made in the critiques of some of the studies in relation to culture shock, that they were mainly conducted quantitatively. The limiting of participants to categories from which to choose is problematic in gaining the true depth of meaning of why choices are made (Coyle, 2007). In contrast to this, Bryman and Bell (2003) discussed that the use of quantitative data in the gathering of

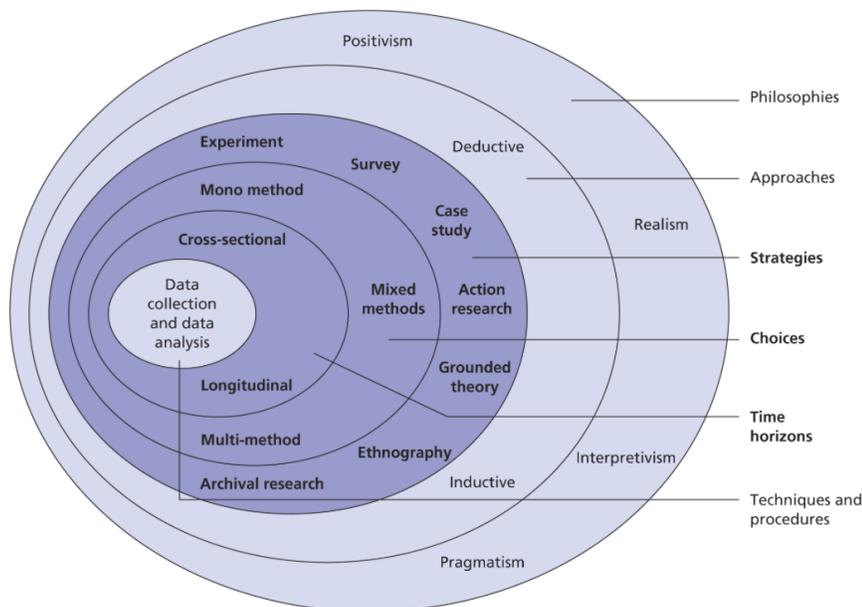
‘meaning’ is apparent in many surveys through the posing of questions related to attitudes. The WBP started very broadly through the gathering of qualitative data via focus groups and the initial findings from the focus groups were then used to develop a questionnaire, which was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative type questions to reveal the feelings of the students in the sample and add meaning to the experiences that they were going through.

Figure 3.2 depicts how the remainder of this chapter was structured. Saunders *et al* (2003) created the research onion and each of the choices made for this WBP will be discussed and justified as the best way to conduct this research.

3.4 Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

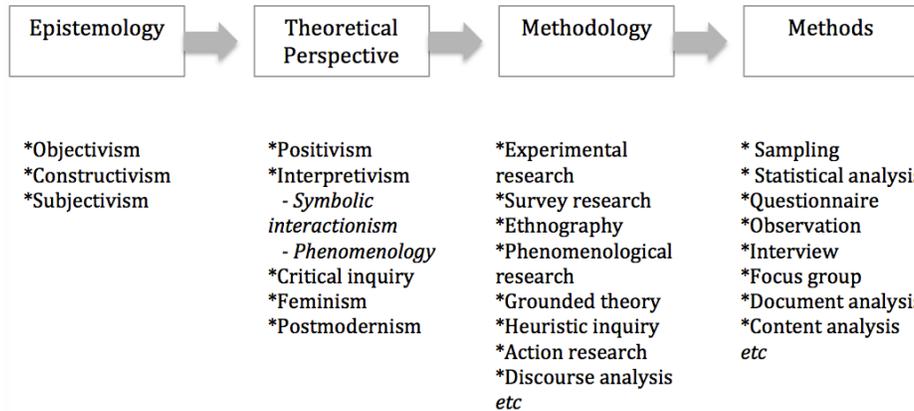
It is important to realise that everything involved in the research will be influenced by the epistemological stance of the author, for example, the method chosen will be influenced by the methodology which in turn is influenced by the theoretical perspectives and that of course is influenced by the epistemology (Gray, 2009). Figure 3.3 highlights the relationship that exists between the dimensions of the research.

Figure 3.2 The Research Onion



Source: Saunders, et al. (2003)

Figure 3.3 Relationship between epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodology and research methods



Source: adapted from Crotty (1998, cited in Gray, 2009:17)

As can be seen from Figure 3.3 ontology does not seem to be considered but as highlighted by Holden and Lynch (2004:399) the ‘researcher’s view of reality is the cornerstone to all other assumptions, that is, what is assumed here predicates the research’s other assumptions.’ The area of reality and how the researcher feels about that reality needs to be addressed (Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, 2001). Perry *et al* (1999, cited in Carson *et al*, 2001:4) state that ‘ontology is *reality*, epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher: and methodology is the technique(s) used by the researcher to discover that reality.’ Gray (2009:17) discussed that ‘while ontology embodies understanding *what is*, epistemology tries to understand *what it means to know*.’ Coyle (2007:11) discussed epistemology as ‘how we can know what we know.’

In essence, both of these descriptors fit with the purpose of this WBP where the intention was not to test whether there was an unchanging reality but to discover what are the varying views on the reality that exists for the international students. It was felt that knowing how the student feels regardless of their reality is important in the way in which they deal with the challenges they face while at the case study institute. With the WBP’s focus being on culture shock among international students, the researcher’s belief is that each students’ understanding of culture shock will be very different thus there is not ‘one

reality'. Furthermore, looking at their understanding of this phenomenon, what is it they do with this knowledge and how do they deal with challenges they face? Adopting the constructivist epistemology (Gray, 2009) as seen in Figure 3.3, the intention in this WBP is in line with the idea that the students create their own meaning and understanding about the phenomenon and that one shared truth does not exist for them. The meaning for them will come from the interactions they have within the situations they find themselves i.e. living and studying in a foreign location and how they come to terms with this in such a short period of time, which further supports the subjectivist and interpretivist nature of this research. It was felt that the objectivist epistemology which believes that an objective reality exists and is free of social actors (Gray, 2009), was not appropriate for this research given the amount of subjective opinion that was needed in order to truly understand the phenomenon of culture shock and how it is dealt with.

3.5 Theoretical Perspective

Following on from this and as Figure 3.3 depicts, the theoretical perspective is influenced by the epistemological stance. The interpretivist perspective falls into the constructivist epistemology, which tries to discover the meaning behind a phenomenon (Saunders, *et al* 2003). This perspective falls within the phenomenological paradigm which considers 'human behaviour from the participant's own frame of reference' (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:52). This further agrees with the description of what the interpretivist philosophy is about - 'no single external reality', 'understood through perceived knowledge' and 'seeking to understand specific context' (Carson *et al* 2001:6). As the focus of the WBP falls within the social science field of study, it is in agreement with the argument that has taken place between the social and natural sciences where the social sciences pertain more to 'the *understanding* of human behaviour' (Bryman and Bell, 2003:16). With regards to the topic of culture shock and whether / how it is experienced, it was difficult to justify the participants as being unconnected from their social environment which is what the positivists perspective is (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Furthermore this strengthened the choice for using a case

study where the context is viewed as important in the study (Yin, 2003). Also, given the depth of detail needed it was felt that this separation was not something that was wanted. It was necessary to elicit from the students the many different interpretations of this phenomenon in order to really discover whether suggestions could be made in relation to other students with regards to coping in a similar situation. With the WBP being applied in nature, the need to obtain suggestions from students in the current situation was paramount in order to instigate change in practices at the case study institution. As one of the outcomes of the research is to disseminate the findings to many different groups (see Figure 3.1), it was felt that depth and detail were required in order to really understand the situation. The focus in this study is on the behaviour of the international students, exploring what they experience in terms of culture shock and how they cope with challenges faced. The interpretivist philosophy facilitated such research.

3.6 Approach Adopted

Hussey and Hussey (1997:13) indicated that inductive research moves from the specific to the general i.e. ‘theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality’ whereas deductive research moves in the opposite direction i.e. from general to more specific. Both approaches tend to be highlighted as appropriate for specific research philosophies however it is argued that a combination of both can be beneficial (Saunders *et al*, 2003; Ali and Birley, 1999). Whether the research is inductive or deductive or both is not problematic, but where the focus of the research lies and its underpinning is important. For example Saunders *et al* (2003) highlighted the various characteristics of inductive / deductive research and as can be see from Table 3.1 underlines that the emphasis of the research is what matters.

A characteristic of inductive research, is the general curiosity of the researcher, which drives the need to explore more and let raw data speak for itself without being influenced by a discovery of a problem or contradiction in the literature and then setting out to test this, which agrees with the deductive approach (Shepherd and Sutcliff, 2011). However it is argued that researchers can find themselves in a situation where theory exists but

may not be specifically applicable within the context of their research (Ali and Birley, 1999). This was a consideration of the WBP where there was an abundance of theory published on the topic areas however, the context of the work was different i.e. short intensive courses in combination with a lack of host culture students. The need to apply controls and reach generalised conclusions and stay independent of the research, characteristic of deductive research (see Table 3.1) was not seen as beneficial in achieving the aim of the WBP. The literature reviewed gave rise to questioning issues like culture shock and adaptation in short intense courses along with exploring the use of the friendship networks that were described in the literature. In light of this, it was decided in the WBP to read the literature with an openness, void of preconceptions to allow the literature to ‘generate a holistic representation of the literature that subsequently directs attention towards specific literature, theories and constructs that cohere’ (Shepherd and Sutcliffe, 2011:368) rather than use the literature to dictate the research.

Having an understanding of the literature that has been produced to-date (characteristic of deductive research), it was argued that with the intention of the WBP to explore the issues with the international student, the use of the inductive approach allowed for this to happen by starting with the students views and building up to how this might impact theory and practice (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). In doing so, it was argued that the use of focus groups was an appropriate means of beginning the research with the students to explore their views on challenges they face in the case study institution with regard to the gaps found in the literature. Focus groups (seen as appropriate in applied social research) have been identified as a method used in the initial stages of research to explore opinions on the topic in question in an attempt to design a second research instrument such as the questionnaire (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2007), which was the second research instrument adopted in the WBP. The openness that the focus group discussion encouraged was considered fitting with the characteristics of the inductive approach and the initial curiosity that was experienced by the researcher. With the WBP being exploratory, i.e. seeking to gain ‘insights and familiarity’ (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:10), the focus group has been highlighted as a method to conduct this type of research

(Saunders *et al*, 2003). Even though the literature read provided an insight for the researcher, the themes generated for the focus groups were left sufficiently open to allow the students to identify challenges faced and ways in which they dealt with situations that may build on the existing literature.

Table 3.1 Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research

Deduction emphasises ...	Induction emphasises ...
Scientific principles	Gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events
Moving from theory to practice	A close understanding of the research context
The need to explain causal relationships between variables	The collection of qualitative data
The collection of quantitative data	A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses
The application of controls to ensure validity of data	A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process
The operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	Less concern with the need to generalise
A highly structured approach	
Researcher independence of what is being researched	
The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalise conclusions	

Source: Saunders *et al* (2003:89)

In addition to this, a questionnaire was produced as a way of exploring further whether the issues raised through the focus group were apparent in the wider student body. Although questionnaires are more typical in explanatory and descriptive research it was argued that with the use of well-designed open ended questions in the WBP questionnaire it is suitable to use this tool in exploratory research and allowed for the student to provide a more detailed response (Saunders *et al*, 2003). In order to do this, it was necessary to gather qualitative data that was free from controlling responses. It was felt that in order to get this data, a relaxed and semi / unstructured environment was required. Further detail is provided on how this was achieved in the sections related to the creation of the research instruments and how the research was actually conducted (Section 3.8 and Section 3.9). All of these requirements echoed the characteristics of what inductive top-

down research is about (Shepherd and Sutcliffe, 2011). This also was in line with the overall philosophical nature of the research.

3.7 Strategy Chosen

In terms of the research strategy considered for the WBP, Saunders, *et al* (2003) discussed an array of options available (see the research onion Figure 3.2). They indicated that each of these options fit within certain philosophical views, however, it is not as simple as that, as the research question is what is important here. The key questions in the WBP are those related to ‘how’ i.e. how do the international students experience culture shock and how do they cope given the two cultures that they find themselves in. In addition to this the WBP aims to explore if they use certain friendship networks to cope and why do they choose them? With this kind of questioning, the choice for the WBP moved towards a case study strategy. Initially given the nature of the WBP, it was thought that the research would be action research i.e. research, which highlights change as the outcome (Saunders *et al*, 2003). In this research, change is important, but it was not considered possible to actually implement, monitor and evaluate change and then implement change again where necessary. The case study institution involved would require more time than was available for the production of the WBP in order to carry this out. It was hoped through the production of the final results and their dissemination to the various stakeholders involved that change will eventually take place leading to a positive outcome for the students.

The case study strategy was deemed most appropriate for this WBP as the nature of the topic needs in-depth information in order to fully understand how culture shock is interpreted and the case study allows for such in-depth analysis of an organisation (Jankowicz, 2005). The case study is ‘an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’ (Yin, 2003:13) and the phenomenon being explored in the WBP is that of culture shock. The use of the case study allowed for the examination of this phenomenon within the natural setting of the case study institution. It was this need for the natural setting that led to the rejection of a more quantitative or

controlled study environment. The context of this study was considered as important as Yin (2009) indicated that the boundaries between the research question and the context in which it happens as unclear. With the WBP case, the student arrives in the case study institution, lives on the premises, mixes with others of many differing nationalities, studies within a new academic culture and has to adjust to a new national culture. It was considered difficult to identify where the boundaries were between the question being asked and the context of this study. The whole idea of culture shock (both national and academic) happened within the environment that the student is in (the case study institution) and using a case study strategy allowed for the 'context and processes' to be researched (Finn, Elliott-White and Walton, 2000:81). Using the case study allowed for the exploration of the 'how and why' questions as outlined above. As the context was important, Finn *et al* (2000) suggested that the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are appropriate. This is supportive of Yin (2003) where he indicated that both qualitative and quantitative data gathering are appropriate within the case study strategy. Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods allowed for triangulation to take place and increase the richness of the data that was required.

Clark, Riley, Wilkie and Wood (1998) distinguished between the use of single and multiple case studies and brought the choice back to the research question that is being asked and also questioned how much external validity is necessary. This WBP study used a single case study where the data gathered was from students within one institution only and was at one moment in time. Being mainly a qualitative piece of research, generalising the findings was not the aim of the WBP, beyond the institution being researched. Generalisability is more associated with quantitative research through sampling that is statistical in nature (Silverman, 2010).

Within the chosen case study strategy the data collection methods used were the focus group and questionnaire. Given that the context and the research questions had a vague boundary, there was a need to use an exploratory scoping tool as a way to identify key issues that needed further exploration and the focus group was decided upon. The focus

group explored issues identified though gaps in the literature which were questionable in the context of the WBP study i.e. short intensive programmes where very few host national students exist as a support network. Questions relating to how they experienced the arrival at the location and the institution, how they dealt with challenges they experienced, why they chose certain groups to befriend and how they felt they have adapted in the new environment? The need for this line of questioning to highlight the key ideas that needed further exploration assisted in the creation of a more focused questionnaire. The questionnaire was also very qualitative in nature however, from the focus group data gathered, it allowed the questionnaire to be structured in such a way that would influence response rate by being shorter in nature. The questionnaire assisted in getting further personal individual perceptions on the issues identified via the focus group. The questionnaire was distributed to the wider student body. The case study strategy suggests the use of multiple data collection methods in order to perform the needed triangulation (Yin, 1999). The focus group informed the questions in the questionnaire that subsequently provided the majority of data for the analysis in the WBP. The next sections focus specifically on the two chosen research instruments.

3.8 Research Instruments - Focus Group

Given the depth of information that was required for this research, the instrument chosen needed to allow the participants to express themselves in a free and comfortable manner. Within the philosophy of the research, the various and most common forms of data collection from which to choose included observation, open questionnaires, semi / unstructured interviews and focus groups. From these, it was felt that focus groups were the most suitable starting point (Stewart *et al*, 2007). The student body in the case study institution is one that does not like to speak out due to cultural influences, so finding an avenue for them to feel comfortable to express themselves in this research was of particular importance. The term focus group has been used interchangeably with other terms such as 'group interview', 'focus group interview' and 'focus group discussions' (Frey and Fontana, 1993, cited in Barbour, 2007:2). However an important

difference identified between them is the nature in which the questions are asked e.g. are the questions asked one after the other of each member of the group, or is the interaction of the group members being given the consideration that is required? In the current WBP, the focus groups were more concerned with the creation of discussion and the interaction of the members in order to encourage as much participation as possible. The key with the focus group was for the members to share their experiences in relation to culture shock and how they dealt with it. It was felt that in order to get students to share in the way that was needed voluntary participation was required. This is discussed further in the section on recruiting the participants. Many advantages have been cited in the literature in relation to the use of focus groups and one author Zikmund (1997, cited in Stokes and Bergin, 2006) listed the advantages as ten "Ss" as can be seen in Table 3.2. In brief, the advantages include the speed at which information can be gained as opposed to individual interviews, ideas being generated as a result of the response of another, and less pressure being felt by individual participants.

Table 3.2 Zikmund (1997) Advantages of Focus Group Discussions

"S"	Explanation
Synergy	The group process generates a wider range of information than would accrue from a comparable number of depth interviews.
Snowballing	Respondent interaction creating a chain of thought and ideas.
Serendipity	A great idea can drop out of the blue.
Stimulation	Respondent's views are brought out by the group process.
Security	Respondents are more likely to be candid as there will probably be other similar people there, and there is less individual pressure than in a depth interview.
Spontaneity	Because no one individual is required to respond to a question, this encourages a spontaneous response when people have a definite point of view.
Specialisation	A trained moderator can interview more respondents in a given session.
Structure	It is easier for the moderator to reintroduce a topic not adequately covered before than in a depth interview.
Speed	Quicker than individual interviews.
Scrutiny	Can be observed by members of the research team.

Source: Zikmund (1997, cited in Stokes and Bergin, 2006:27)

From this list of advantages, an 'S' that was of particular relevance to this study was that of security. Given the nature of the student body and the relationship that exists between them and the researcher, the issue of trust was something that had to be

considered. Clark *et al* (1998) underlined that one of the key aspects of gathering the required information is based on the development of trust between the members of the group and the researcher and this is further heightened in the WBP given the cultural backgrounds of the students. The need to have the student feel comfortable in this environment and the fact that the students could participate in groups allowed them to feel safer and participate more. This in turn influenced the the amount of information that could be generated as opposed to individual one-on-one interviews (‘synergy’ as outlined in Table 3.2).

The focus group as a data collection method was compared closely with that of the one-on-one interviews which, is also frequently used in the collection of qualitative data. The main disadvantage of the latter is considered to be the lack of interaction, the existence of which is necessary to encourage a deeper discussion around the topic of culture shock. It was found that being part of a group helped the students to snowball their experiences as a result of another group member's participation (‘snowballing’ constituting another of the ‘S’ requirements outlined in Table 3.2). The problems associated with having a group of people together was also considered before the decision was made to use this tool. Various studies discuss the potential pitfalls of using focus groups and these include the following: strong characteristics of the participants possibly intimidating other group members leading to quieter members not being heard; the possibility of one group member not having a similar opinion and not sharing it as all other group members have similar thoughts, gaining consensus views (Jenkins and Harrison, 1990; Bryman and Bell, 2003; Stokes and Bergin, 2006). In light of some of these potential obstacles, it was thought to give careful attention to the creation of the group through the recruitment process.

Recruiting the members of the focus group was an issue that needed careful consideration. There are various opinions in the literature reflecting the ideal size of the focus group for example. Suggestions on group size varied from the smallest number of four participants to as high as 14 (Doody, Slevin and Taggart, 2013). In light of the variations, an important consideration was the manageability of the group and it was

important to match this with the skill set of the researcher. Under four people may reveal too little information whereas the opposite, over twelve may be difficult to manage (Tynan and Drayton, 1988). With the students for this study, comfort and trust were important. It was decided that the participation needed to be on a voluntary basis. As the researcher is known to the students, access to large numbers was not deemed an obstacle. An email was sent to the students that were on-campus at the time of the data collection in April 2013 (see Appendix 1 for the email that was distributed). The email explained the nature of the study and how the results were to be used (all considered important in terms of ethical research) and at the end of the email the student was given the option of being part of a group of similar nationalities or a group that was of mixed nationalities. No student responded with the request to be part of a similar group. All indicated that a mix of nationalities was suitable. The composition of the group was considered important as it may have led to less participation if the groups were mixed. However, the literature indicated particular advantages and disadvantages of having different or similar groups respectively (Ivanoff and Hultberg, 2006). They identified that the members would have to have some similarities so as to initiate and maintain the discussion. It has also been indicated that it helps if they know each other previously as this encourages the environment of trust, which was seen as fundamental in this research. The similarities that existed in the students for this study was the fact that they are all international students facing similar issues in relation to moving to Switzerland and into a new academic environment. The key differences that exist among the focus group members relates to their cultural backgrounds and experiences they have had in different academic environments prior to coming to Switzerland. The email produced a response from 15 students who were willing to participate with one student preferring to have a one-on-one interview. As identified above, none of the students specified the need to be part of a similar group of nationalities. Three focus groups were conducted (each approximately 1.5 hours in length) with one interview (approximately 1 hour in length). The question of how many focus groups to conduct arose and it was decided that after three (and one interview) the information gained was not providing anything new. At that stage, the

topics that were to be addressed were addressed and the saturation point was reached (Saunders *et al*, 2009).

Preparation for the focus groups was important in order to obtain the data that was needed. Following initial literature readings, topic areas that needed discussion were identified as suggested by Doody *et al* (2013). A guide was created to assist in keeping the discussion within the bounds of the research topic. This guide was semi-structured in nature so as to allow the researcher the flexibility to discover further issues where needed (Yin, 1999). The guide that was produced can be seen in Appendix 2 and this highlights the structure that was to be taken and the topics that were to be covered. Timing was an issue for the three focus groups that were conducted as the students who participated were more verbal than initially expected. The nature of the research touched on areas related to disappointment for the student and this in turn encouraged them to become distracted and discuss topics that were not relevant. After 90 minutes of discussion, the focus groups were stopped as the students had other commitments. At the end of the discussions, permission was sought of each of them to see if follow-up contact could be made to complete the last section of the research. All members agreed. The transcripts of the focus groups and the individual interview can be seen in Appendices 3 - 6 inclusive.

The follow-up contact came in the form of an open-ended questionnaire produced using surveymonkey.com (see Appendix 7). It was decided to pose questions that would provide a recap on the issues that arose during the discussions. This allowed for a confirmation of the feelings that were expressed in the discussions and allowed for easier synthesis of the information at the time of write up and analysis of the focus groups. As mentioned earlier, the students had become distracted at times during the focus groups and the follow-up questionnaire allowed for focus to be maintained solely on the research topic. The results of both the focus groups and the follow-up questionnaire informed the design of the questionnaire that was then distributed among the wider student body for further investigation. This initial analysis of the focus groups provided ideas with regards

to the types of questions to be asked in the final questionnaire and in addition to ways in which to formulate those questions so that they be best understood by the participants.

The ideal approach with the focus group was to recruit a number of students that was reflective of the mix of nationalities that exist within the institution and the purposive sampling technique was considered appropriate for this (see Section 3.10 for more detail on sampling). However, given that the students were allowed to volunteer to participate, this mix of nationalities reflective of the institution did not occur (see Figure 4.24; Section 4.4). This however was seen as a compromise between having the ideal sample and encouraging more students to participate. Even though it was not reflective of the institutions typical intake, it was nonetheless diverse in participants (see Table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). It is argued that representativeness is not the key with the sample in qualitative research if the objective is to explore a phenomenon (Mays and Pope, 1995). Furthermore the discussion that was to take place on the particular phenomenon was viewed as more important than the number of participants that took part (Hopkins, 2017). It was considered relevant to identify participants with diverse characteristics or who ‘live in circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being studied’ (Mays and Pope, 1995:110) which was achieved through the participants in the focus groups. The participants represented a high mix of European with a lower representation of Asian, African and the Americans. The intension of the WBP was not to generalise beyond the case study institution so the sample for the focus group, although not representative of the typical intake, was reflective of a number of diverse situations in which the student arrives at the institution i.e. entry at first year level or direct entry onto subsequent levels. Their composition was also diverse in that there were participants who had only lived in their home country prior to arrival and those that had moved around frequently prior to arrival in Switzerland. Despite the lack of representativeness of the typical intake of students to the case study institution, the choice of focus group as a starting point to explore the issues to be examined was suitable for the purpose of the research. The data gathered provided a foundation on which to formulate questions for the questionnaire that was distributed.

3.9 Research Instruments - Questionnaire

Given the applied nature of this research and the desire to create improvement for the student it was considered necessary to explore further the issues generated from the focus group. As identified in Section 3.8, the focus group is often used in conjunction with other research tools (Doody *et al* 2013; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) and the questionnaire was considered the most appropriate tool as the second stage of data collection to further explore the issues identified. The questionnaire afforded the opportunity to reach a wider sample (to explore if the same issues arose as the focus group findings) at a relatively low expense. It was chosen over one-to-one interviews as at the time of the research, the students were about to finish their programme and many leave the campus at this stage (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Sending the questionnaire rather than trying to arrange interview schedules or further focus groups was deemed more feasible as it provided the researcher with the ability to gather many responses at the same time (de Leeuw, 2008), while giving the student time to complete it out-with pressurised exam times. Given the issue of trust that was needed from the respondents in the WBP (see Section 3.8), it was argued that the questionnaire allowed the researcher to reach a more representative group of the typical student intake, which it did (see Section 4.4; Figure 4.24). The focus group volunteers were diverse in nature but a possible reason for the lack of the larger mix of nationalities may have been related to the presence of the researcher (i.e. their lecturer). As a result of this reflection, the questionnaire allowed the student to complete the questionnaire without the presence of ‘their lecturer’ and also provided anonymity. It is also argued that the fact that the students could take their time to read the questions rather than be asked them directly afforded them the time they needed to respond (de Leeuw, 2008). This was deemed beneficial given that the first language of the student was not English.

Although the questionnaire is a tool that is typically used to gather factual information, it can also be used to gather opinions and experiences. This allowed the researcher to explore more opinions on the key issues that were identified through the focus group and it was considered beneficial in that it allowed for all participants to be asked the same

questions in the same format (Matthews and Ross, 2010) and they were returned in such a way which made it easier to compare and contrast the findings (Denscombe, 2010).

Careful consideration was taken in how the questions for the questionnaire were created in order to overcome the challenge of not being present to probe for more information on responses. The analysis of the focus group transcripts assisted in the development of the questions. Gray (2009) provided some guidance on how to create questions for a questionnaire which can be seen in Table 3.3. In reviewing this list, the one piece of advice that was difficult to take into consideration was that related to memory as the students had to think about how they felt when they arrived in Switzerland and in the new academic environment.

Due to the qualitative focus of the study, the type of questions that were included were mainly open, with a mix of some questions that were closed. The use of open-ended questions in this research were considered necessary as the student was allowed to use their own words to express feelings and show how they dealt with situations without being forced to choose between answers. From the review of the focus group findings, many of the ideas that evolved were developed into questions where the student could choose a response e.g. Yes / No or choose from a list of options that developed from the focus group. Students were also given the option to 'please explain' their choice in questions that were a little more closed in nature. Many of the questions that needed the feelings of the students were left completely open to allow them the freedom to express themselves (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The questionnaire was appropriate for the purpose of the WBP as it has been argued that the questionnaire is also appropriate in comparing 'characteristics and experiences of different groups of people' (Matthews and Ross, 2010:204).

Questionnaires are used extensively in research and Gillham (2000, cited in Gray, 2009) suggested that they should be between four and six pages in length. This was an important consideration given that qualitative data through the use of open questions was required for the WBP and can be viewed as a deterrent to responding. The questionnaire was an online questionnaire and due to the many open-ended questions asked, the design

of it had to be examined. The questions were formatted over seven pages (the first page was information related to instructions and ethical considerations and the last page was thanking the respondent). Only five pages of questions were created. Using separate pages for different sections of the questionnaire was to encourage completion of all the questions as scroll screens tend to decrease the nonresponse of some questions (Vicente and Reis, 2010). An email was sent to the students and this was viewed as the most relevant distribution method given that there is increased confidence that the appropriate person has been reached. People tend to deal with their emails personally rather than delegating the task to others (Saunders *et al*, 2003). The email contained a link for the student to access a SurveyMonkey questionnaire which arguably influences the response rate in comparison to sending an attachment that the student would have to download, complete and upload again (Vicente and Reis, 2010).

A copy of the questionnaire that was distributed can be see in Appendix 8. The questionnaire was distributed to two colleagues to gain feedback. The colleagues having worked in the case study institution for more than five years and having close contact with the students were familiar with the issues that the students might face and were able to give valuable feedback. Comments from one colleague:

I have examined your research tool with a lot of interest. I also tried answering the questions to determine its utility value. I can say this is a very well designed tool. I like the subheadings under which the terms are developed and organised. The questions are very clear. The structured possible responses are very adequate.

For the purpose of doctorate research, you may want to consider articulating your ethical obligations in this instrument. It may also be useful to give specific instructions regarding how you want the respondents to indicate their responses. There is scope to reduce the number of questions asked in this tool ... the shorter and more comprehensive the tool, the more effective.

After the necessary alteration (i.e. related to ethical obligations and improving instructions for the participants), the questionnaire was distributed using the student email database. Only students in the final year of the programme were included in the study as they were the ones that would be able to answer questions on the topic under discussion. The questionnaire was distributed to four different cohorts of students at two different times i.e. two cohorts were contacted in June 2013 and two cohorts were contacted in

June 2014. It was felt after the last distribution that a saturation point was reached as responses started to repeat and the questionnaire was not distributed again. In order to encourage participation, a similar email that was sent to the focus group students was also sent to the larger student body (see Appendix 9). It highlighted similar issues related to ethics to inform the student of how the information was to be used and guaranteed anonymity.

Table 3.3 Guidance for Creating Questions for a Questionnaire

Guidance on developing questions for a questionnaire
Can the question be misunderstood? Does it contain difficult or unclear phraseology?
Is the question misleading because of unstated assumptions or unseen implications?
Is the wording biased? Is it emotionally loaded or slanted towards a particular kind of answer?
Is the question wording likely to be objectionable to the respondent in any way?
Can the question be asked in a more direct or more indirect form?
Are double questions avoided?
Are leading questions avoided?
Is attention paid to detail e.g. overlapping categories such as 'age 30-35, 35-40'?
Do questions avoid taxing respondent's memories?
Can the questions be shortened?
Are categories such as 'Don't Know' and 'Not Applicable' provided?
Will the words used have the same meaning for all respondents, regardless of nationality, language, culture, etc.?
Is the frame of reference clear e.g. if asking how often, is the range of possible responses made obvious?
Do questions artificially create opinions on subjects where respondents really do not have any?
Is personal wording preferable e.g. 'How do <i>you</i> feel?' or impersonal e.g. 'How do you think people feel?' The first is a measure of attitudes, the second is a measure of respondents' perceptions of other peoples' attitudes.

Source: Gray (2009:341)

A challenge with the questionnaire related to the anonymity guaranteed and as no names were sought, it was difficult to find out who responded and who did not in order for follow-up reminders to be sent to the non-responders only however, reminder emails were sent to everyone in the email group to encourage participation. The response rate for this instrument was low (as expected). The total number of emails sent was 474 of which 113 were returned but only 70 were completed and used which was a response rate of just under 15%.

3.10 Sample

Sampling deals with two key questions i.e. how should the sample be chosen and how big should it be (Finn *et al*, 2000). As indicated, the WBP is exploratory in nature and this influenced the sampling techniques that were employed. The WBP is focused on the researchers' place of work therefore the choice of case study was predetermined and fits within the non-probability sampling strategy, i.e. there was no randomness involved in the selection of the case (Denscombe, 2010). However, it was necessary to use a sample within this case organisation as it was not possible, nor considered necessary, to target the whole population i.e. all the students. An exploratory sample was required for this study which allows for the smaller numbers of participants and fits with the idea of 'probing relatively unexplored topics and as a route to the discovery of new ideas or theories' (Denscombe, 2010:24). Gray (2009) indicated that qualitative research usually links to purposive sampling which is also within the non-probability strategy. Purposive sampling is fitting with the case study strategy that the WBP has followed and refers to the use of judgement in identifying those that are able to help achieve the aim of the research. The focus of the WBP is on the international student, which the chosen case study institution is made up of. Within the total population in the school, it was the final year BA level that were best seen as fit to participate in the study. During the time of the research, two academic environments existed e.g. first to third year are similar to the American system and the final year BA is linked to the British system. The WBP was to explore challenges associated with both national and academic culture and as one of the beneficiaries of this research is the awarding university in the UK, it considered that the final year BA was the sample going to be able to comment on challenges associated with the academic culture.

In purposive sampling, Patton (2002, cited in Saunders *et al*, 2009) differentiated between various purposive sampling strategies e.g. extreme case, heterogeneous, critical case sampling or typical case sampling. With the WBP, it was the heterogeneous sampling that applied, as this allowed there to be differences among the sample chosen e.g. different cultural backgrounds, different prior educational experiences and different

in terms of previous mobility. Even though the sample within qualitative research tends to be smaller in nature and the small sample may produce very different cases, Patton (2002, cited in Saunders *et al*, 2009) argued this to be beneficial as themes that emerge as similar may be of interest. Both the sample for the focus group and the questionnaire produced sufficient differences to allow for the analysis to be performed.

With the WBP, a total of 108 final BA students were contacted via email in order to search for volunteers to participate in the focus group of which 15 students replied (response rate of 14%). The second research instrument was distributed to a total of 474 final BA students via email and this produced a response rate of 15%. More detail on the breakdown of the respondents can be seen in the findings chapter (Chapter 4).

3.11 Secondary Research

Burges, Sieminiski, and Arthur (2006) indicated that in the production of a Doctorate in Education, the literature review is the section that allows the researcher to explain the relevance of the literature to the particular research in question. It was interesting to read the discussions by Wolcott (1990, cited in Silverman, 2010) related to qualitative research and Burges, *et al* (2006) on whether the traditional literature review chapter was needed or whether the literature could be integrated in other ways through the thesis, for example, dispersed throughout the work and carefully linked to the different sections in the thesis or through the production of a chapter devoted to the literature discussion. It was decided for the WBP to combine both of these possibilities and have a literature review chapter so that the discussion and identification of any gaps could be concentrated in this one section so as to help with reader guidance. However, the literature was also dispersed to other sections, for example, the analysis chapter so that comparisons could be made to previous studies and new information could be identified so as to generate or add to the literature. The secondary research and the production of a literature review chapter was considered necessary in grounding the WBP. The literature considered in the literature review chapter provided a concise discussion on the research that has been

conducted in the past and that which is currently being done in order to provide the justification for the WBP research.

Hussey and Hussey (1997) emphasised the importance of exploring the literature to identify what has been done on the area of study to ascertain how this impacts on the current study and to reflect on previous research methodologies and how this can help in the focussing of the current study. It was from this search that the final aim and objectives were decided upon given the gaps that were identified i.e. the context of the case study institution appeared different to the previous research conducted. It was important to clarify the scope of the study so that the correct sources could be tapped into.

The criteria used (not in order of importance) in the search for texts for the WBP include the following:

1. Authors: it was intended to exploit knowledge of seminal works with a view to discovering more recent research. Sources were refined to peer reviewed journals and textbooks.
2. Date of research: it was deemed necessary for this study to identify what recent research has been done in this area to identify the feasibility of continuing.
3. Relevance: key words and phrases such as 'culture shock', 'international students', 'internationalisation of education', 'learning shock', 'intensive degree programmes' 'acculturation', 'coping strategies' and 'friendship networks' were used.
4. Readership: possible readers of the WBP as identified in Figure 3.1.

Using this criteria helped in guiding the search. Much of the work on culture shock and adaptation was drawn from the field of psychology and much of the work on learning shock was drawn from studies in education. From these searches the literature was divided into key themes that were discussed in the previous chapter. The literature search was also focused on 'empirical literature' and 'methodological literature' (Gray, 2009:184), empirical meaning that the search focused on studies that have given evidence to support the claims that have been made and methodological meaning the methodologies used in these studies were considered also.

As mentioned in the focus group section, the literature provided guidance on the questions that were included in the focus group discussions and questionnaires. The literature review also assisted in the research design of the WBP.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher in the WBP is considered an insider due to the nature of the project itself. The applied nature of the research meant that a key outcome is to instigate change if needed based on the findings. Being an insider in the research can create problems with relationships within the organisation, as this research was undertaken by an individual who was already well established in the organisation, and did not have the intention to leave after the research (Sikes and Potts, 2008). The issue of objectivity has been questioned in relation to insider research and as the topic of the research led to sensitive issues it was important to show that the research was being viewed as ethical by both management and the students who participated.

Permission to conduct the research was the first consideration for the researcher. Discussions were held with line management on the topic being studied for the WBP and whether any initial concerns became apparent. Agreement was given and again, prior to actually conducting the primary research two years later, confirmation that management was still supportive of this research was gained (see Appendix 10 for email confirmation from management).

With the element of trust from the students being important in this study and based on the feedback from the colleague that reviewed the questionnaire, it was important to be clear with the student in relation to what the research is about and how the findings were to be used (Silverman, 2010). Through the initial email to the students (seeking for volunteers for the focus group and participants for the questionnaire) a full disclosure was made around these issues. They were informed that the findings would be shared with management however, no student would be identifiable via their responses. The transcripts of the focus groups and interview replaced the names of the students with numbers and the questionnaire did not ask for any identifiable information e.g. name. It was also considered important to let the students know that this research was voluntary

and because of who the researcher was, there was no obligation for them to participate. In the focus group for example, the purpose of the research and how it was to be used was explained again at the beginning of the meeting and students were given another chance to change their mind if they wished. Nobody wanted to change their mind and nobody contacted the researcher after the focus groups were conducted wishing to be withdrawn. For the questionnaire, it was explained that participation was voluntary and continuing to complete the questionnaire was their willingness to participate. No student contacted the researcher after the completion of the questionnaire wishing to be withdrawn from the research. Given the sensitivity of the topic it was felt that trust was important to gain from the student so that they did not feel as if they could be harmed in any way for the honesty they provided in the research (Silverman, 2010). It was because of this fear of harm that they may feel, that confidentiality as described above was guaranteed.

The purpose of the WBP was to initiate change and to share findings with the various stakeholders in order to help in the adjustment of the international student to life in Switzerland and the new academic environment, however, it is not the place of the researcher at this stage to give advice, however, based on the findings from the study, a set of recommendations have been produced from the feedback from the students themselves. These will be shared with the various stakeholders but are not to be considered as advice coming from the researcher.

3.13 Time Horizon

The time horizon in the WBP was cross-sectional in nature. The reasoning behind this was that with longitudinal studies it is better to have the same participants in the sample on numerous occasions over a period of time (Payne and Payne, 2004) and it was questionable as to whether it would be possible to do that in this study. For example, students participate in an 18-week programme and then do an internship of four months. It could not be guaranteed that the same students would return after the internship as some decide to extend the internship and return for a different academic term. The cross

sectional nature of the research provided a snap shot in time of how the students felt towards culture shock and how they felt they dealt with it. The cross sectional nature is also in line with the case study strategy that was chosen (Yin, 1999). The purpose of the WBP was not to measure adaptation or measure intensity of culture shock over time so the longitudinal study was not considered necessary.

3.14 Data Analysis

Doody, *et al* (2013) discuss the enormity of data that qualitative techniques create. This was true with this study which begun with focus groups and followed up by questionnaires, which used a substantial number of open-ended questions. The evidence of the amount of qualitative responses gained from the students can be seen in Appendix 11-28. Unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis is not yet at the stage where fixed rules apply in relation to its analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2003) but it has been argued that the rigidity of rules is not necessarily desirable in qualitative analysis.

Doody *et al* (2013:267) discuss in their paper related to analysing focus group data that a series of steps should be followed namely ‘(1) generating rich data; (2) familiarising oneself with the data; (3) writing memos; (4) indexing; (5) formation of themes; and (6) mapping and interpretation.’ Given the amount of data that was accumulated through the research, a framework was needed in order to guide the analysis. Many approaches exist with regards to the analysis of qualitative data and both thematic analysis and framework analysis were given consideration for this study. A combination of the two emerged as appropriate in analysing the data gathered. Both were considered as close in nature and Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood (2013) discussed how framework analysis fits within the umbrella of thematic analysis approaches. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006:79) as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.’ It is praised for its flexibility (Braun and Clark, 2006) and mostly free from a theoretical position and is being used more and more in the field of psychology. As some of the key readings for this WBP were drawn from psychology literature (e.g. culture shock, acculturation, stress, friendship networks) it was felt that

thematic analysis was the best approach to use in the analysis of the data. The generation of themes from the data was key to examine if similarities or differences existed in the way in which the students dealt with the key challenges they faced when confronting two different cultures (national and academic). The steps identified by Gael *et al* (2013) were followed in relation to analysing the data gathered for the WPB.

As discussed, the focus groups were used as a way to develop ideas for the questionnaire that was distributed to the larger group of students. Each focus group was recorded both by video and audio and were transcribed verbatim. This was a time consuming exercise but transcribing the focus groups personally allowed for the familiarisation with the data. Transcripts were read openly numerous times prior to making any notes on what was being said. Initial notes were made in order to create the questionnaire for distribution. This allowed for the key issues to be identified and integrated into the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were mainly open-ended in nature leading also to a substantial amount of qualitative data being gathered. A similar process was used to start the analysis. Although the data from these did not have to be transcribed like the focus groups, the qualitative responses had to be read openly several times in order to become familiar with what was being said. The distribution of the questionnaires happened at different stages and this was done until it was felt that no new information was appearing in the data. After each set of questionnaires were returned, they were briefly reviewed and at the return of the last set of questionnaires it was decided not to distribute again as the data appearing was becoming repetitive in nature. As the questionnaire was distributed via an online questionnaire platform, the closed-ended questions were computed automatically and charts were readily available. However, as there were two distributions of the questionnaires they had to be combined for an overall analysis. The biodata gathered from the sample allowed for further investigation in some of the analysis e.g. knowing the number of countries the student lived in helped in analysing how they felt when they arrived in Switzerland.

The next stage of the analysis was focused on indexing and forming themes (Dooley *et al*, 2013; Ward, Furber, Tierney and Swallow, 2013). This was a challenging part of the analysis as it was important to understand what indexing is and know what constitutes a theme. With the indexing, the responses of the students for each question in the questionnaire were collated together for ease of comparison. Words were highlighted (using a colour coding system) e.g. specifically related to feelings that the students were experiencing at different stages of their study. This was done manually as no computer assisted software was used in this analysis. Once the words were highlighted, they were reviewed again to look for patterns. Patterns were then created into different categories for example, for the question ‘What were your feelings once you knew you were coming to Switzerland, the initial reading of the qualitative information discovered variations in feelings ranging from positive to negative. Each word was placed in a category and a count was done to see how often each feeling was felt by the students similar to that in semantic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A typical format used can be seen in Table 3.4 taken from Q6 of the questionnaire. Doing this allowed figures to be created for ease of presentation. At this stage in the analysis, post-its were used as a way of moving back and forth between the focus groups and the questionnaires to start highlighting similarities and differences that appeared between the different themes that were discovered (Ward *et al*, 2013). Charting the data in figures made it easier to summarise the key information that was to be analysed against the literature but also with the colour coding that was used, it was easy to return to the original data if it was required.

From Table 3.4 it can be seen that the pink code highlighted ‘excited, excitement, happy’ and were put in category one. The following categories were as follows:

- Category 1: excited / happy (pink code)
- Category 2: worried / scared / nervous / anxious (green code)
- Category 3: curious / interested / eager / enthusiastic (yellow code)
- Category 4: anticipation (blue code)
- Category 5: sad (orange code)
- Category 6: other e.g. safe / secure environment (red code)

Table 3.4 Example of how categories were created from questionnaire

Q6 What were your feelings once you knew you were coming to Switzerland?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Excited	6/27/2013 6:40 AM
2	Excitement for getting know a group of new friends, but nothing special apart from that since I have been studying in the UK for 5 years before.	6/26/2013 4:11 PM
3	Very excited but unsure about the new environment and people.	6/25/2013 5:25 PM
4	Curiosity, happiness	6/25/2013 4:13 PM
5	Excited	6/25/2013 2:46 PM
6	I felt safe at ease, and great! (I knew Switzerland from before and I always enjoyed it)	6/25/2013 2:13 PM
7	Excitement	6/25/2013 2:05 PM
8	excited	6/10/2013 10:52 AM
9	Excitement and scared to come by myself.	6/4/2013 9:43 PM
10	Excited, interested	6/4/2013 1:52 PM
11	Excitement and nervous. It was unknown to me and not having lived in a foreign country alone before it was rather unnerving.	6/4/2013 11:14 AM
12	excited	6/4/2013 9:32 AM
13	excited, anxious, scared, worried, happy	6/4/2013 12:16 AM
14	excited-thanked my parents for their decision, everything looked lovely, I thought I can meet Heidi like a movie....	6/3/2013 11:18 PM
15	Nice environment	6/3/2013 10:55 PM
16	Normal	6/3/2013 10:55 PM
17	Scared	6/3/2013 10:31 PM
18	Mixed feelings, sad to leave my friends and family behind, excited to meet new people, and eager to finish school and start to work.	6/3/2013 9:50 PM
19	I honestly never saw myself in Switzerland so I really didn't know what to expect. I was excited because I enjoy travelling to new countries. I had heard there was a lot of racism however through my four years I have never experienced it.	6/3/2013 9:29 PM
20	Excited because I knew Switzerland from before and always loved it especially for its tranquility and safety.	6/3/2013 9:17 PM

Given the substantial amount of qualitative data that was gathered through the research instruments, frequently the students used complete sentences rather than just a word or a list of words (as can be seen from Table 3.4). When this was the case, the sentences were analysis rather than taking the word out of the context in which it was written similar to latent analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Examples of this can be seen further in the analysis chapter (see Section 4.4).

The framework analysis method and the development of themes is suitable to both inductive and deductive research and the key area of consideration is the research question being asked (Gale *et al*, 2013). What existed in this inductive research was the generation of themes from the qualitative data that was gathered however, there were

some specific areas that were explored, which were guided by the literature, (e.g. the terminology in the literature related to positive and negative feelings i.e. sad being associated with negative feelings) which is deductive in nature, however the questioning was left open enough to allow for the unexpected to appear.

In relation to dealing with issues of validity and reliability in this research, the literature revealed that the terminology changes within qualitative research e.g. validity referring to truth value; reliability referring to consistency; and generalisability referring to applicability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Noble and Smith, 2015). Noble and Smith (2015) suggested that qualitative researchers need to establish trustworthiness of the data and put forward suggestions on how to establish this. Having analysed the data using the framework analysis approach through the development of themes, consideration was given to various stages of the data collection and analysis in order to increase the trustworthiness. Personal bias was a concern given that the researcher was an ‘inside’ researcher, which was given consideration earlier in this chapter. As trust needed to be established with the students, being an insider was considered beneficial. It was feared given the nature of the students, there would be apprehension on their side on sharing opinions however, this turned out not to be the case. It was challenging for the researcher to stay completely objective but at the same time encourage participation on the topics being discussed in the focus groups. With regards to biases in sampling, this was left completely open for the students to volunteer with the only thought from the researcher being that related to the particular groups of students that would be best suited to help fulfil the aim i.e. BA final year students, no other boundaries were in place with regard to who within that groups could / should participate.

As identified in the procedure discussing the data analysis, the data gathered from the focus group was recorded and transcribed verbatim to allow for note taking and reflection and to help identify the key issues so that it could be integrated into a questionnaire for the larger group of students. This allowed for increased depth to be gained from the responses which were grouped together for ease of comparison and to help create an audit trail of how the themes came about. The use of two research instruments allowed for

depth of comparison to be made as the themes developed. An area of concern in relation to the trustworthiness of the data arose, as suggested by Noble and Smith (2015) when the data that was transcribed was not fed back to the the focus group members or the questionnaire respondents. However, the use of comparing both research instruments helped in identifying repetition in feelings and similarities in the various themes and the fact that the distribution method of the questionnaire (i.e. distributed until repetition was apparent), assisted in respondent validation. The exact words of the students are used in quotations through the analysis to allow the reader to also interpret them.

3.15 Limitations

There were few limitations identified in this research. A challenge with the focus groups was related to the sensitive nature of the research. At times the students got distracted to talk about ‘other’ issues related to their time in the institution and Switzerland that did not necessarily help in the achievement of the aim of the WBP. However, in light of the need for the maintenance of the trust that was established, it was felt that the students needed to feel that they were being listened to. The skill of the researcher was tested in the focus groups in terms of bringing the discussions back on track. As a result of the straying conversations at times the timing of the focus groups ran over, so in an attempt to make sure all the data that was needed was gathered, the follow-up questionnaire was sent to recap on key points of the discussion and ask some closing questions. This was deemed successful as the recap questions reflected the discussion and the closing questions helped inform the recommendations provided in the work.

It was feared that the open-ended nature of the questions in the questionnaire may produce little responses however, even though not all were completed, the responses did start to become repetitive and it was felt that a saturation point was reached, which then helped to make the decision to not redistribute the questionnaire to another cohort of students. The answers to the open-ended questions proved useful in the analysis of the quantitative data that was gathered.

A final limitation to the research was the fact that only one institution (part of a larger group) was sampled for the research. The case study institution was a useful exploratory case and although the intention was not to generalise beyond the case study institution, other properties of the group would be worth exploring further to verify if the same issues arise among all the students the group receives in order to improve their experiences in Switzerland.

3.16 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the options available and justify the choices that were made in conducting this research. The applied nature of this research had the intention of using the knowledge gained to assist in the reflection on practice and discover through the views of students if improvements could be made in the implementation of practice. Given the subjective nature of the topic that was under investigation it was felt that deepness of meaning was only explorable via a qualitative design, hence the use of a case study on the researchers place of work. The focus groups were chosen to gain initial insight to the issues that could be developed upon. It was also felt that the feelings of the larger student body could deepen the insight gained. As a result, a questionnaire composed of both qualitative and quantitative type questions was deemed appropriate. The findings from the focus group assisted in the creation of the questions for the questionnaire and once repetition of information was identified in the responses of the questionnaire, the distribution of this was stopped.

The research was conducted within one case study institution and the non-probability sampling technique was used in the choice of this institution due to convenience i.e. the researchers place of work. The sample from within was chosen purposefully as there were only certain students within the institution that could really contribute to the achievement of the aim having experienced both a new national and academic culture.

Ethics were a key consideration in this study as the research is an 'insider' and this partly assisted in the encouragement of the students to participate in the study. However, trust had to be established and the guaranteeing of confidentiality was important so that

they did not see any harm coming to them through their contributions. The following chapter deals with the findings that were generated from both the focus groups conducted and the questionnaires distributed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings that were gathered from both the focus groups and the questionnaires. These findings will be explained and analysed and then discussed in relation to the literature that has already been generated in the second chapter. Through this chapter, the research questions identified in the introduction chapter will be addressed and the key issues from the research will be brought together so that conclusions can be drawn. From the analysis of the findings presented in this chapter, recommendations will be put forward in relation to the dissemination of the information to the many groups that can be influenced by this research (previously identified in Figure 3.1 in the Methodology Chapter). This chapter firstly presents the findings and then continues to the discussion and comparison with the literature. For reasons of confidentiality that the students were promised the coding used is as follows: FGR=Focus Group Respondent; QR=Questionnaire Respondent and each of these will be followed by a number e.g. FG1 R1 or QR3 and so on. The page number indicated signifies the page number in the appendix where the quotation can be located.

4.2 Findings from the Focus Group

The focus groups each lasted approximately 1.5 hours which turned out to be too short. As time was an issue, each group was asked if they would mind participating in a short follow-up email questionnaire to get views on the last topics that were to be discussed. The follow-up questionnaire that was sent started with a very brief recap on topics already discussed during the meeting time and had one section at the end that had not been discussed. The recap questions reflected everything that was identified in the discussion, however it provided more structure for the presentation of the findings. The findings from the follow-up questionnaire is used along with the findings of the focus group discussions to report the overall findings from the focus group in this section of the WBP.

The focus groups were made up of 15 people who voluntarily took part in the study. Three groups were created. One individual interview also took place with a student who wished to be part of the research but did not wish to be part of a focus group. The breakdown of these groups can be seen in Table 4.1 - Table 4.3. The breakdown of the nationalities of the focus group participants does represent a mix in nationality. It was not truly representative of the student body of the school, however it did represent diversity which was in agreement with that suggested (Barbour, 2007). The majority of the student body is from Asia. However, the data gathered from the focus groups was rich and guided the creation of the questions for the questionnaire distributed where more of an opportunity was gained to gather the views of those that are more representative of the student body in the school.

Table 4.1 Participants from Focus Group 1

Participant	Nationality	Time in Switzerland	Previous places
1	Portuguese	3 years	Brussels
2	Singaporean / Thai	3.5 years	Indonesia / India / Vietnam / Taiwan / Hong Kong / Thailand / Singapore
3	Chinese	8 months	Canada / America
4	French	8 months	Madagascar / South Africa

Table 4.2 Participants from Focus Group 2

Participant	Nationality	Time in Switzerland	Previous places
5	Portuguese	4 months	South Africa
6	Hungarian	3 years	Only Switzerland
7	Ukrainian	3 years	UK, Spain
8	Hungarian	3.5 years	Germany, Belgium
9	Bulgarian	10 months	Germany

Table 4.3 Participants from Focus Group 3 and Interview

Participant	Nationality	Time in Switzerland	Previous places
10	German	8 months	Peru, Thailand
11	Greek	3.5 years	Italy
12	Singaporean	3.5 years	UK, Canada
13*	German	3.5 years	Kazakhstan, Russia
14	Peruvian	2.5 years	Argentina, South Africa
15	Canadian	9 months	Only Switzerland
16**	Zimbabwe	4 months	South Africa

*P13 – born in Kazakhstan but spent the longest part of his life in Germany so describes himself as German.

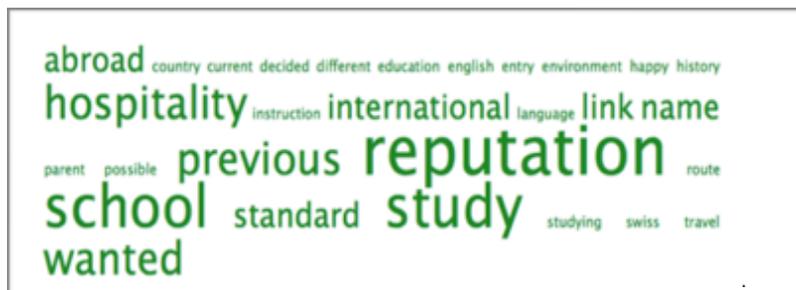
**P16 – this was the individual interview which has been added to FG3 details.

Focus Group respondents from here on are referred to as R (respondent) followed by the number. Questionnaire respondents are represented as QR (questionnaire respondent) followed by the number.

4.2.1 Prior to arrival in Switzerland - Focus Group Findings

Once the bio data was gathered, a key question was to find out why the students chose to come to Switzerland for their study. The answers were varied but the following word cloud (created by [wordsift.com](http://www.wordsift.com)) - Figure 4.1 highlights the words most frequently used.

Figure 4.1 Wordcloud of most frequent words used for ‘Why study in Switzerland?’



Many of these words appeared together as a phrase but the key word that reappeared was that of ‘reputation’ which linked often to to both ‘hospitalsity’ and ‘Swiss’. Examples of the phrases used are highlighted in Table 4.4 (see transcripts from FG1 (‘Focus Group 1’); pg5: FG2; pg17: FG3; pg32: Interview; pg43).

Table 4.4 Phrases used to show ‘Why study in Switzerland?’

Name the country has for hospitality, Swiss reputation, Standards, Name of the school, History
Wanted to study abroad, International Environment, Secondary benefits e.g. travel
Links with previous institution, Different entry route possible
English was the language of instruction

Following this, the participants were asked what kind of research they did in order to decide on the institution. It was also hoped that the sources the students used to gather their information would become apparent. Table 4.5 indicated both how the student found their information and what it was they were looking for through this research.

It emerged from this information that the most common ways of gathering information about the institution was through word-of-mouth, speaking to agents and using general internet searches e.g. Youtube and Facebook. An example of this is seen as follows:

I think the first thing I looked at was Google, I think everybody basically did that. This was before contacting the agents, because at that time the agents weren't as prominent in Thailand as they are now, especially for this group they have definitely become more active. Other than the schools website, I wanted to hear about what other people's experiences were so I actually found a forum which was talking about the school, there were a lot of people complaining about the school ... about the internet and about the food, so I actually contacted the agent and I talked to them about this. What they did was the same as FG R4, was to introduce me to some previous students who were either doing internships in the country or finished their studies. We had a little dinner, we had a lunch, we talked about what school like was like and whether or not it is a good choice to go to this school. So firstly, internet based and after that word of mouth for my research (FG1; R2; pg6).

It was from this data identified in Table 4.5 that the choices for the questionnaire were created. For example the choices for Q9 in the questionnaire were (1) general internet search, (2) institute forums, (3) spoke to previous students, (4) spoke to current students, (5) spoke to a representative of the institute, and (6) visited the institute on an ‘Open Day’. An ‘other’ option was also given to see if there were other methods that the students used. This is then further compared with this results of the questionnaire to see if the concept of word-of-mouth remained high as a way of gathering information.

In relation to the feelings that the students experienced once they knew they were coming to Switzerland to study, the focus group respondents did not really elaborate on this specific time but they did share various stories of their feelings once they arrived in Switzerland. As a result of not finding their initial feelings prior to arrival, it was decided to create a question related to this for the questionnaire.

Table 4.5 What was researched and how?

Researched How	Researched What
Internet / Youtube / Facebook Word-of-mouth including: - Current students, - Previous students, - People that lived in Switzerland known to the family. Education fairs / Attending seminars Adverts in the newspapers Open days at the institution Agents presentations in home country Travel guides	Programme and courses Student life in general Atmosphere, people and place Workload, was it tough People, history of Switzerland Expenses Ranking of the institution Language of the programme Security Length of time to do the programme Facilities in the area and in the institution

4.2.3 Arrival in Switzerland - Focus Group Findings

The findings from the focus group in relation to their arrival in Switzerland was quite mixed. The stories that they told talked of the expense of the country upon their arrival (FG1; R2 and R4; pg9), the fact that they had to share a room with someone at school (FG1; R1, pg11), a feeling of being trapped by being in such a small village up a mountain (FG1; R1; pg9) and at the same time, amazement of the environment that they found themselves (FG2; R2; pg 11). However, when the follow-up questionnaire was sent to recap on some of these feelings, the key feeling was one of positivity. Table 4.6 gives the responses from the follow-up questionnaire (all of the responses provided by the respondents) of the words and phrases that were used as they described their feelings.

Table 4.6 Phrases the focus group students used about feelings upon arrival in Switzerland

Responses from students
1. Beautiful, amazing view, expensive, cold weather, wow!, There is a huge Portuguese community here (FG1; R1).
2. Excited, optimistic (FG1; R2).
3. Nice weather and mountains (FG1; R3).
4. Excited, interested, observing (how expectations about the country turn out), open for all new, adult and independent, content (the right place to be), on holiday (FG2; R6).
5. Lost, scared, had a big fear of unknown (FG2; R7).
6. At first I felt safe and pleasant but my second impression (after a few weeks) was that I am not welcome and I felt uncomfortable (FG2; R8).
7. Disappointed of the Country as a State, amazed by the nature (FG2; R9).
8. Unfazed similar environment than in Germany, visited Switzerland various times before (FG3; R10).
9. I was OK as I have been to Swiss before for holiday. Also took the school provided coach. In the coach on the way to Leysin, got to speak to some students (FG3; R12).
10. Happy, excited, alone, sad, cold (FG3; R13).
11. Amazed because it was my first time in Europe. Excited to see the school and meet new people (FG3; R14).
12. Excited, comfortable, a bit scared. (FG3; R15)

From the focus group, it was difficult to get the students to differentiate their feelings from arrival in Switzerland or arrival in the location of the institution and because of this it was decided to create that separation in the follow-up questionnaire that was distributed to them after the focus groups took place. Table 4.7 (all of the responses provided by the respondents) shows the feelings that were experienced upon arrival at the institution.

Due to the variety of feelings being displayed it was felt that the open nature of the question was appropriate as it allowed the student freedom to express a multitude of feelings. This freedom was necessary in order to truly compare with the models of culture shock that are discussed in the literature review (e.g. the Disease and Growth Model; see Section 2.4). Seeing the variety of feelings emerge from the focus group students, it was felt that the questionnaire should also have this as an open-ended question. The findings from the questionnaire produced a similar variety of feelings that was then categorised and compared later in this chapter (see Section 4.3.2 and Section 4.4.4).

Table 4.7 Phrases the focus group students used about feelings upon arrival at the institution

Responses from students
1. Felt a bit like I am imprisoned (difficult or ‘escaping’ from the village); Great cultural diversity; Strict and serious environment; Quite good facilities (to do sports, study, relax); I knew the language (French and Portuguese) would facilitate my integration and networking with the schools staff and locals (FG1; R1).
2. Excited, nervous lost (because of language used in the village) (FG1; R2).
3. Very strange building and I got lost at the campus (FG1;R3).
4. Excited, interested; Open for all new; Adult and independent; Content, the right place to be BUT ... Alone, Lost, unstable (getting to know a new system, rules and regulations, new people, getting used to English all the time, lack of performance feedback); Vulnerable (no own home), food only at given times, family not present); Homesick (culture shock) (FG2; R6).
5. It would probably be described with the same words, as I do not remember before the institution when I arrived in Switzerland. I had a school transfer directly from the airport so my arrival to Switzerland and arrival to the school was actually the same thing. Although I felt more comfortable outside of the school at the beginning (FG2; R7).
6. Excited relieved (that the school organised everything so professionally) motivated determined worried (that I would not be able to keep up with the workload and my level of English will not be on the required level) curious (FG2; R8).
7. I liked the mixed culture of so many nationalities, but in the beginning I could not say much about the school itself (FG2; R9).
8. Overwhelmed, excited, willing, challenging, expecting, interested, down casted (FG3;R10).
9. I was happy to arrive at last as the coach went from the airport to all the campuses and then finally this school. But overall was cool. As got to know students in the coach. Also as I had pre-departure meeting so there was a guy David and his parent awaiting for me to arrive to settle us in (FG3; R12).
10. Alone, sad, cold, I don’t understand anyone, left from the family but this was just 1 – 2 weeks (FG3; R13).
11. Welcomed (the students that I met in South Africa were there to welcome me) (FG3; R14).
12. Lost, confused (FG3; R15).

From the focus group interviews, it was difficult to separate challenges in to academic challenges, personal challenges or ‘Swiss’ challenges. There were many stories told that integrated a number of different issues. Table 4.8 gives examples of the experiences that the students had in relation to ‘challenges’. The questionnaire that was sent to the larger groups of students was then developed from the discussion held with the focus groups. Table 4.8 gives a mix of challenges identified by the focus group members and Q12(challenges related to Swiss culture), Q13 (feelings related to academic environment), Q14 (intensity of the programme) and Q15 (challenges specific to academic culture) on the questionnaire were all created as a way to try and separate

challenges that were experienced in relation to the Swiss culture and the academic culture.

Table 4.8 Comments from students in relation to challenges experienced

Respondent	Comments made from students in relation to challenges
FG1; R1; pg11	Well for me it was the fact that I had a roommate. That was tough for me to think about this idea ... living with a man in the same room ... but he ended up alright.
FG1; R3 pg 11	I think for me, this place is very inconvenient, it is very hard to get to the cities, to shop, to eat ... I think I'm totally separate from the real world.
FG1; R4 pg12	I'd say personal development, like the way ... for example at BA we almost have no classes, so it is up to us to do what we want to do, how we want to do it, obviously it has to be through the curriculum but like ... for first year, they come at 19, used to stay with their parents, they have to be organised, do their laundry and all that so it is a great way to grow into business life and to grow up.
FG1; R2 pg12	There were classes that I felt were too easy, that they didn't really benefit me in any way and there were some classes that were a bit more difficult that I found were actually making me learn new things and although it was difficult, it was more rewarding. So, some of the easy classes I felt really frustrated that I'd studied them and the difficult classes I actually enjoyed because I was actually learning.
FG1; R4 pg12	Having the kitchen close at 1000 for me was ... like a midnight snack is a usual thing so ... going to the local restaurants, they expect you to know this (closing at 1000) and that is kind of frustrating.
FG2; R5 pg22	Because everything just came at once ... boom, boom, boom this report, that report, deadlines were so close it's not like in South Africa where you do all your reports at the end, you've got time, or your exam is in three months so you just procrastinate more and here its like two weeks. Like in South Africa, you didn't have access to all these different kind of things, you hear everyone talk about Emerald and I'm like ... what the hell is Emerald? I didn't know all this stuff.
FG2; R9 pg23	I was also very confused at the beginning because the programme is very different than the third year but for me personally, the third year was harder because I was also new and I liked it more than BA right now ... much more. My first confusion was, to be honest, about the critical thinking ... critical thinking, critical thinking, and critical thinking but at the same time you are not supposed to express your own opinion. I still don't understand it. The fact that you have to learn by yourself ... I think for me personally, its like 50-50 ... you need someone to put the pressure on you to make you learn because when you know it is on your own, you probably won't do it.

4.2.3 Coping Strategies - Focus Group Findings

From the recap questionnaire distributed to the focus group members, it was decided to get more depth in terms of how the students managed to deal with any of the difficulties that they experienced when at the institution. As can be seen, many challenges appeared from the various stories that were told as evidenced by Table 4.8. The focus group interviews revealed some insight into how students tried to deal with difficulties and the follow-up questionnaire tried to bring these thoughts together. Question five to question nine on the follow-up questionnaire recapped on their thoughts. Table 4.9 highlights the

comments produced related to how they dealt with difficulties (all of the responses provided by the respondents - Follow-up questionnaire; pg50; Q5).

Table 4.9 Comments from students on dealing with negative feelings - Focus Group

Comments from focus group students
Making sure you have a good friend base to support and understand you. Be disciplined, friendly and greeting everybody as way to receive 'favours' and make it easier to ask for help (when needed) (FG1; R1).
Time management, friends, family, colleagues (FG1; R2).
Doing sports and talk to my friends back home (FG1, R3).
Contact with loved ones back home. Rely on friends at the institution. Socialising, parties, drinks, cigarettes. Travelling home for a weekend. Burying myself in work. During third year and BA in the institution, I tried to reproduce real, independent life (working part-time in a hotel, outside apartment, own car, food etc.). Building a meta-world ... outside apartment with three Hungarian students living together (FG2; R6).
I was studying all the time to no let myself think about something else (FG2; R7)
I Skyped with my family, friends from home, or I just talked to someone from the Hungarian group. I also found it refreshing to go out jogging or do any kind of activity which is not connected to studying (FG2; R8).
Strong believe in myself and, seeing the difficulties as a challenge that will help me grow (FG2; R9).
The strong group cohesiveness (5 of us) was helpful to overcome challenges and difficult situations. Activities outside the school further helped a lot in overcoming difficulties, even small things like dinner in close towns / cities Funplanet, Christmas Market, swimming. As I have the benefit of having a car here, vacations and short trips to foreign countries helped me escape (FG3; R10).
Talk to my friends or seek a lecturer (FG3; R12).
I was talking with friends, was asking for advice by the staff (FG3; R13).
My social life, I always escaped to my friends when I felt alone or tired of school and responsibilities (FG3; R14).
Talking to my family / friends back home helped a lot. Not much in third year, but during my BA semester I travelled more, therefore if I need a break I will spontaneously go out. It can be just to somewhere close or far. It is dependent how much time I feel that I need to get away. Also, the act of exercising helps relief some of the frustrations (FG3; R15).

The discussion in the focus group tried to discover what kind of support groups the students used in order to help them through their time in the institution. Two questions were created in the follow-up questionnaire to recap on the focus group discussion. One question focused on internal support which is presented in Table 4.10 and it gives the reasons why the students chose these support networks (all of the responses provided by the respondents). The words that the students used in the support question were then categorised into choices that the questionnaire students could choose from with an open

‘others’ option to allow for other possibilities that the students had (see Appendix 8; pg53; Q17 questionnaire;).

Table 4.10 Internal support and why - Focus Group

Internal Support	Reason for choosing these networks
Programme leader (FG1; R2)	Most knowledgeable and qualified.
My roomie and some classmates (FG1; R3)	We share similar value systems and have similar experiences.
Friends, staff from the school (FG1; R1)	I believed they could give me appropriate advice (due to their professional and personal experience) and to give me the support I needed. This is because the staff has the ability to really make a difference and make your life easier.
The Hungarian community (from different years in school), friends from my class (FG2; R8).	The Hungarians were supportive and as we came from a similar background we understood each other well. Also we could always speak about things that were not connected to school which I found refreshing.
Firstly only staff members, two girls from my home country (FG2; R7)	I felt comfortable with them no only because of the nationality but also because of the personalities. As I am not much of a party person I was looking for someone with similar interests.
Hungarian community, roommate, certain staff members (FG3; R6)	Hungarians were giving each other guidance and support and doing activities together e.g. gift giving for Christmas, organised by the ‘country leader’. Bound by the mother tongue. Relationships with confidence gave stability e.g. roommate or certain staff members.
Programme leader (FG3; R9)	Because she was the first person I met and she offered her help in the beginning.
No one ... just my friends (FG3; R14)	No comment
My friends (FG3; R12)	They are from my class and become my friends
Friends which I was always together, most of them the same culture (Russian) (FG3; R13)	The friends from the school were understanding me, they are in the same situation.
5 of us ... all direct entry working together for reports and coursework. We stick together (FG3; R10)	Firstly, though the intense workload in 3 rd year their was only little time to socialise with other students as after all classes and group meetings at around 10pm the day almost came to an end. However, the group we found and even we are facing difficulties at the beginning of cultural understanding and work practices, was resulting into friendships.
Individual friends that I go to talk to but no support groups (FG3; R15)	They are willing to listen and I feel comfortable talking to them.

Table 4.11 shows the external support groups that the students chose to be part of and also gives the reasons why these support groups were chosen (all of the responses provided by the respondents).

Table 4.11 External support and why - Focus Group

External Support	Reasons for choosing these networks
Friends and alumni (FG1; R2)	Had first hand experiences with the school.
Good friends that grew up with me (FG1; R3).	They were my friends since childhood, they know everything about me, they can provide really help advices.
Family (mother and sisters), some good friends from Brussels (FG1; R1).	These people are part of who I am and therefore I felt it was important to keep true to my principles. Talking regularly to them could bring me back to some sort of reality and help me see my difficulties with humour. Furthermore, I had 'explanations' to give to my mother, as she helped me a lot in making sure I come to Switzerland for hospitality (I wanted to come since I was 15 years old).
I haven't created relationships with locals. I relied on my family and friends from Hungary (FG2; R8).	No comment.
Met people while skiing but I can't call them support group. I never asked them for anything but talking to them made me more relaxed and therefore more confident (FG2; R7).	It was accidental every time. Mostly I met people on the lifts.
Family back home, local community (French language an advantage) (FG2; R6).	They help to maintain or reproduce a normal, independent lifestyle, instead of the boarding school student status.
Few friends from a different semester coming to visit (FG3; R14).	No comment.
Just the family (FG3; R13).	The family because they have experience in life and they will give me good advices.
My sister from back home (FG3; R10).	She came to visit me various times and was able to catch my points. However, overall less support from other groups within the school and externally was needed.
My group of friends back home or my parents (FG3; R15).	They are people that I trust, with their unbiased advice and they understand me better than anyone else.

Less students responded in relation to the external group that they tried to develop and this is analysed later in this chapter. The groups that students chose to be part of both internally and externally were developed into choices for the main questionnaire (Q16; question left open to focus on words that students used and identify if any related to the choices given in the next question; and Q17; question giving choices developed from the focus group responses and an 'other' option available) and further analysis can be found on this later in the chapter (see Section 4.3.3 and Section 4.4.6) .

Question ten in the follow up questionnaire was used to explore students' feelings towards the intensity of the 18 week programme as the focus group discussions did not

generate a lot of data on this and it was considered important in the nature of the WBP. The feelings displayed highlighted differences that exist between the different levels in the programme e.g. 3rd year level and final year BA level. Table 4.12 shows the responses that were generated from the follow-up questionnaire from the focus group members (all of the responses provided by the respondents).

Table 4.12 Comments from focus group students on intensity of the programme

Comments from students
1. The programme is heavy and intense, but the school environment actually makes time to go fast with motivation and good time-management skills, it seemed possible to have fairly good grades and pass the year. I believe the intensity of the programme is a great way to build us for the future, especially in a very stressful and time-consuming industry (FG1; R1).
2. From 1 – 3 year, more relaxed. For the BA course more demanding and requires discipline (FG1; R2).
3. At the beginning I felt very tired of this, but I change to think about that in a more positive way. The intensity can help to adapt harded situations in the future if I practice now (FG1; R3).
4. It is highly intensive and rather demanding, even though some subjects are not quite deep or difficult. Due to the time constraint, one always feels late with his work, even if he works as much as he can (lacking sleep and free time). In BA sometimes the intensity dictated by our programme (compared to the partner university) seems to compromise the depth or quality of delivery preparation and student performance (FG2; R6).
5. As for me personally the third year was much more intense and therefore more difficult (FG2; R7).
6. Until the third year, the courses were always intense. We had classes all day long, no day off, a lot of group work to do. However I had the impression that the workload was not comparable to other colleges or universities. The BA seemed less intense at the beginning, however after a few weeks I realised that this course was more challenging. As mentioned during the interviews, I felt that there was a huge gap between 3 rd year and BA. I do think it was not the workload, but the way of studying and the way of managing our time. Overall, I believe that although the workload is heavy it is still not as intense as at other universities (FG2; R8).
7. I liked only the third year because of that intensity and pressure. It helped me grow and learn a lot. BA is very light and disappointing. Besides a few subjects that I felt were really related to hospitality (HR and SM), the others were not either presented properly or I did not see their application (FG2; R9).
8. My expectations of a school who is naming themselves ‘Leader in Hospitality Management’ could not been met. The programme I went through (third year and BA) is intense and allows the student to grow. Especially in BA everyone is on one’s own, which allowed me to develop own ideas and question existing topics. Some of the subjects do not meet the requirements and are less relevant or not ‘current trend’ in the industry and their application is lacking (FG3; R10).
9. More time would be better for February intake. I am used to September intake, which is longer, and at least a 3-week break to take and catch your breath. It also helps build friendship as some / most of us take this opportunity to travel around Europe together. There are some who chose to go home and some stay in school (FG2; R12).
10. As I said before, I think the programme is short enough; there is no need to finish the module in week 8 or even 7 (FG3; R13).
11. Is not professional, should follow more the path of a university in terms of standard in projects and the content of the classes (FG3; R14).
12. That with proper time management skills that the intensity level is not that bad (FG3; R15).

As can be seen from the comments in Table 4.12 there are mixed feelings coming from students i.e. there appears to be a combination of feelings towards the intensity of the

course, it is challenging but in more of a positive light and others that see it as challenging but in more of a negative light. In the analysis of this information, the whole sentence was analysed rather than just the words themselves and this further assisted the analysis of the same question in the questionnaire (see Section 4.4.5; and Table 4.3.5). The sentence was analysed in terms of tone to explore if the overall feeling seemed to be negative or positive. An example of how the responses from the focus group were interpreted as either positive or negative can be seen in the following sentence:

The programme is heavy and intense, but the school environment actually makes time to go fast with motivation and good time management skills, it seemed possible to have fairly good grades and pass the year. I believe the intensity of the programme is a great way to build us for the future, especially in a very stressful and time-consuming industry (comment 1 from Table 4.12 FG1; R1)

With this response from the student, if analysed by words alone it could indicate negativity e.g. heavy, intense, stress however, the use of the word 'but' in the sentence was interpreted to mean that there was more positivity attached to this intensity e.g. time going fast with motivation, good time management skills. Reading the sentence multiple times helped in categorising whether feelings seemed to be emerging from the responses as either positive or negative. This resonated with feelings that emerged from the focus group discussion as seen in the following statement:

Well, I was very confused and I didn't really know what was expected but I really like this system because it is more university like. I found the system that we had in higher diploma was more like ... everything that we learned in practice, like F&B and housekeeping we could have learned that on our internship and I really like the programme of the BA because we have a system from our teachers and lecturers but we basically can decide what we want to write about, find the topic that is interesting to us and then go read about it. It is very much dependant on how much effort we put in in. And I like that. We can choose, most of the time, topics that we are interested in ... i found that very motivating ... challenging on the other had (R8; FG2; pg23)

On further probing R8 in this discussion as to whether s/he saw this challenge as positive or negative s/he indicated that 'I really like it' and 'I enjoy' (see R8; FG2; pg23). As a result of this, it was felt necessary to leave the question open in the questionnaire to explore if similar mixes of feelings emerged from the larger student group.

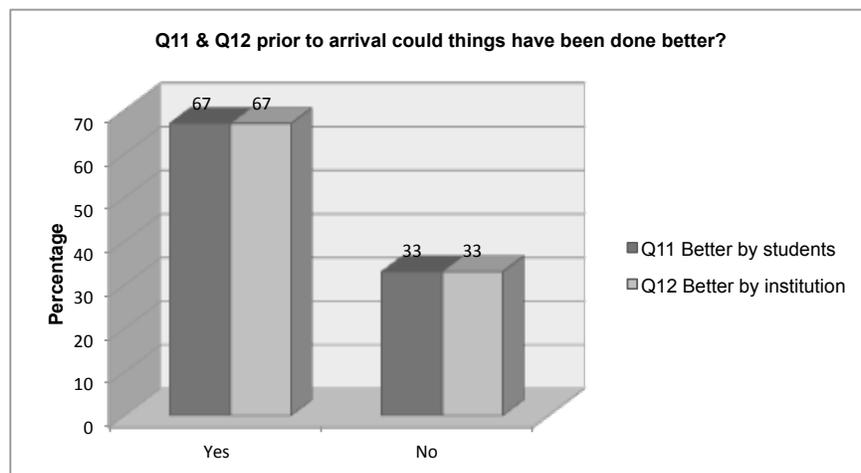
These comments are compared with the findings of the questionnaire in the analysis section of this chapter in relation to whether there is more positivity or negativity

associated with the intensity of the programme (see Section 4.3.2 and Section 4.4.5). The same method was used in analysing the feelings that the students felt towards this intensity in the questionnaire .

4.2.4 Could things be done better? - Focus Group Findings

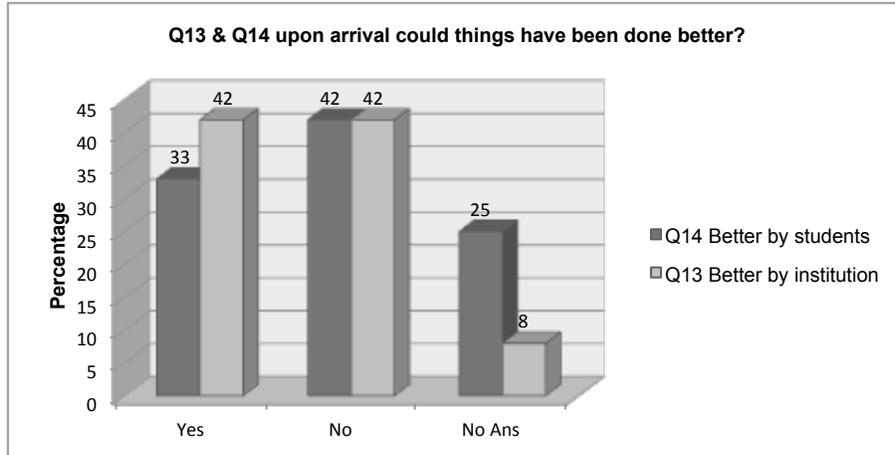
The discussion within the focus group meetings led to many opinions in relation to what the students thought could be done differently but as a result of the sensitivity of the topic being discussed it was felt that the follow-up questionnaire could help consolidate their ideas better. Question eleven to question fifteen broke it down to what could be done better prior to arrival by both the student and the institution and what could be done better upon arrival by both, followed by how they might advise a student that wishes to come to the institution in terms of preparation. Figure 4.2 highlights that 67% of the students felt that both institute and they themselves could have done things differently prior to arrival. The specifics on how is discussed later in the analysis section and compared to the findings from the questionnaire (see Section 4.3.4 and Section 4.4.8).

Figure 4.2 Could things have been done better prior to arrival - Focus Group



With regards to their thoughts upon arrival, Figure 4.3 indicates a fairly even divide between yes and no. However, there were a few that chose not to indicate either yes or no for these questions.

Figure 4.3 Could things have been done better upon to arrival - Focus Group



The reasons given in relation to how things could be done better upon arrival is discussed in the analysis section and compared against those that responded to the questionnaire (see Section 4.3.4 and Section 4.4.8).

The last question asked of the focus group members related to how they might advise other potential students thinking of coming to the institution and Table 4.13 shows all of the responses provided by the respondents. These comments are compared with the findings of the questionnaire and then fed into the recommendations and dissemination chapter of the WBP.

Given the rich data that was provided in these questions from the follow-up questionnaire, it was decided to leave these question open for the questionnaire that was distributed to the wider student body. It was felt that exploring how they or the institution might do things different could have implications for practices.

Table 4.13 Advice to potential students - Focus Group Findings

Comments from Focus Group students on how they would advise potential students:	
1.	Make sure you know what you're getting into (perhaps participate in the open day) and have good amount of rest to make sure you're ready for the intense programme. Try already to make 'connections' prior to go there (e.g. go with a friend, chat with current students ...). Consider if hospitality (or the art of serving others) is really what you want to do for the rest of your life (even in reality there are other options). Be natural, confident and have high standards for yourself. Make sure as well that people respect those standards (e.g. stand straight, look at people in the eyes, do not accept discrimination or lies around you ...) Learn about social dynamics (how to mingle and greet people with a smile) and develop an 'eye for detail' (FG1; R1).
2.	Talk to previous students for what to expect when you come to the institute to study (FG1; R2).
3.	Firstly, they should do enough research about everything; policy, structure, ways of teaching, amount of homework ... they should make sure they are able to handle pressure and intensity. Secondly, time management. Third, make a clear list what they should bring and should not (FG1; R3).
4.	Research thoroughly about the institution. Research even more thoroughly about other schools! Research thoroughly about the hospitality industry from an unbiased point of view, career prospects and the lifestyle it implies. Be ready for living with strangers, tolerating other cultures, and standing up for yourself. Be ready for working with new people, who are not always qualified, ready or motivated. Stay critical over all four semesters (FG2; R6).
5.	I would suggest them to consider different opinions - not only one former student whom they know should provide all the information (or not only the agency), but the students' should look for different perspectives and then evaluate. It would also be nice to come and see the actual place. However, as these future students are mostly very young people who just finished their school, I would suggest them to ask themselves questions not about the university itself, not about the people and the place, but about the industry and their future career. Because it seems so far away for a person coming to the first year, but it actually is such a wrong perception (FG2; R7).
6.	I would advise them to work in the industry for a year, in order for them to get a clear picture of what hospitality is. Also, they might find something in the industry that they would want to do in the future, which would keep them motivated throughout their studies. They could also talk to managers which schools are considered the best, and what to expect in their career. It is also sensible to contact people who have graduated from the school and ask them about their opinion of the school and the career opportunities with such diploma (FG2; R8).
7.	To do a better research, before choosing the school (FG2; R9).
8.	Communicate with actual students from the school to receive a better and deeper insight into the actual environment. Visit the school if possible. Take time for a decision. Be open minded and try to get involved (FG3; R10).
9.	Attend the pre departure meeting to get to know fellow students heading to the same school. Sunday's shops are closed. Prices are higher in Swiss even then McDonalds (FG3; R12).
10.	Ask people on Facebook, come for an open day, come in group of people (FG3; R13).
11.	They should put a lot of their part to take the best out of the institute, otherwise the knowledge is very vague (FG3; R14).
12.	Make sure that they know what they are getting into, that if the education path is the way they expect it to be. The amount of support that the school gives and how they treat the students. If financially possible, take the opportunity to go to the school's open house. See things first hand. The presentations given back home are too glorified. The information touches only on brief explanation of how things worked (FG3; R15).

4.3 Findings from the Questionnaire

Following on from the focus groups and interview that were conducted, the questionnaire was distributed to final year students (BA final). It was these students that could comment on the change of academic environment that takes place within the institution. Year 1 - 3 (Higher Diploma level) is very American in terms of the grading systems and Year 4 (final year) is in line with the British grading system as the academic partner is a British University. The sample for the questionnaire produced the following information. Table 4.14 shows the number of students that were emailed, the number of students that replied and the number of responses that were complete. For the findings and analysis chapter, it is the completed questionnaires that are referred to and those questionnaires that were not completed were not used.

Table 4.14 Sample detail from the questionnaire distributed

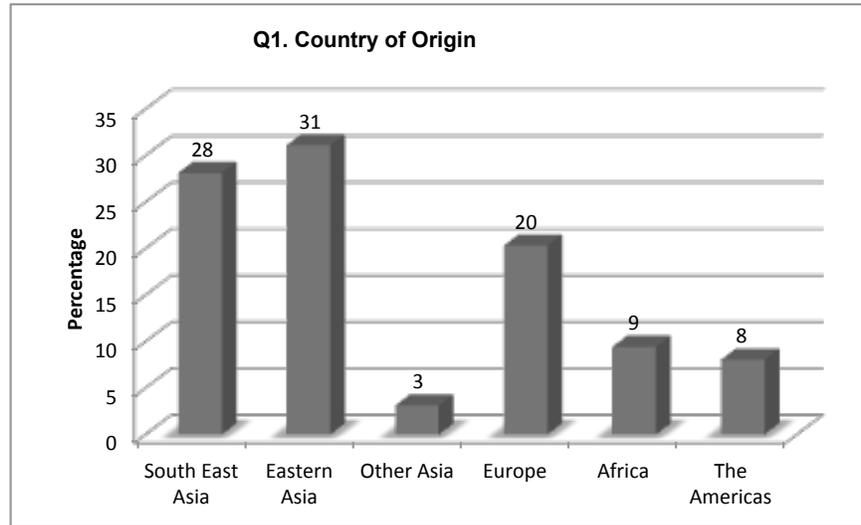
Cohort	No. of Students	Returned	Completed
1	108	21	8
2	126	29	20
3	240	63	42
Totals	474	113	70

The students were asked what their country of origin is and in order to present the information more clearly, the countries were categorised into different regions. Table 4.15 shows the countries and what region they are situated within and Figure 4.4 shows the percentage of students that come from each region.

Table 4.15 Country of origin divided into regions

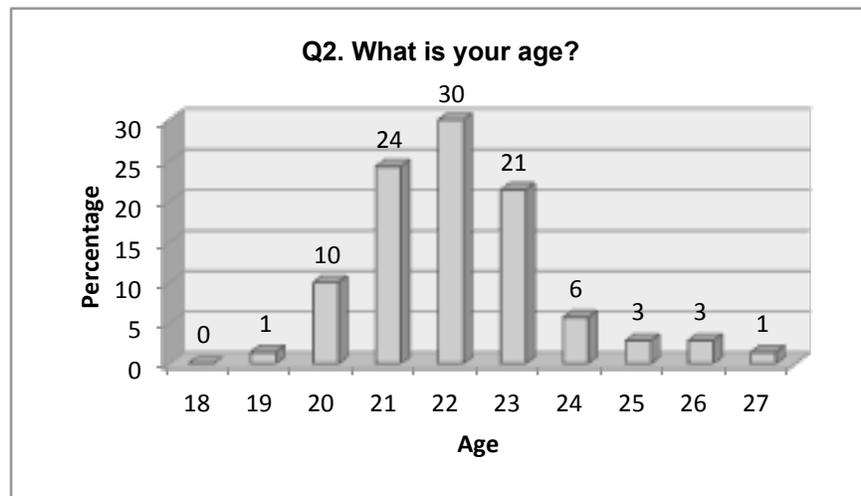
Region	Includes
South East Asia	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
Eastern Asia	China, China HK, China Macau, South Korea, Taiwan
Other Asia	Nepal, Azerbaijan
Europe	Sweden, Germany, Russia, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Greece, Italy
Africa	Zimbabwe, South Africa
The Americas	Canada, Alaska, Brazil

Figure 4.4 Regions of the questionnaire respondents



From the completed questionnaires Figure 4.5 shows that 75% of the sample are between the ages of 21 - 23.

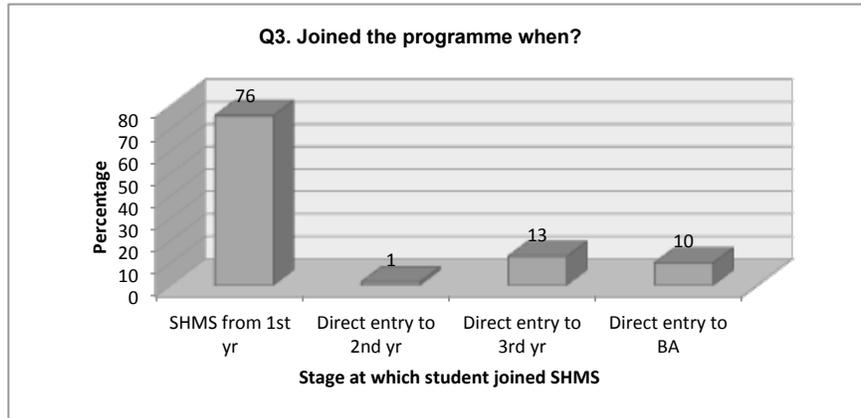
Figure 4.5 Age of sample



It can be seen here in Figure 4.6 that 76% of the students that were in the study have come through the system from first year which is something that will be interesting to examine in terms of how the students felt they coped with the academic shock that they

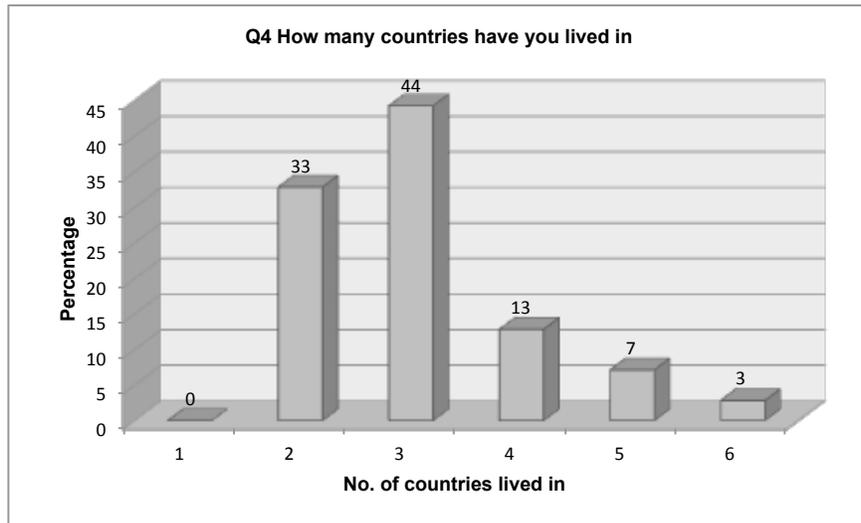
experienced in comparison to the 23% that arrived directly into the third year and final year (see Section 4.4.6).

Figure 4.6 When the student joined the programme



In an effort to perform a deeper analysis of the data, the students were asked how many countries they have lived in for longer than 6 months at a time and the most common number of countries that students have lived in is three as can be see Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7 Number of countries that students have lived in for longer than 6 months



The information in Figure 4.7 is to help identify if the frequency of moving has any impact on the way in which the student adapts or adjusts to the new environment they find themselves within. The questionnaire tried to discover the reasons why students

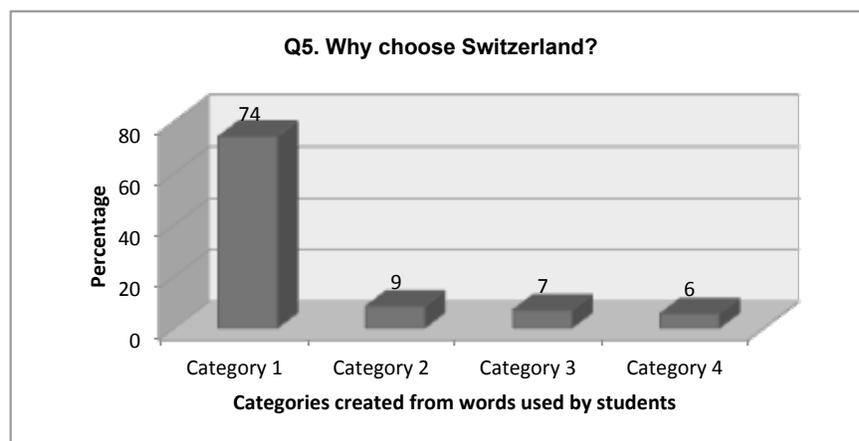
chose to study in Switzerland. This question was made a compulsory question on the questionnaire and students could not move on if they did not answer this. The answers were quite varied. In order to put some sort of meaning to the answers, 4 broad categories were created which are indicted in Table 4.16. The words that the students used were counted to see how many times certain words or phrases were being used. There were no choices given in this question so as to really find out the reasons behind their choice to study abroad. From the 70 responses, many students chose many combinations of the categories and Figure 4.8 shows how ‘reputation’ was chosen most among the students 74% of the time. Examples of the many combinations of words that were used by the students can be seen in Appendix 11 pg62. One specific one is as follows:

I was interested specifically in events management and was aware of the reputation Switzerland had within this field. Switzerland also had an aspect of familiarity as I visited family there on an annual basis and therefore believed that this would benefit me with a soft transition from leaving home for the first time (QR33; pg63)

Table 4.16 Categories created from words used by students on why Switzerland

Category 1	Reputation / Renowned for Hospitality Education
Category 2	Programme / Length of time to study / Offered more value
Category 3	Parents Involvement / Knew people here / Familiar already with Switzerland
Category 4	Travel / Adventure / Diversity of the country / less crime

Figure 4.8 How often the words were used in relation to why Switzerland



Something that is of interest in this question that could be explored further in the analysis is the fact that only 9% of the responses indicated that the programme itself was

why Switzerland was chosen. This will be analysed further in relation to whether academic differences were considered in relation to the choice of programme.

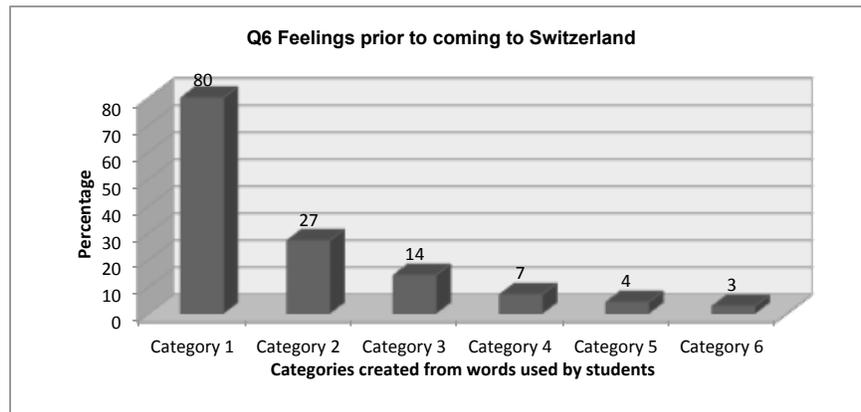
4.3.1 Prior to arrival in Switzerland - Questionnaire Findings

The next part of the questionnaire examined the feelings prior to the student's arrival in Switzerland, what it was they did in terms of research and what it was they wanted to know. Question 6 simply asked what were their feelings once they knew they were coming to Switzerland. This is to compare with the literature in relation to culture shock. The question was open and allowed students to really express how they felt. From this array of words that were used, 6 categories were established as highlighted in Table 4.17. There were students who responded to this question by just listing words and those that wrote entire sentences. The words identified in the categories in Table 4.17 were created as a result of reading the responses many times and letting the themes emerge and then they were counted for frequency of appearance. Figure 4.9 highlights the frequency of these categories.

Table 4.17 Categories created from words used by students on how they felt prior

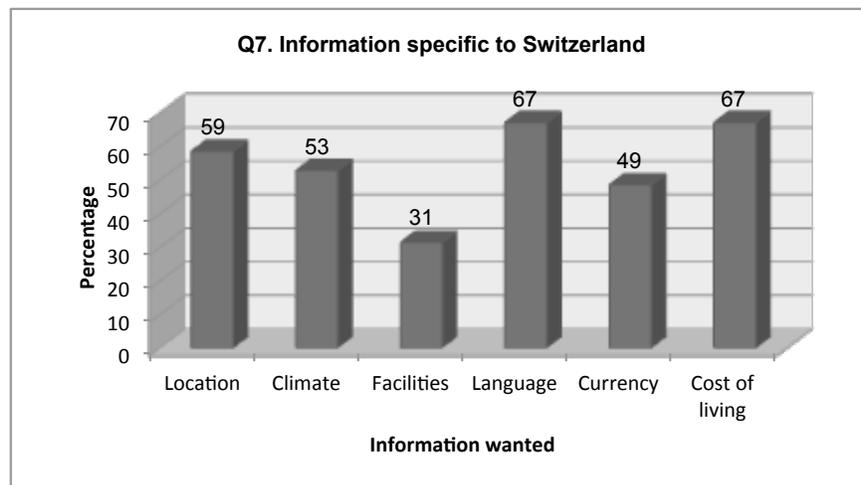
Category 1	Excited / Happy
Category 2	Worried / Scared / Nervous / Anxious
Category 3	Curious / Interested / Eager / Enthusiastic
Category 4	Anticipation
Category 5	Sad
Category 6	Other e.g. Safe / Secure Environment

Figure 4.9 How often each type of feeling was chosen



Question 7 and 8 tried to find out what kind of information the student wanted to know prior to arrival in Switzerland and what specific information they wanted to know about the institution prior to their arrival. These questions gave options for the student to choose from, which were influenced by the responses given in the focus group, but also gave the student the option to add to the choices that were already given. Figure 4.10 highlights the information sought by the student.

Figure 4.10 Information about Switzerland wanted



It can be seen here that 'language' and 'cost of living' were high on the list of priorities followed closely by the 'location'. It is unfortunate though that the question did not ask whether this was location of Switzerland itself or the location of the institution they had

chosen to study as Q8 wanted to find out more about the institution itself. Maybe this question could have been made a little more specific with regards to location. The ‘other’ option did create a few responses as indicated in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18 Comments made in the ‘other’ option that was given in Q7

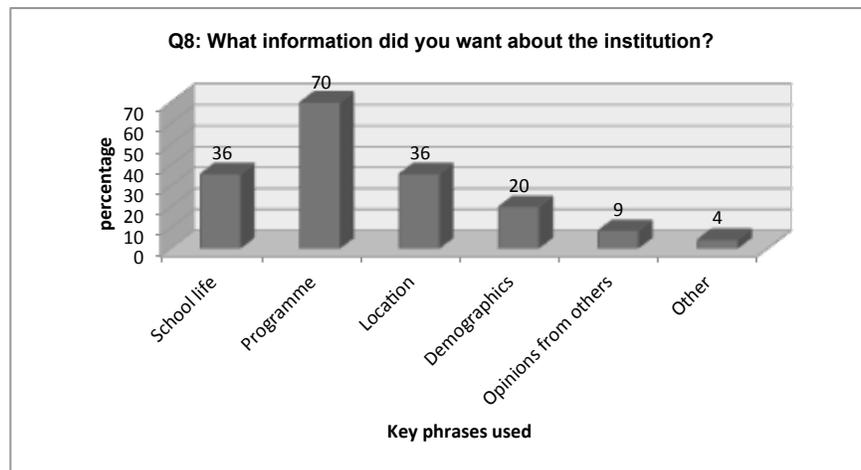
Extra comments:
1. Culture / Culture of Swiss people in order not to face the shock
2. Standard of living and how safe it was / Crime and safety / Safety / Security / Travel
3. All was similar to home country so didn't need to know anything.
4. As I had been travelling to Switzerland on an annual basis from when I was born, I was largely familiar with the lifestyle I would be moving towards / I knew pretty much everything
5. Sights to see / Attraction
6. Electric adapter
7. Accommodation / Food / Food reviews
8. School life

Comment 3 and 4 are interesting as some form of research was still needed in order to be able to say ‘I knew pretty much everything.’ It is interesting though that even though culture was not given as an option in the question itself, that it was given as responses as part of the ‘other’ option. In relation to specifics with regards to the institution itself, the following information was retrieved. As with previous questions, this question was left completely open so as not to influence the choices that the students made. The findings were varied in terms of the terminology that was used and 6 categories were created for presentation and ease of interpretation purposes. The categories are identified in Table 4.19 and the frequency of each category chosen is displayed in Figure 4.11. The words used by the students were reviewed to explore if commonalities were present, which informed the name of the category e.g. School life identified those words or phrases that reflected anything to do with life in the school, whereas Location identified words or phrases related to anything to do with life outside the school.

Table 4.19 Categories created from the words that students used for Q8

School life includes: social / rules and regulations / accommodation / food
Programme includes: structure of course / modules, grading, reputation, opportunities after graduation
Location includes: where the school is / access to other places / facilities available
Demographics includes: nationalities of other students and teachers / language / size / how international / culture of SHMS
Opinion from others
Other includes: costs / tuition

Figure 4.11 Specific information searched for in relation to the institution

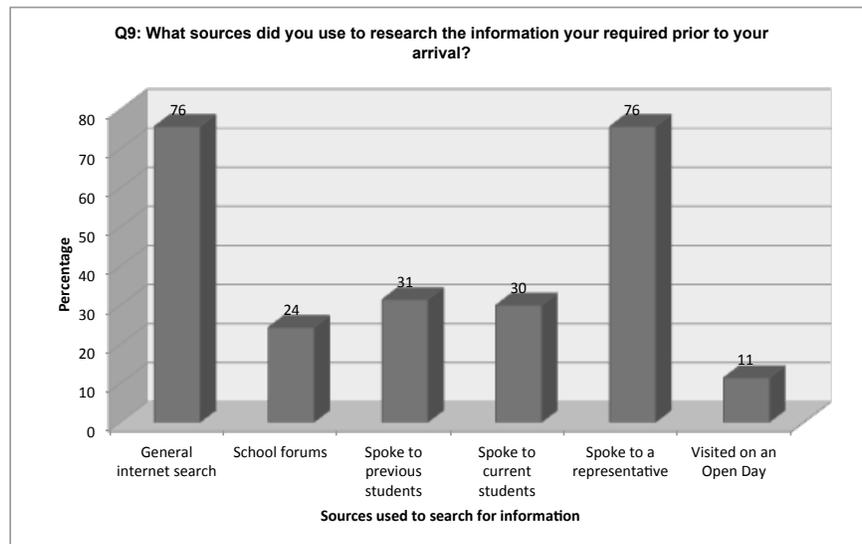


‘Programme’ was chosen by 70% of the respondents and it can be seen in this category that some of the issues that might relate to academic culture shock are part of this e.g. structure of the course and grading. Within each of the categories there are words and phrases used by the students that indicate that issues in relation to culture (be it national or academic) were given some form of consideration. This will be analysed further in the next section.

Following on from wanting to know what the students’ tried to find out about their move abroad to study, it was important to know how they did this research. Q9 and Q10 examined what sources they used to find out the information and questioning whether these sources were of use or not. Figure 4.12 displays the various options that the

students used in order to find their information and Table 4.20 shows the ‘other’ sources that the students used.

Figure 4.12 Sources of information that students used

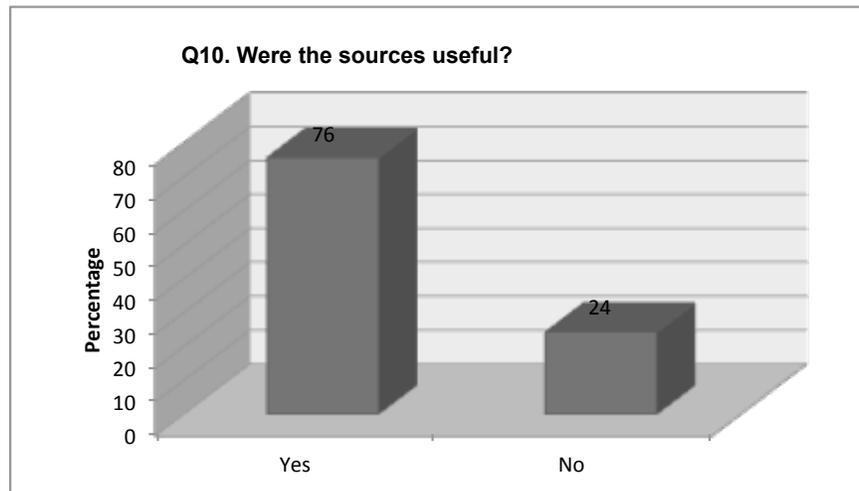


From these ‘other’ comments made by the students, it is questionable why ‘YouTube and Google’ were not considered under the option general internet searching or why ‘spoke to my brother’ was not considered as speaking to previous or current students? It can be seen however from Figure 4.12 that general internet searching (76%) and speaking to representatives (76%) is very high on the list of ways that students find out the information they need in relation to their study in the school. Speaking to other students whether they are current or previous (61%) is also a popular way for students to find out what they need to know. From these sources used, Q10 wanted to examine if these were useful or not and why. Figure 4.13 shows that 76% of the respondents found that their source was useful. Worrying though is the high percentage (24%) that found their sources not useful as this is an influencing factor on how prepared they come to study in a foreign location.

Table 4.20 'Other' sources that students used to search for information

Other:
Spoke to my brother who studied here
Site visit but not an open day
YouTube and Google
The most helpful was FaceBook, I found alumni's, current students and people who would be studying with me. That's how I found my roommate for my first year, which made it less nerve-racking to come for the first time (did not feel so alone).
YouTube
Joined a group on FaceBook
Actually, the first year, the agent had told us what to prepare and how was everything like in Switzerland ... but I would the information is not so adequate. Am not sure if the agent tried to hide something and just tried to get our commission fees. Anyways, since I got here, all the information were from current students, and the agent was useless. Before that, I didn't know anyone here.
One student said see Q8 response for her which is ... internship procedure. I had already the knowledge about the school as I have attended SLC two times (in summer it is based in the same campus).

Figure 4.13 Were the sources useful?



A myriad of comments were obtained in the 'please explain' section of this question. The theme from them was that the internet can provide a lot of information that can give you an insight into what Switzerland is like, speaking to students gives you a realistic picture and that the agents, although nice, exaggerate what the reality actually is. Table 4.21 gives a sample of the comments that were made as to why students found their

sources useful or not. QR indicates Questionnaire Respondent followed by the number of that respondent and the page number where the quote can be found in the appendix.

Table 4.21 Comments from students as to why sources were useful or not

1. The agent in my hometown did not provide realistic expectations. She just wanted a commission (QR69; pg74).
2. Talking with previous students was the most helpful. School catalogues, agents talked only positive things while the student told me even the risks of going to the school. All those were useful though (QR62; pg 73).
3. Whatever information given were too general, no specific instruction or recommendation were given. As information were taken from people whom have not really been through living in Swiss. As for online information, it was vague, stating bring more cloths, not stating expected salty food or even where and how to do laundry, as well as getting necessities (QR56; pg74).
4. Totally different from what the agent mentioned. Especially about the bank account (QR55; pg74).
5. Well, the information online and through the agency helped me in answering questions like what facilities they have there, the names of lecturers and the schools in the group in general. However, it's the experience here that changes the feeling, friendly people makes everything seems less scary, in contrast, people that look on me with a strong-weird look seems really disturbing (QR53; pg 73).
6. General information maybe yes ... but the real lifestyle and how it works here doesn't really match with what I've told ... and the information provided is very limited (QR54; pg 74).
7. I came to the school with my mom personally since we're here on holiday before school started and we had a small tour around the campus and had our questions answered (QR48; pg 73).
8. The sources agent gave to me? Not at all (QR46; pg 73).
9. Most of the things that I wanted to know about was 70% accurate (QR45; pg 73).
10. It was useful, as my friends influenced my choice to chose the school (QR44; pg 73).
11. It definitely useful! You can collect all kind of information on the internet, and ... more real life examples or specific information from students and representative (QR37; pg73).
12. The agent helped to know the basic information. The student then explained me how is the life of student at the school, how is the culture, what is possible to do there, or if the studies are hard or not (QR35; pg 73).
13. I was able to have a vague idea of what to expect but I think the agency said many over exaggerating things, which really worried me and my family (QR32; pg 73).
14. We live and study in school, there's nothing else to worry about so get used to this school is the priority (QR29; pg72).
15. My friends are trustworthy their words are more realistic than the school website / agent (QR28; pg72).
16. Information from the site visit / agent can NEVER reflect the downsides / hidden problems of staying in Switzerland (QR27; pg73).
17. But the information could have been more specific and accurate concerning lifestyle in Swiss (QR25; pg72).
18. I figure out that, based on self experience are more reliable (QR24; pg73).
19. Helped me get some basic concept of the school (QR21; pg72).
20. Well to an extent, the sources were able to give me a general overview of what the village was like but in terms of the course work, I didn't feel that I had enough information (QR18; pg72).
21. The university agent explained as much as possible what I should expect on arrival and so did previous students (QR16; pg72).
22. They were, speaking to other students helped me choose one campus instead of the other (QR10; pg73).

These comments from Table 4.21 will be used at a later stage in the analysis section to see if the sources of information used led to a more 'realistic' adjustment for the student. The comments made will be further compared with the source that was used (see Section 4.4.2).

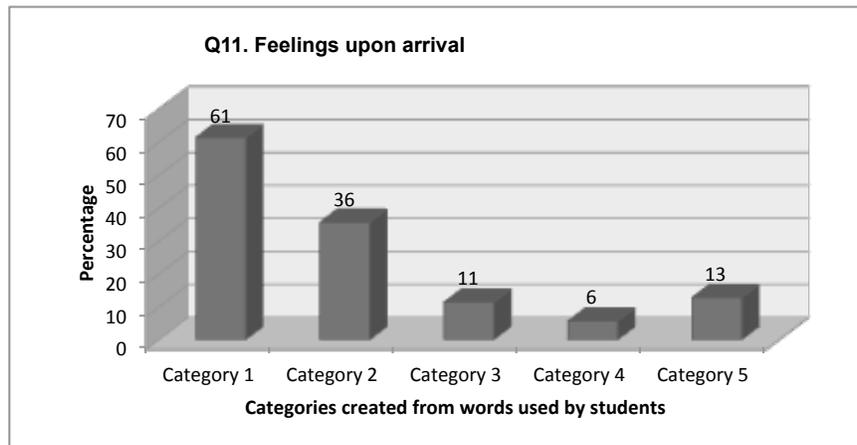
4.3.2 Arrival in Switzerland - Questionnaire Findings

This section of the questionnaire wanted to discover how the student felt once they arrived in Switzerland and the location of the institution. There were five questions in this section and they were all open ended so as to see how the students would describe themselves in the situations. Question 11 wanted to explore their initial feelings upon arrival. As with other questions previously, the words and phrases were counted and categories were created. Table 4.22 shows the categories that were made and Figure 4.14 shows how often this category was mentioned by the student. The same process was adopted for the creation of these categories as identified in Section 4.3.1.

Table 4.22 Categories created from the words and phrases used by students on feelings upon arrival

Category 1	Excited / Happy / Amazed / Beautiful
Category 2	Worried / Scared / Nervous / Anxious
Category 3	Sad / Lost / Far away
Category 4	Annoyed / Irritated / Disappointed
Category 5	Other: Shops closing early / Cold

Figure 4.14 Feelings identified by students upon arrival in Switzerland / the institute



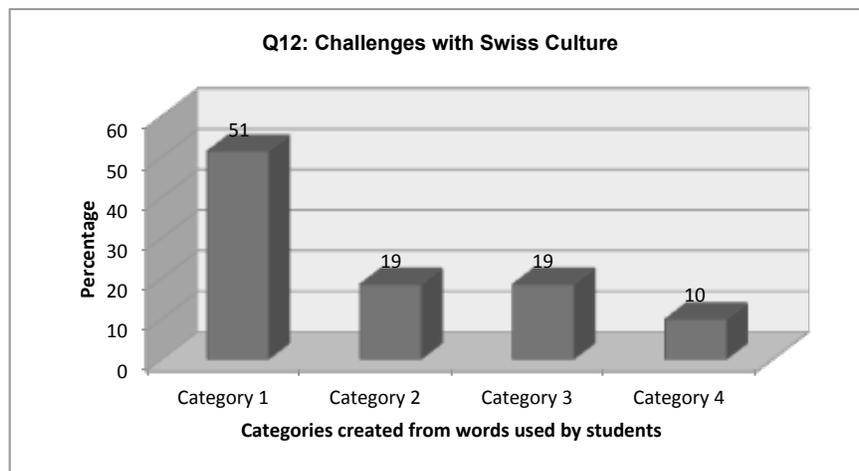
Excitement still seemed to be the main feeling and from this it was hoped to discover what some of the challenges were that the students associated with the Swiss culture. Table 4.23 shows the categories that were created for this as many words and phrases

were used and Figure 4.15 shows how often this category appeared. The same process was adopted for the creation of these categories as identified in Section 4.3.1.

Table 4.23 Categories created from the words and phrases used by the students on challenges

Category 1	Language / Food
Category 2	Operating Hours of shops
Category 3	Cold / Closed / Unfriendly people / Obsessed with Rules
Category 4	No Real interaction with Swiss culture

Figure 4.15 Challenges identified by students regarding Swiss Culture



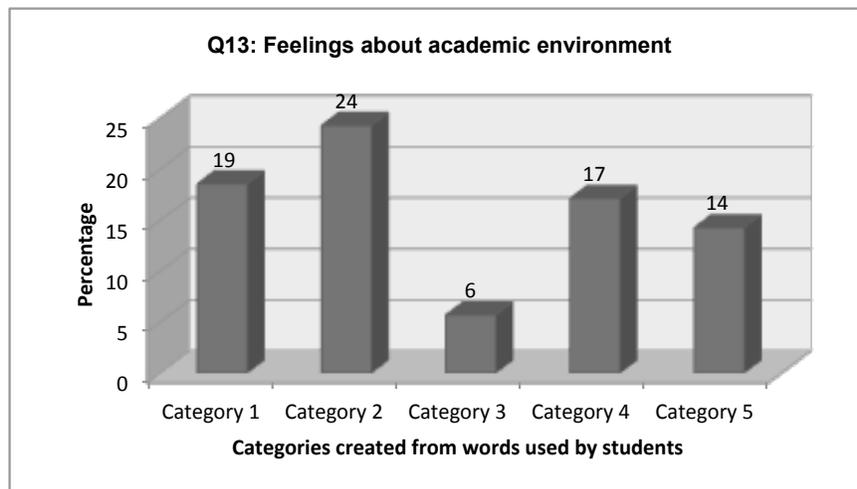
The key challenge that appeared, which was mentioned most was the issue of ‘language’ but something that was of more interest was the fact that category 4 ‘no real interaction with the Swiss culture’ appeared 10%. More analysis on this will appear in the next section of this chapter (see Section 4.4.5).

The following questions specifically investigated the programme and the academic environment in the institution. The intention was to find out how challenging they found this. This might be interesting to examine in comparison to where they have come from and who they spoke to prior to arrival. It might also be interesting to examine in relation to when they joined the programme? Table 4.24 shows the categories that were created from the words and phrases that the students used and Figure 4.16 shows how often these words were used. Excitement is still high on the list however, a new category of disappointment appeared.

Table 4.24 Categories created from the words and phrases students used on the academic environment

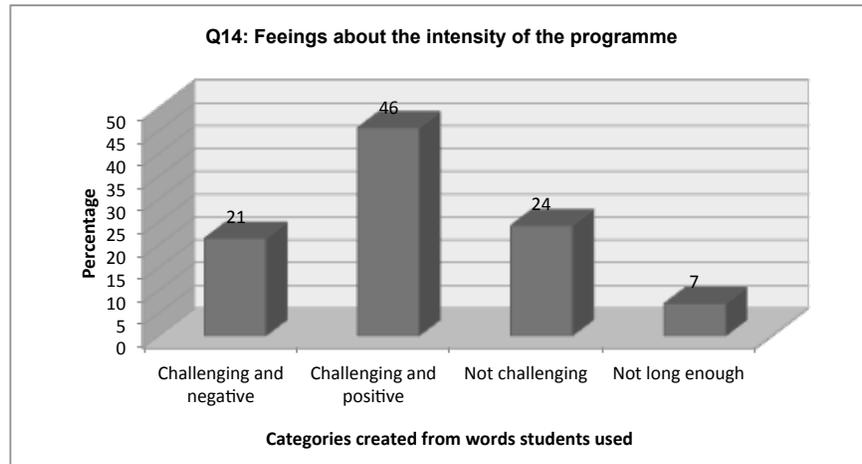
Category 1	Excited / Happy
Category 2	Worried / Scared / Nervous / Anxious
Category 3	Curious / Interested / Eager to start / High Expectations
Category 4	Difficult
Category 5	Disappointed / Lower than expected

Figure 4.16 Feelings identified by students about the academic environment



Question 14 examined how students felt about the intensity of the programme that was offered at the institution. Part of the reason to ask this question was to explore if they had realised this prior to their arrival. From the responses that were gathered, four main themes emerged which are highlighted in Figure 4.17. It was decided to create a specific category for ‘not long enough’ as these words were used a number of times. The category ‘challenging but negative’ did mention topics such as time management, which does relate to length of time however, it was felt that this was not the same as ‘not long enough’ for the purpose of this research as the student should have known the length of the programme when they were deciding on where to do their study.

Figure 4.17 Feelings identified by students about the intensity of the programme



Quotes from each of these categories in Figure 4.17 can be found later on in the analysis chapter (see Section 4.4.5).

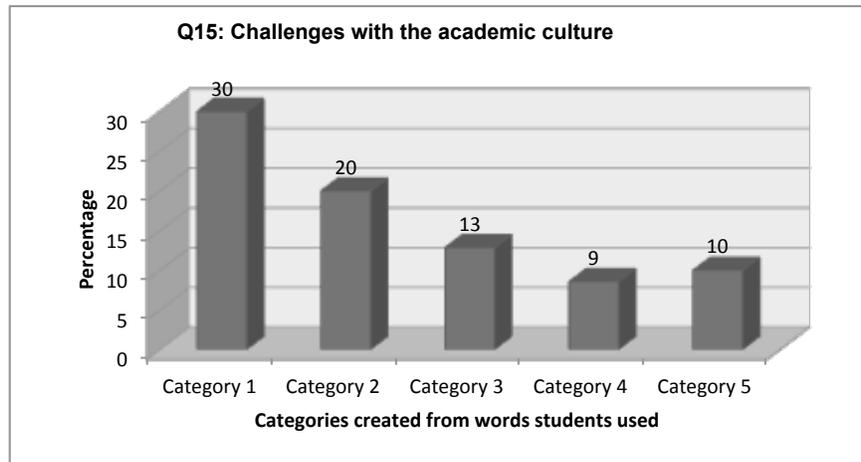
Figure 4.18 highlights the challenges that students experienced with the academic culture and Table 4.25 explains the categories that were generated from the words and phrases that the students used. Feelings expressed in this question (Q15) can possibly help in relation to disseminating information to the various groups involved in preparing students for their study in the institution.

Table 4.25 Categories created from the words used by students in relation to academic challenges

Category 1	Dissertation / Course work pressure / Not enough time
Category 2	Big difference between level 3 and level 4 / Teaching / Critical Thinking
Category 3	Too much free time / Independent study expected
Category 4	Too much reliance on group work
Category 5	Was easy / No challenge

The categories used for this question are interesting and will be used at a later stage to compare with the previous studies done on challenges students experience within foreign academic cultures (see Section 2.5 and Section 4.4.5).

Figure 4.18 *The challenges students experienced with the academic culture*



4.3.3 Coping Strategies - Questionnaire Findings

This part of the questionnaire wanted to discover one of the key aspects of this research i.e. how is it the students cope with the different experiences they have had. An open question was asked to try and see what is it they do if the feelings they expressed earlier were negative, what networks did they use to help them through and whether they believe they have adjusted or not. With the open question (Q16), an array of terms were used and Table 4.26 identifies the categories that were created from the responses given by the student. Figure 4.19 then shows how often each of these categories were chosen.

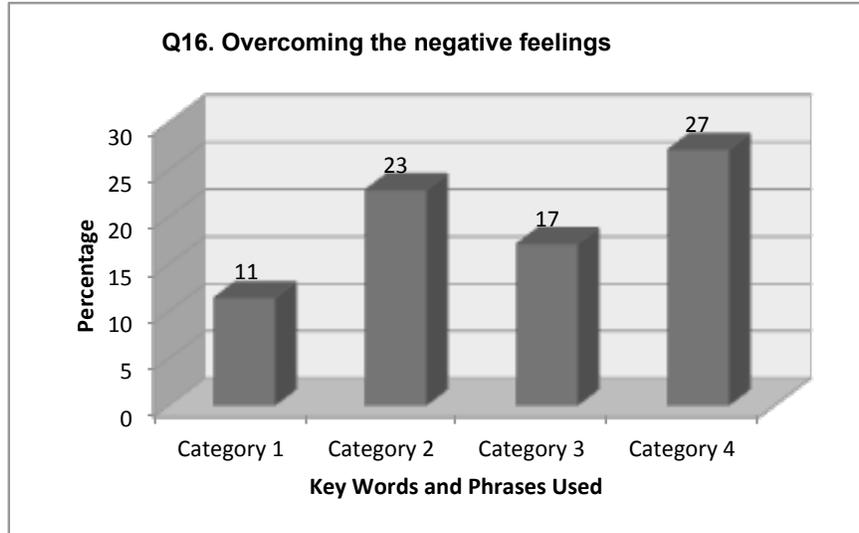
Table 4.26 *Categories created from the words and phrases students used to overcome negative feelings*

Category 1	Old Friends / Family
Category 2	New Friends
Category 3	Focus on Work / Lecturers
Category 4	Accept it / Adapt / Think Positive

As can be seen from Figure 4.19 category 2 (new friends at 23%) and 4 (accept it / adapt / think positive at 27%) were the most popular choices. In some ways both

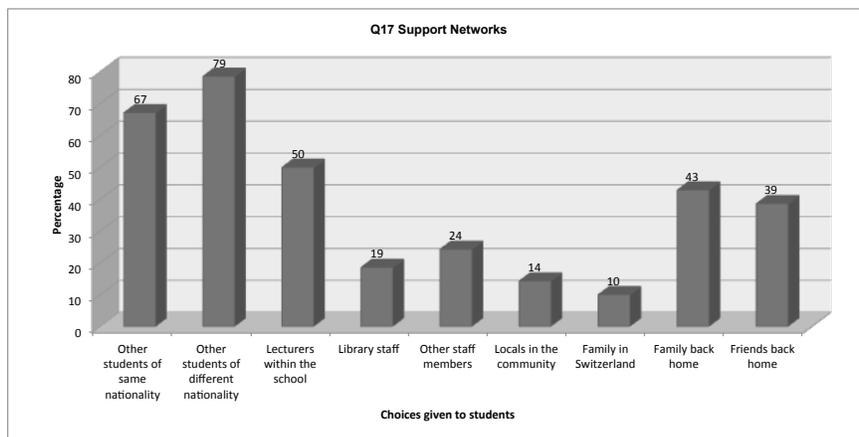
categories link in that in order to think positively and adapt then you use the networks that are around you i.e. make new friends.

Figure 4.19 How negative feelings were overcome



From the choices that were given in Q17 which asked specifically about the networks that students tried to develop, Figure 4.20 highlights the most common ones chosen. Students were allowed to choose as many as were appropriate for them.

Figure 4.20 Support networks chosen



Some students added to the choices that were given in the question and they are highlighted in Table 4.27. Some of these comments though could be integrated into the

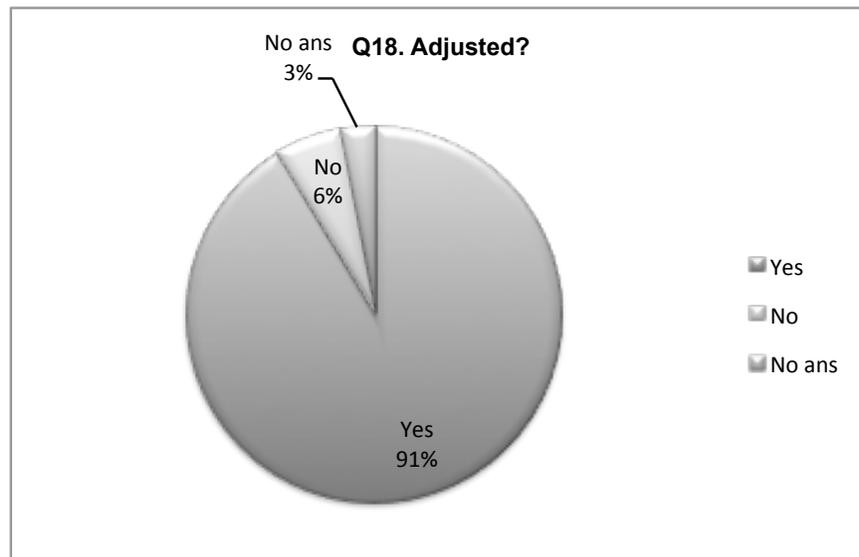
choices that were given to the students in the questionnaire e.g. comment 2 is a mixture of 'other staff' and 'locals in the community'. An additional one though was the networks developed via internships undertaken while here. It is unknown though whether these internships took place in Switzerland, back in their own country or elsewhere (see Appendix 22; pg96 for all comments).

Table 4.27 Extra comments made in relation to networks used

1. Networks during previous internships / colleagues at work during internship
2. Operations staff / Maintenance / Dishwashers / Locals, Chefs, other schools Staff
3. Since when I first arrived I was the only student from my country (or could even say continent) it was difficult to interact with others due to language barriers. However, as time passed they broke out of their shells and started interacting with me.

Lastly in this section, Q18 wanted to know if the student felt that they had adjusted and why they thought so. Figure 4.21, a huge 91% believed they had adjusted and the reasons given as to why they felt they had to adjusted or not will be analysed future in the analysis section (see Section 4.4.7).

Figure 4.21 Have students adjusted?



Examples of some of the comments that came from the students as to why they feel as if they have adjusted or not are as follows:

Yes I definitely have! It matured me, I found a lot of friends which I can actually call friends, made me feel part of a family, which was very hard to leave after BA! (YES response; QR2: pg97).

I feel that I adjusted well, as I never felt like I was away from home. In fact oddly enough I felt more at home at school thanks to the freedom and support networks that I had (YES response; QR8; pg97).

In terms of Swiss culture I can't say I had to adjust very much because I didn't interact with many Swiss people. As for the academic culture I did adjust for the Diploma however, I can only hope that I've been able to adjust for the BA (YES response; QR10; pg97)

I adapt easily and understand fast the way I should speak, look. I am very open to new things, and lived in more than 3 countries, so it was easier (YES response; QR25; pg97)

Yes, I feel I have managed to adjust well to both cultures as I'm a very dynamic person (YES response, QR42; pg98)

It's just like, when in Rome, do what the Romans do. So I just had to blend in to what is already here and live with what I have now (YES response; QR48; pg98)

My local language is poor level. I felt difficulties when I try to talk with Swiss (NO response; QR15; pg99)

The complete list of all reasons can be seen in Appendix 23; pg97

4.3.4 Could things be done better? - Questionnaire Findings

This part of the questionnaire wanted the students to reflect on if they were given another chance when making the decisions they did, would they do anything differently. It is broken into 3 areas (1) could you or the institution have done anything better prior to your arrival (2) could you or the institution have done anything better upon your arrival and (3) how would you advise other students about to embark on the same journey in terms of preparation?

Figure 4.22 Could you or the institution have done anything better prior to your arrival?

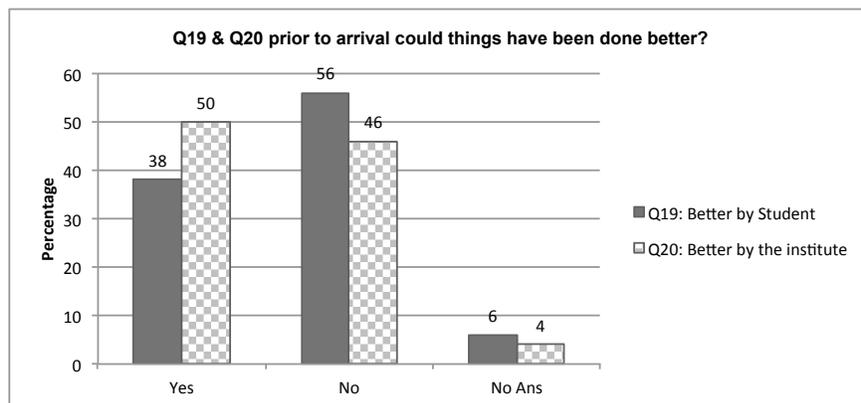


Figure 4.22 compares whether the students felt either themselves or the institution could have done anything more or different prior to their arrival for their studies. From this figure we can see that the majority of the students felt that they themselves could not have done anything better prior to their arrival (56%) and half of them believed that the institution could have done something better prior to their arrival. The comments made in relation to what could have or could not have been done will be discussed in the analysis section of this chapter (see Section 4.4). Examples of the comments made by students on what they could (or could not) have done better prior to arrival are as follows:

Could have learned more about the actual subjects and disciplines taught in the institution. I am not sure that I would have gone to BA here, if I had known exactly what I was going to study (YES response; QR19; pg 100).

Smile more, it actually changes one's perception (YES response; QR53; pg100).

Try to learn the language before arriving in Switzerland (YES response; QR66; pg100).

I think I was open minded enough to get on the right path (NO response; QR2; pg101).

It had to come with the experience. I don't see how more research could have helped me (NO response; QR26; pg101).

Examples of the comments made by students on what the institution could (or could not) have done better prior to arrival are as follows:

Offering some kind of real testimonials from current students to be familiar with the surroundings of the institute and Switzerland (YES response; QR3; pg102).

Provide more details about the academic programme (YES response; QR19; pg102).

Crucial to know the cultures of the group arriving (YES response; QR53; pg102).

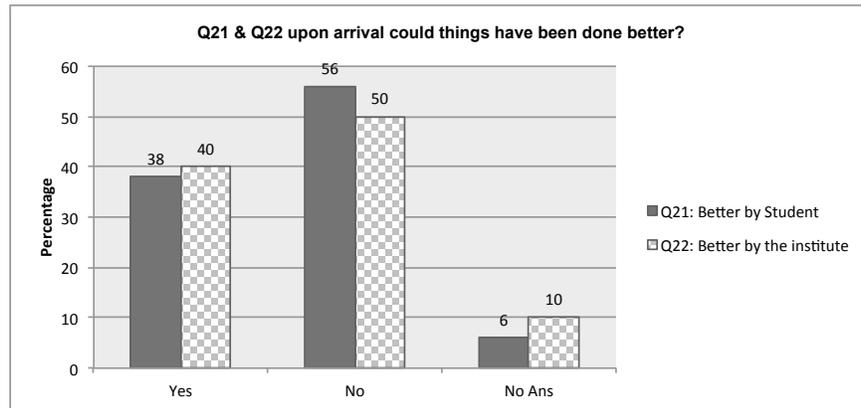
Everything is perfect (NO response; QR37; pg103).

There is a limit the institution can do. As this is a multinational school, each nation had different expectations, and each individual has their own behaviours and adaptability, hence it's tough, time consuming and resource wasting to specifically create or change the orientation programme to cater for each individual (NO response; QR 56; pg103).

The complete list of all reasons can be seen in Appendix 24 and Appendix 25 pg100 - pg 103.

Following on from this the students were asked if anything could be different once they arrived. Figure 4.23 shows the thought on this.

Figure 4.23 Could you or the institution have done anything better UPON your arrival?



The majority thought that neither the institution nor they themselves (i.e. the students) could do anything better upon arrival.

Examples of the comments made by students on what they could (or could not) have done better upon arrival are as follows:

I wish i interacted with everyone from he beginning before they built their groups of friends instead of staying in my own room (YES response; QR11; pg104).

By being more outgoing. It is likely that people who go to parties more often adapt more quickly. For me and other people who prefer small companies of trusted people to large gatherings it might be more difficult (YES response; QR26; pg104).

Connected with past students (YES response; QR61; pg104).

I had fun with my roommate, and it helped me meet a lot of people and she arrived before me, so she gave me a little tour of the school (NO response; QR20; pg105).

I was well prepared and informed before my arrival (NO response; QR44; pg105).

Examples of the comments made by students on what the institution could (or could not) have done better upon arrival are as follows:

Perhaps a week of casual dressing and adaptation. I felt I did not have enough time to settle down before the classes started (YES response; QR26; pg106).

Maybe give more information about the school, people, Switzerland. Or maybe they could have had a student from the student ambassador forum who would help the new students with answering questions (YES response; QR44; pg106).

Try to find out if students are comfortable (YES response; QR49; pg106).

Everything was great very friendly made me feel like I could go to them anytime (NO response; QR2; pg107)

Is good enough compare to other colleges that I have studied in Taiwan and Guam (NO response; QR46; pg107).

The complete list of all reasons can be seen in Appendix 26 and Appendix 27 pg104 - pg 107.

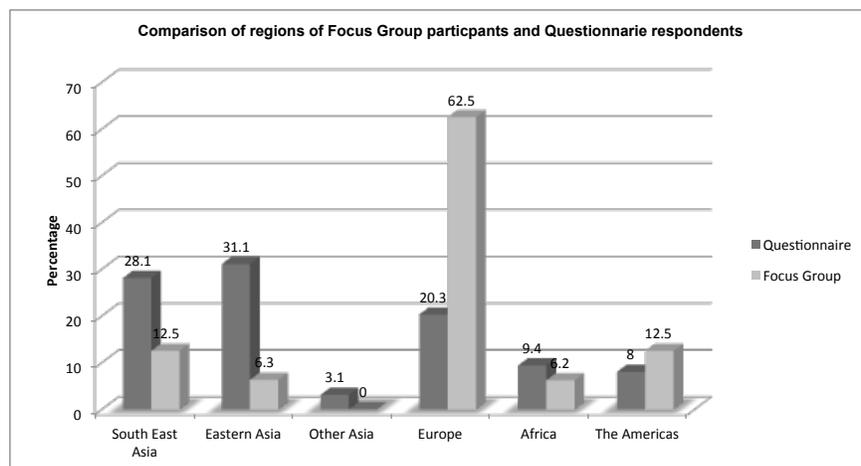
A complete list of all the comments made by the students in the various questions in the questionnaire can be seen in the appendices (Appendix 11- 28 inclusive).

4.4 Analysis and Discussion

The focus groups and the interview were held as a starting point to try and explore the feelings from the students in relation to adapting to both the academic and national culture that exists in the institution that they chose to study at. The findings of the focus groups provided a basis for the creation of the questionnaire that was distributed twice (all final year students that were currently finishing their final year and those that had already finished). The analysis is divided up in the same way as the design of the research instruments and the findings that have already been presented previously, namely: sample information; prior to coming to Switzerland; arrival in Switzerland; and finally coping strategies employed by the student. Use of direct quotes will be made where necessary to facilitate the understanding of why certain responses were given.

It was hoped to have generated a sample from the focus group stage that was reflective of the student body in the school but as can be seen from Figure 4.24 the focus group was made up of mainly Europeans (62.5%). The questionnaire however, did reflect the school intake with 62.3% coming from Asia and the European group being substantially less (20.3%). A possible reason for the higher percentage of European focus group participants could be from the way the sample was chosen e.g. it was on a voluntary basis generated from an email that was sent to students seeking participants for the study. The nature of the European student within the school is one where there is less fear associated with interacting with lecturers and less fear associated with stating their own opinions. This is quite typical if compared to the dimensions created by Hofstede e.g. High versus Low Power Distance and High versus Low Uncertainty Avoidance. Those that attended the focus group that were of Asian origin had spent time in other countries and living in Switzerland was not new to them e.g. FG1; R2 indicated that he moved every 2 years with his family (see Table 4.1). This may have influenced their willingness to be part of such a study.

Figure 4.24 Comparison of regions of Focus Group and Questionnaire respondents



The age group that participated in both the focus groups and the questionnaires were similar with the majority of students being between the ages of 21 - 23 (73% and 75% respectively). With regards to the length of time that students have been at the school the focus group was more representative of the student progression that exists in the school. Focus groups and questionnaires are compared in Table 4.28 in relation to when students joined the programme. A higher proportion of direct entry to 3rd year and BA final year in the focus group was useful as a comparison basis on how the different groups adapted.

Table 4.28 Comparison of when respondents joined the programme in the institution

Joined School when	Focus Group	Questionnaire
From 1 st year	50%	76%
Direct entry to 2 nd year	6.25%	1%
Direct entry to 3 rd year	31.25%	13%
Direct entry to BA final	12.5%	10%

It is typical in the school that those that join in first year tend to remain until the end of their programme at final level BA, however other entry routes do exist for students to join the programme at various stages. Comments that were made in relation to joining the school (other than at first year level) are seen in the comments that came from the focus group respondents:

... a special arrangement between the school and the Canadian school and could continue the the BA here for 1 year. To complete in Canada would have taken 2 years (FG1; R3; pg5; came directly to 3rd year, studied previously in Canada).

... where I studied formerly in South Africa there was a link to this school (FG2; R5; pg17; came directly to BA final, studied previously in South Africa).

... A different entry route ... did industry training and then applied to direct entry to 3rd year. Didn't do a diploma previously. I couldn't do this in Germany, it would have taken 3 years as opposed to 2 years here (FG3; R10; pg32; came directly to 3rd year, no previous university level study, used work experience to gain entry).

The issue that arises here is related to the way in which students who enter the programme from the beginning and those that join at final year BA adapt to the environment that they find themselves. This is an area that will be analysed further throughout this chapter.

4.4.1 Prior to arrival in Switzerland - Analysis

The findings of both the focus groups and the questionnaires indicate that a key reason for the students choosing to study in Switzerland focuses on the reputation of Switzerland as a place to study hospitality. Naturally as the questionnaire gained more responses, the reasons given were more and varied however, reputation still appeared as the most important reason, identified by 74% of the sample. As identified in the model of international students' preference by Cubillo *et al* (2006) (see Figure 2.2), country image appears as one of the four broad categories that students consider in relation to university choice and within this category 'social and academic reputation' is an area of consideration. It is this category that links strongly with Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) 'Push-Pull Factors' where reputation and profile of the country are part of the factors that pull students to a particular study destination. One student said:

... Switzerland is like the aura of hospitality if you think about it (FG1; R4; pg6; French but lives in South Africa).

Table 4.29 gives an overview of the evidence gathered from both the focus groups and the questionnaire on how students were 'pushed' or 'pulled' (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) in relation to making their choice in coming to Switzerland. Although the specific terms used by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) are not used by the students, it can be seen from

their statements that there is clearly evidence of both push and pull factors influencing their choices.

Table 4.29 Comments indicating both Push and Pull Factors influencing choices

Mazzarol and Soutar Push-Pull Factors (2002)	Student Comments
PUSH including: Foreign degree better than local one Students inability to gain entry to local programmes Better understanding of the Western culture Intention to migrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying hospitality in South Africa but I wasn't very happy with it (FG3; R14; pg32). • No hospitality schools in Sweden (QR67; pg64). • Higher level of education and a diploma more appreciated (QR52; pg64) • Wanted to study abroad in a very international environment (FG2; R8; pg17). • Secondary benefits ... international environment, possibility to travel to meet new people and work in different countries and all that (FG2; R6; pg17).
PULL including: Reputation / profile of the country Better knowledge / awareness of the country Family decision / alumni network Geographical proximity Cost of higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation • People that worked with my father came here also (FG3; R11; pg32). • Came here because of the name of the school and the reputation of Switzerland (FG3; R15; pg33) . • For me it was my dad, because I really didn't know what to do (FG3; R11; pg33). • My mom wanted it (QR48; pg63). • My parents forced me to do so (QR11; pg62)

Other categories from Cubillo *et al* (2006) model also appeared through the responses given by the students both in the focus group and the questionnaires. Table 4.29 is created as a result of asking the respondents of the questionnaire to indicate why they chose Switzerland (Q5). Table 4.30 indicates the information specific to Switzerland that they searched for (Q7). As the responses indicate, there are elements of all of the categories from Cubillo *et al* (2006) evident in the responses. Table 4.30 is created by taking the broad categories from Cubillo *et al* (2006) and using the comments from the questionnaire to investigate how many of these categories are actually considered when making the choice of where to study.

The choice of language was chosen by 67% of the respondents of the questionnaire, which fits with the model of international students preference, however this is an aspect that should have been developed further within the questionnaire. Two issues in relation

to language appear within this study, the location of the institution being Switzerland (French-speaking region) and the language of instruction being English. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) in their study examined choice of destination as well as choice of institution and identified language as an influencing factor but did not differentiate between local language and language of instruction.

Table 4.30 Questionnaire respondents V's Cubillo et al (2006) Model of International Students Preference

Categories by Cubillo et al (2006)	Comments from students
Personal Reasons	Parents Involvement / Knew People here / Familiar already with Switzerland (7%)
Country Image	Reputation / Renowned for Hospitality Education (74%) Currency (49%) (see Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.10)
City Effect	Location (59%) Cost of Living (67%) Climate (53%) (see Figure 4.10)
Institution Image	Language (67%) Facilities (31%) (see Figure 4.10)
Programme Evaluation	Programme / Length of Time to Study / Offered More Value (9%) (see Figure 4.8)

A possible reason for this is that much of the study done on foreign students is based in English speaking countries (e.g. UK, USA, Australia) where both language of instruction and the local language are the same. From the findings of the focus group, English (the language of instruction at the institution) was mentioned by one of the respondents:

... the English was important because I studied my whole life in French ... I had some English lessons but I felt that I need to work on this language to make sure I can pass (FG1;R1; pg8; Portuguese but born and raised in Belgium).

An interesting comment in relation to English appeared from a Zimbabwean respondent who didn't seem to think twice about English and was almost shocked at the fact that everything was in French:

... language, which to me was very odd because I thought, well at least most countries that I had been to, English is spoken by everyone and here is quite different in the sense that there's a lot of French and if you don't know French you really have a problem communicating ... even basically from the airport everything is in French and you don't really know what to do, what to say and things like that ... (Interview; R16; pg 43 Zimbabwe).

As can be seen from these two comments, language in this study poses many problems. At the stage of making the choice of where to study, this issue should be made very explicit, that two factors exist, that of the local language and the language of instruction. An attempt made through the questionnaire to see if students thought about this issue themselves was through question eight, when they were asked what information specific to the institution did they search for. The question was left open purposely to see if language would emerge as a research point. It did not.

Although studying abroad is an expensive investment and a factor that is considered in the model of international students' preference by Cubillo *et al* (2006), not many students considered the area of tuition fees (4% made this comment in the 'other' option available in Q8) but it is possible that this issue was integrated into both Q7 (information required specific to Switzerland) and Q8 (information required specific to the institution).

Currency and Cost of Living may have been combined and interpreted to include tuition fees. The focus group did indicate that their parents were part of the decision-making process particularly in relation to financing the study. Comments include:

... finally it was my decision and my parents were supportive (FG3; R10; pg33; German)

... for me it was mostly my decision but I had my parent's support, without their consent I wouldn't have been able to come here (FG3; R15; pg33 Canadian)

... apart from the finances ... choosing what to study and where to study, I think I made my own decision (FG1; R2; pg6 half Singaporean, half Thai).

... for me it was my dad because I really didn't know what to do (FG3 R11; pg33 half Greek, half Italian)

Question 8 focused more on issues related to the categories of 'institution image' and 'programme evaluation' in the model by Cubillo *et al* (2006). The main area that appeared to be researched was the programme (70%), followed closely by school life (36%) and location (36%) (see Figure 4.11). Comments from the questionnaire specific to programme evaluation and institution image can be seen in Table 4.31. Programme evaluation was high in this question (70%) however, only 9% of the sample mentioned this in question 5 when asked what they wanted to know about their move to Switzerland. It is arguable that a number of these categories influence each other for example, the

programme on offer could be the main influencing factor and it just happens to be in a certain location, or reputation as a pull factor is much stronger. However, it is likely in this case that both the reputation of Switzerland as a place to study hospitality along with the programme on offer at the institution were issues that were considered together.

Table 4.31 Comments from students related to Cubillo et al (2006)

Categories by Cubillo et al (2006)	Examples from students
Institution Image	... teaching style, subjects taught ... (QR39; pg70) ... teachers ... (QR29; pg70 / QR64; pg71) ... what degree will we get and if the degree is approved by government, industry or not ... (QR47; pg71)
Programme Evaluation	... structure of courses ... (QR21; pg69) ... how good of an education it provides ... (QR25; pg70) ... length of studies ... (QR26; pg70) ... classes taught and how difficult the degree would be ... (QR59; pg71) ... recognition reviews ... (QR67; pg71) ... what the subjects were and how the grading system worked (QR2; pg 69)

From the questionnaire, specifics the respondents said in relation to school life included elements of the social life, rules and regulations, accommodation and food. The specifics they commented on in relation to location included where the school is, access to other places and the facilities available. All these research areas by the respondents fit within the model by Cubillo et al (2006). The focus group did elaborate on these also by indicating questions they asked about school life:

... about the atmosphere, the people, is it a nice place? (FG3; R11; pg34; half Greek, half Italian)

... we talked about what school life was like and whether or not it is a good choice to go to this school ... (FG1; R2; pg6; half Singaporean, half Thai)

Comments that highlighted the importance of the location came through from the focus group participants as follows:

... for me it was about the climate, I was quite used to moving around a lot already so I wasn't very worried about that, but coming to live on the top of a mountain? (FG1; R2; pg7; half Singaporean, half Thai)

... the most exciting part was ... this sounds childish ... the snow was really attracting. I grew up in Madagascar where it is hot all the time (FG1; R4; pg7; French, lives in South Africa).

... secondary benefits ... it's an international environment, possibility to travel to meet new people and work in different countries and all that is connected to make it Switzerland and hospitality (FG2; R6; pg17 Hungarian).

4.4.2 Sources used to research

The categories created as a result of the focus group appeared to be sufficient in relation to seeing how students researched for information. Even though question nine in the questionnaire had an 'other' section to allow for students to add what they like, it did not produce anything new. One student did indicate that she found out about the programmes through the attendance at a summer programme that is held through the summer months at the institution, however this is not a common route into the institution. The findings from both the focus groups and the questionnaire revealed that the most common way of gathering information about Switzerland and the institution was word of mouth (61% speaking to both current or previous students, see Figure 4.12). Also within the choices from the questionnaire were, speaking to representatives of the institute; finding forums online about the school and general internet searches produced high results (76%, 24% and 76% respectively - see Figure 4.12). From the comments made from both the focus groups and questionnaire, all of these choices indicate some form of word-of-mouth as indicated in the following:

... I wanted to find what other people's experiences were so I actually found a forum which was talking about the institution, there were a lot of people complaining about the school ... so I actually contacted the agent and I talked to them about this (FG1; R2; pg6; half Singaporean, half Thai).

... I tried to get in touch with Hungarians living in Switzerland and tried to ask if it was a culture shock for them ... so I was talking to people who were living in Switzerland outside of the school ... I tried talking to them and asking for more contacts and I was also talking to my friend who was attending the school already (FG2; R8; pg18; Hungarian).

... I saw a presentation in Greece ... and some other Greek kids were already in another institution in the group had said ... just come, its amazing (FG3; R11; pg33; half Greek, half Italian).

... For me, I had contact with a student that was here (FG3; R14; pg34; Peruvian).

... The most helpful was Facebook. I found alumni's, current students and people who would be studying with me. That's how I found my roommate for my first year, which made it less nerve-wrecking to come for the first time (did not feel so alone) (Questionnaire respondent; Canadian).

Agents or representatives from the institution played a big part in informing students about the institution prior to their arrival and these representatives appeared to involve current or previous students in presentations that were used to help inform the new students. Previous or current students were present when presentations were given to allow the new student a chance to discuss concerns they had in relation to attending the

institution. This appeared to be informal in nature as shown in a comment by one student:

... We had a little dinner, we had a lunch ... the only time they talked about academics was when they did the presentation with the agents where they talked through the powerpoint. That was the only time they focused on the academics. When it was up to me and just the students talking we didn't talk academics (FG1; R2; pg8 half Singaporean, half Thai).

From this it appears that there is a lot of emphasises given to word-of-mouth as a means to getting the information that is required. With this form of data gathering, it could be questioned as to whether it helps in relation to the aspirations and expectations that students have about the choices that they make in relation to institutions (Azmat *et al*, 2013). As Griffiths *et al* (2005) mentioned, aspirations are less controllable than expectations and making use of the alumni in helping to prepare students for their venture abroad can give more realistic previews of the situation that they will find themselves in. As already indicated by the reasons the students chose to study in Switzerland e.g. reputation, maybe by seeking word-of-mouth and realistic previews from those that should be in the know about the institution, help give more realistic expectations. This was followed up on in the questionnaire by asking if the sources used were useful or not. This is not a question that was directly asked in the focus groups but one student indicated their level of happiness with the source of their information

... and they [the agents] were not very updated, I wanted to go into tourism and hospitality and they told me that I could do this but when I got here there was not tourism and hospitality (FG3; R;15; pg34; Canadian).

The questionnaire respondents demonstrated a high satisfaction rate (76%) with the sources that they used (see Figure 4.13). From the completed questionnaire, 61% of the sample gave some reasons as to why they were satisfied or not (see Table 4.21). Figure 4.25 gives a more detailed breakdown of the source that was used and how satisfied they were with each source for this 61%.

Figure 4.25 Comparison between the sources used and satisfaction level

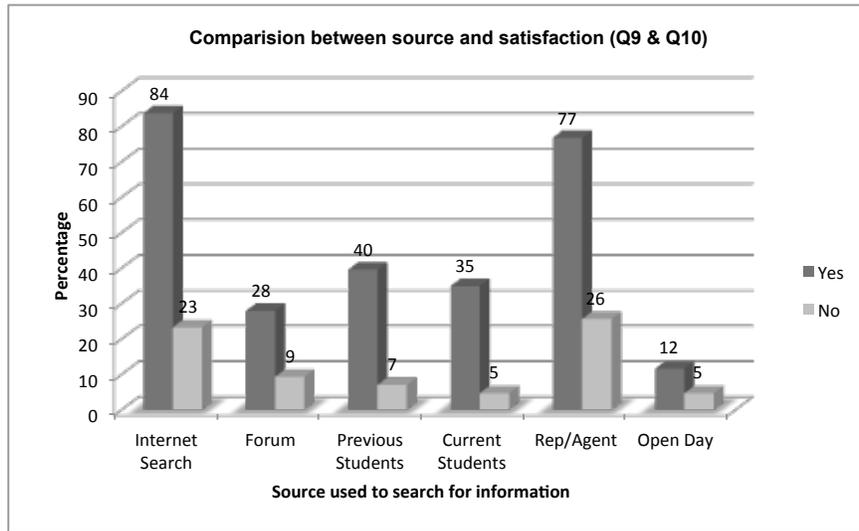


Table 4.21 highlights some of the comments made from these respondents which explain why they thought the source was good or not. From these examples, it is clear that the choice was a definite yes or no. However, for some, it appeared that the question was not as simple to answer yes or no to, as the students used many sources, of which some were useful and some were not. For example:

... my friends are trustworthy, their words are more realistic than the school website / agent (this respondent used all the sources and answered Yes to how useful they were; QR28; pg72)

... well to an extent, the sources were able to give me a general overview of what the village was like but in terms of the coursework, I didn't feel that I had enough information (this respondent used Internet search / Previous students / Representative and answered Yes to how useful they were; QR18; pg72).

... The spokesperson was very nice but most to the information I got about the school prior to arrival was again from my brother! And this was obviously more useful than anything else (this respondent used Representative and said Yes to how useful they were; QR2; pg72).

... Talking with previous students was the most helpful. School catalogs, agents talked only positive things while the student told me event the risks of going to the school. All those were useful though (this respondent used Internet search / Representative / Previous students and said No to how useful they were; QR62; pg 72).

Table 4.32 Comments from students who chose yes or no in relation to how useful the sources were.

	Example comments from students	Source used
YES	It was useful, as my friends influenced my choice to choose the institution (QR44; pg 73)	Internet search / Current Students / Representative
	Helped me get some basic concept of the school (QR21; pg72)	Internet search / Representative
	It helped me to realise how expensive it would be to live in Switzerland. Also I was already interested in figuring out where I should do my first internship, and speaking to previous students helped (QR11; pg72)	Used all sources except Open day
	Speaking to other students helped me choose one campus over the other (QR10;72)	Internet search / Previous students / Current students
	These sources gave me a faith that I had chosen a good school to study in Switzerland. They also inform me some inconvenient truth however that can be accepted (QR4; pg72)	Internet search/ School forum / Current students
NO	Totally different from what the agent mentioned. Especially about the bank account (QR55; pg74)	Internet search / Representative
	Whatever information given were too general, no specific instruction or recommendation were given. As information were taken from people whom have not really been through living in Swiss. As for online information, it was vague, stating bring more clothes, not stating expected salty food or even where and how to do laundry, as well as getting necessities (QR56; pg74)	Internet search / Representative
	I thought the agent was very helpful. However, according to my experience, the information from the agent and the image of the school are very exaggerated (QR3; pg73)	Internet search / Representative
	I figure out that, based on self experience are more reliable (QR24; pg73)	Internet search / Representative

From this data gathered and the cross-tabulations performed, the content of the information being given to students is highlighted as problematic as the information provided at times was not realistic or over exaggerated, but what can be seen from these comments is, those that were not happy with the sources only seemed to use two sources, general internet search and a school representative. This was a pattern identified through all those respondents that said NO they were not happy with the sources they used. Those that were happy with the sources that they used tended to use a wider variety of sources and quite possibly weighed up the pros and cons of the information they were getting from each source e.g. in the YES comments in Table 4.32 speaking to current or previous students was common and this was the trend among all the YES responses.

Information gathered through this analysis leads back to the issue of expectations and aspirations identified by Griffiths *et al* (2005) and also can relate to the Push-Pull model identified by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). Speaking to the many people that can influence the decision of the student e.g. previous students, current students, representatives / agents of the school, all fit within the Pull factors i.e. alumni network, as can be seen by the student who commented that speaking to these sources gave them faith in the choice that they made. It is possible that these students felt that the information gathered was more accurate and trustworthy (Oliveira and Soares, 2016). How the alumni network is used influences the expectations of the students as can be seen by the same student who identified that ‘inconvenient truths’ (QR4; pg72) were also discovered hence giving a realistic preview prior to arrival.

4.4.3 Feelings prior to arrival in Switzerland

It was important to try and discover the feelings that students had prior to coming to Switzerland as, through the literature discussion it was discovered that the staged descriptions of adaptation received many critiques (see Section 2.4.1). One of the key critiques was whether the first stage actually related to excitement given the change that students go through in making this move to a foreign location to study (Searle and Ward, 1990 cited in Brown and Holloway, 2008). The students in the sample were asked an open question to allow them to use whatever words and phrases they wanted to describe the feelings that they had. As can be seen from the words that were used by the students and the categories that were created as a result of question six in the questionnaire (see Table 4.17 and Figure 4.9) the vast majority (80%) felt some form of excitement at having made this choice. The next category however, was almost the complete opposite of this relating to worry and anxiety (27%). At face value this finding sits nicely within the stage descriptors of culture shock as identified by Lysgaard (1955) U-Curve, Oberg (1960) four stages, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1960) W-Curve and Adler (1975) model of transitional experience. All of these models identified that the first stage of culture shock was related to positive feelings, which is what the sample from the questionnaire also

tended to agree with. However, what is different is that these feelings from the students were felt prior to actually arriving in Switzerland, similar to Quan *et al*,(2016).

On closer examination of the words used by the students it was discovered that many of these words (both positive and negative) appeared together showing that students had many feelings about making this move to Switzerland. The major trend was between excitement and nervousness / anxiety, but there was also sadness apparent. This can be seen in the examples below.

... a bit scared as everything was new. Even though I knew Switzerland is very good I've never been away from home like this and had never experienced what the life of a boarding school would be like. I was scared on one side but very open minded to find new friends as this seemed to be the best way to cope with the situation. After all I found a lot of friends which made me feel like we are a big family and definitely prepared myself to visit other countries and to do my internship far away from home (QR2; pg 65; from Luxembourg, entering at 1st year level).

... excited, scared, nervous, happy (QR7; pg65; from Indonesia, entering at 1st year level).

... excitement and nervous. It was unknown to me and not having lived in a foreign country alone before it was rather unnerving (QR18, pg65; from South Africa, entering at the final level BA).

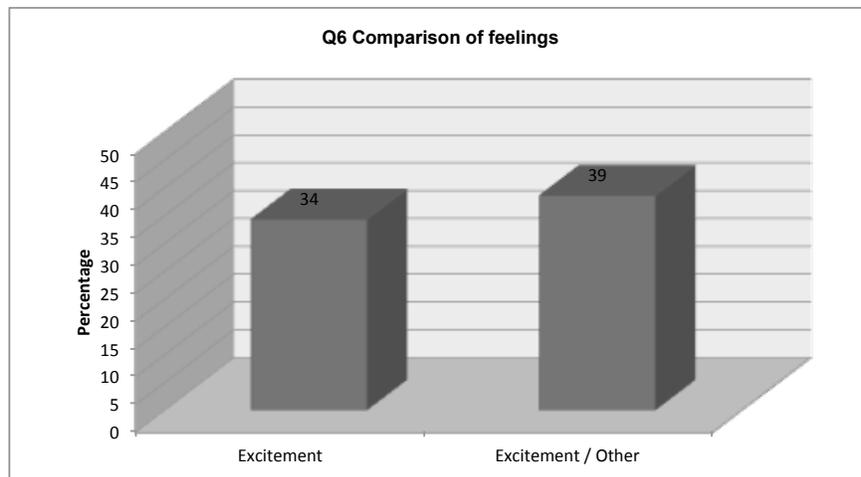
... inevitably nervous but excited, secure and enthusiastic at the same time (QR33; pg66, from Zimbabwe, entering at 1st year level).

... I was excited but also sad (QR35; pg66; from Czech Republic, entering at 1st year level).

... Mixed feelings, sad to leave my friends and family behind, excited to meet new people and eager to finish school and start to work (QR11; pg65; Canada, entering at 1st year level).

From reviewing these comments and as Figure 4.26 indicates, 34% of the respondents used only the term excitement whereas 39% of the sample used a combination of many feelings.

Figure 4.26 Comparing feeling of excitement with other feelings



From this finding it is not as simple to say that the first stage is equal to excitement and neither does it fit simply with the critique from Searle and Ward (1990, cited in Brown and Holloway, 2008) who indicated that the first stage is anxiety. The students in this sample demonstrated a broad mix of both excitement and anxiety at this initial stage; as one student put it:

... Excited, anxious, scared, worried, happy (QR16; pg65; from Zimbabwe, entering 1st year level).

From some of the responses gathered from the questionnaire it is possible to say that the students viewed this move more in line with the Growth Model of Culture Shock. The comments did not reveal much in terms of negativity except possibly the two comments that indicated an element of sadness (QR35 ;pg66 and QR11; pg65). The anticipation and eagerness demonstrated by some of the students highlighted an awareness that things will be different but there was willingness to embrace this (see comment by the student from Luxembourg - QR2; pg66) and:

... I was extremely excited and couldn't wait to explore this well-known beautiful country (QR54; pg66; from Russia, entering final BA level).

... I was very excited and ready to learn about different cultures (QR49; pg66; , no country of origin identified, entering 3rd level).

4.4.4 Arrival in Switzerland - Analysis

Excitement remained as a strong feeling among the students when they arrived at their location. Through the collation of the data for Q11 it was hoped to create similar categories as with the previous question on their feelings prior to arrival (Q6). Three categories remained similar e.g. Category 1 for both questions related to excitement; Category 2 for both questions related to anxiety and nervousness; and Category 5 and Category 3 (Q6 and Q11 respectively) related to sadness. Figure 4.14 which highlights the breakdown of how students felt upon arrival shows that excitement remained high with 61% of the students using this word. However, similar to the analysis for Q6 (feelings prior to arrival), this high percentage did not consist of students using this word only, it was used in conjunction with words demonstrating other feelings. It was noticed though that there was a change in the kind of words that were being used. For example,

Category 4 related to annoyance, irritation and disappointment; and Category 5 related to facilities in the area and the weather. This can be seen in some of the comments shown in Table 4.33. In both Category 4 and Category 5 comments, there is some evidence of both positive and negative feelings being experienced simultaneously. This analysis is consistent with the findings from the focus groups and the follow-up questionnaire that was distributed to the focus group members.

If these findings are brought back to the discussion on the staged descriptions of culture shock (see Section 2.4.1), this analysis seems to fit more with the idea that excitement alone is not the first stage of culture shock as identified by Lysgaard (1955) U-Curve, Oberg (1960) four stages, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1960) W-Curve and Adler (1975) model of transitional experience but more in line with the critique by Searle and Ward (1990, cited in Brown and Holloway, 2008) who indicated that the first stage causes anxiety. However, in saying that, the findings from both Q6 and Q11 indicate from the students' perspective that the excitement begins prior to arrival (similar to Quan *et al*, 2016) and then more of the negative feelings come upon arrival in the new location. It is upon the arrival at the new location that evidence of the Disease Model perspective of culture shock starts to appear (related to emotional problems), substantiated by comments in Category 4 (see Table 4.33). From the comments gained from the students, it is possible to start to see how adaptation exists in two areas as discussed by Ward *et al* (1998) i.e. psychological and sociocultural. The comments in Category 3 and Category 4 relate more to psychological adaptation (emotional issues with the student) and the comments in Category 5 relating more to sociocultural adaptation (feelings of 'fitting in' to the environment). However, it is not simple to separate these two, which can be evidenced in the following statement from a student that demonstrates both psychological and sociocultural adaptation concerns:

... Scared and 'it's really loud'. The first time when I was here for my first year, I sat on the bus bringing me to the campus, the people attending to us was OK, they are smiling and looked a little stress maybe because of the huge crowd. Well the bus, the huge crowd seems to be from a specific country and I'm in a different one, I felt really scared, don't know if I'll fit in or not (QR53 ; pg77; from Malaysia, entering 1st year level).

Table 4.33 Comments from questionnaire regarding feelings upon arrival

Category	Comments
<p>Category 3 (including: sad, lost, far away)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Switzerland: very punctual – everything is very punctual such as transportation. Village – isolated – it takes long to get city centre, shops are closed early(QR3; pg75). 2. Very far (QR70; pg77). 3. Lonely, I didn't know anyone. I was afraid I wouldn't fit in. Amazed about the beautiful place (QR59; pg77). 4. Lost, alone, worried. (QR48; pg77)
<p>Category 4 (including: annoyed; irritated; disappointment)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The airport pick-up employees let me wait for 3 hours at the airport instead of the car. I felt quite disappointed and unwelcome (QR21; pg76). 2. I was excited before. A bit disappointed while discovering various difficulties and problems of the school, was sad about the village but I got used to it (QR43; pg76). 3. Confused, surprised, tired and irritated (QR67; pg77). 4. Disappointed. This is not what I've been expected (QR57; pg77).
<p>Category 5 (including: other e.g. shops closing early; cold)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiet but beautiful place, nice, cold (QR4; pg75). 2. The weather is nice but the shops close too early (QR13; pg75). 3. Lost, cold and unfriendly atmosphere around Swiss people. Expected more sophisticated looking streets and people (QR25; pg76). 4. Amazed by the view and also the people. But also feel shocked with the shops are closing earlier and not opening on Sunday (QR55; pg77).

In light of this discussion and comparing prior feelings and arrival feelings, it is possible to extend the curve taking the students in this sample as evidence. Rather than having the first stage upon arrival as being euphoria and a honeymoon period, as per many of the staged descriptions of culture shock, the first stage could be the pre-arrival stage and the frustrations arriving and shock appearing upon arrival. With the current sample of students, Hyde's (2012) model, which highlights survival as the first stage (see Figure 2.5) is a little more appropriate where the students in this sample demonstrated less excitement (even though it was still quite high at 61%) than they did prior to arriving and started to show more negative feelings. With these findings it makes the starting point on the U-Curve difficult to plot as there are both positive and negative feelings at

the same time. This could also relate back to Ward *et al* (1998) where they indicated that psychological adjustment is more difficult to relate to the U-Curve. These findings though do not address the critique made by Church (1982) where longitudinal studies are needed in order to establish an adaptation curve among the group of students. It was not the intention of the WBP to recreate this curve but more to identify if and when culture shock might occur.

A point of interest in the location of this study is the fact that the nature of the programme is 18 weeks in duration and as can be seen from Hyde (2012) who tried to give a timeframe for students to anticipate different feelings, the timeframe in his model is 12 months. Hyde's (2012) model indicated that adjustment starts to appear between months five to twelve but at five months, the students in this sample are finished their programme for that 'year'. This is analysed a little further in this following section when the students are asked how did they cope with the intensity of the programme that they chose to study on.

4.4.5 Challenges with National and Academic Culture

As mentioned previously, the focus group did not seem to separate challenges between national and academic culture during the discussion so it was hoped that through the questionnaire some form of separation could be identified to see if there is a difference between both cultures for the student. The interesting issue in this study that is slightly different from other studies done on international students is the fact that both cultures are different e.g. Swiss national culture and British academic culture. In previous studies identified in the literature review, the majority of studies have been conducted on institutions where the academic culture and the national culture are both the same e.g. studies conducted in British universities that work within the British academic framework (see Section 2.5). From the focus group and the questionnaire (see Figure 4.15), 10% of the sample indicated that they did not really have any interaction with the Swiss culture as can be seen from the following comments:

... Swiss culture is not particularly evident in school (QR52; pg80).

... Nothing since we hardly interact with true Swiss culture (QR39; pg79).

... The sad part is, being part of the school, one never did have many chances to understand the Swiss culture as anticipated (QR8; pg78).

However, in saying this, there were still plenty of comments related to the issue of language, food, operating hours of shops, unfriendly people, obsessed with rules etc., all of which fall under the area of culture as identified by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1962, cited in Ting-Toomey, 1999) who stated that the term culture is associated with both external and internal attributes i.e. architecture to values of a community. Language and food appeared most often with 51% of the questionnaire respondents stating this as challenging (see Figure 4.15). This is similar to some of the stories told by the focus group members (see Table 4.8; FG1;R4).

In relation to culture shock and the definition provided in the literature review by Pedersen (1995:1) ‘culture shock is the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment’, it was found that several student when asked about the challenges they experienced with the Swiss culture, compared here (Switzerland) with home as can be seen from the following comments:

... I didn't like the lack of accessibility of services that I'm used to at home (stores and restaurants seemed to be closed all the time. I was surprised to discover that Swiss people in general speak fairly good English. I do speak some French, but I believe people were friendly enough to try to communicate with me in an understanding sense (QR67; pg80).

... Swiss culture is not as open-minded as US culture, which is extremely strange. I feel like even the school I've attended in Asia is more open-minded than in Swiss (QR.57; pg80)

... When I worked in Geneva I realised that Swiss people are more cold and stiff comparing with American culture or my country. It would take a period of time to be involved (QR54; pg80).

... As I am from Brazil what I could say was more challenging was the fact that the Swiss culture is more of a closed culture and people are 'colder' than in Brazil (QR40; pg79).

... The food was also difficult to adjust to and it still is because its very processed and different from where I come from (QR10; pg78).

Even though the students did not use the term ‘culture shock’, all of these comments show that differences in what was once ‘normal’ to the student has changed and the realisation that adjustments need to be made. Not many students actually commented on

‘adjustment’ at this stage of the research except one who noticed differences when interacting with Swiss people and realised that s/he would have to do the adjusting:

... Cold people, discriminative and uncomfortable to be around. They are not willing to understand differences and think they are on top of the world. You have to adjust instead to their culture (QR25; pg79).

From this comment, it can be seen that the student falls close to the discussion held by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, cited in Berry, 2006) on reciprocal influence. The discussion by Redfield *et al* (1936) assumed that the minority group is the one that changes most in the intercultural contact where as other researchers in later years believed that both cultures change. From this student’s point of view, s/he seemed to believe that the change would have to occur from his/her side. It can also be seen from this statement a realisation that s/he will have to unlearn what was once familiar to him/her in order to learn something new so that a ‘fit’ can be achieved (Hofstede *et al*, 2010).

An interesting discovery from the sample related to national culture was the challenges that seemed to appear as a result of the international environment of the institution itself, meaning that it did not seem to be the Swiss culture that was challenging, but the many different cultures that existed within the institution. As can be seen from Figure 4.4 (regions where the sample came from), which is representative of the breakdown of students at the institution, the Swiss culture did not seem to be an issue:

... Actually I didn’t had any problems with the Swiss culture as I knew Switzerland very good already and the rules and life style are very similar to my country of origin. The only part I must say was strange was to deal with the Asian cultures as I found they didn’t adapt, the eating habits and stuff, the Russians with their strong image was strange to adapt too (QR2; pg78).

... Too many Chinese speaking people. I wish to study in an international environment not a school with 70% Chinese students (QR29; pg83).

... I do not believe that we students are in contact with the Swiss culture to a large degree - the challenges lie in dealing with the cultures of the other students (Asian, African for example). Otherwise the Swiss culture is very similar to my own (German) so I did not find this particularly challenging (QR59; pg80).

Even though these comments do not talk specifically about challenges with the Swiss culture it is possible to see here that because there is so little integration with the culture ‘outside’ the institution that what happens ‘inside’ the institution is equated to the national culture of where they have found themselves.

However, moving on from this, it was hoped that the findings and comments from the students would highlight challenges specific to the academic culture in the institution. Three questions related to this e.g. feelings and challenges associated with the academic environment and feelings about the intensity of the programme (Q13, Q14 and Q15). The feeling of excitement was still felt by 19% of the sample and there was an element of curiosity and keenness to start (6%). However, similar to the finding related to when the student arrived in Switzerland, anxiety and nervousness was experienced by 24% of the students and the feeling of disappointment seemed to increase in relation to the academic environment (14%) (see Figure 4.16). Table 4.34 shows the comments specific to the challenges that students experienced. The table identifies the categories created for the findings and a brief indication as to what each category includes. If we examine these comments in more detail, the challenges that the students in this sample experienced are very similar to those identified in the literature review(see Section 2.5 with regard to the academic challenges). To start with, the comments seem to agree with Furnham and Bochner (1986, cited in Furnham, 2004) who indicated that a change to university for any student (international or national) is one of big change e.g. becoming independent and self-supporting along with being productive and responsible.

The sample in this study fits loosely into the description by Mazzarol *et al* (2003) of how education has been internationalised. This sample exists in a location where the delivering university has a branch campus in Switzerland but what does not exist in this situation is the host student, there are no (or very few on rare occasions) Swiss students. With the challenges that were studied in the literature review, some of them existed due to challenges with the host student. However, this is not the case in the WBP sample.

Table 4.34 Comments from questionnaire relating to academic challenges (Q15)

Categories	Comments from students
<p>Category 1 including: Dissertation / course work pressure / not enough time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time for rest, ends up health issue (QR65; pg92). • You have a short period of time to execute a lot of research for your final independent research among other reports (QR63; pg92) . • Its the self-discipline, managing coursework, tutorial, proposal for dissertation, and the entire dissertation in general (QR48; pg91). • Strict lecturers however it made us to work on our assignments and be serious with every coursework (QR4; pg89). • I think that the dissertation aspect with the combination of balancing out the class work (QR11; pg89).
<p>Category 2 including: Big difference between level 3 / teaching / critical thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would say it's the change from diploma to BA standards with very little guidance on what to expect and how to manage it and adapt (QR10; pg89). • The higher requirements to critical thinking were challenging (QR19; pg90). • Using the critical thinking is something that was not taught during the 3rd term of study (QR55; pg91). • Struggle to be critical (QR68; pg92). • The teaching method (QR1; pg89).
<p>Category 3 including: Too much free time / independent study expected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much free time and too little things to do no matter how much you read yourself (QR25; pg90). • Self-study is the hardest time, especially when we are all used to the easy lifestyle in first to third year. Lecturers are willing to give help but they prefer us to find the answer by ourselves (QR14; pg89). • The huge difference in requiring to work individually. In third year most assignments are group projects whereas most assignments in BA are individual work (QR27; pg90). • The final term was focussed on independent studying, which gave me the impression of being in a university (QR59 pg92).
<p>Category 4 including: Too much reliance on group work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of importance placed in group work at your final degree classification (QR67 pg92). • Group work. It has seems that some of the people in group work become silent member. (QR24 pg90) • Working in groups was very challenging because everyone comes from a different background and has different opinions and personality (QR42 pg91). • Some of students from country A always late to school and meetings. This is disrespectful to those whom take them seriously (QR37 pg90).
<p>Category 5 including: Was easy / no challenge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the beginning I found that the classes took long as there was a big language barrier between the different countries, which made it really boring for those who understood perfectly English (QR2 pg89). • It's not different from the previous work that I had in secondary school (QR36 pg90). • Nothing special (QR57 pg91).

A problem specific to the type of delivery in this institution was the lack of integration with the British university that the students seemed to feel and this was also highlighted by Ziguras (2008, cited in Ramachandran, 2011) where the students felt isolated from the main university campus. This can be seen from the focus group comments:

... Maybe it was written somewhere but it was not emphasised that this was from XX university (FG2; R9; pg19; Bulgarian).

... I knew it was linked but I didn't know much about the university (FG2; R5; pg19; Portuguese).

However, even though there rarely any host students in this institution, similar challenges still existed between the previous studies and the students in this sample. As the institution is delivering a UK based degree, the expectations from the lecturing team as identified by Jim (1992), Jim and Cortazzi (1993) (see Table 2.11) still seem to appear. Many of the comments in Table 4.34 identify issues related to independence in learning, critical evaluation, involvement through group work and challenges linked to finding answers for yourself. All of these issues relate to the 'academic culture' as described by Cortazzi and Jin (1997). An interesting finding from this list in Table 2.11 is the fact that international students have the expectation of 'collective consciousness' however, the findings from this sample and from evidence in the literature review, the use of group work in the academic setting seems to be an issue.

With the literature review findings, the issue of group work was identified as problematic with examples from students not understanding the reason for the use of group work or related to not understanding the role that they had to play within that group (Griffiths *et al*, 2005). It is not specified in the studies in the literature review if the groups are made up of host and foreign students or how mixed they are but from the findings for this study, there is no host student. This makes this situation interesting as many of the students that attend this institution are from collectivist type societies who value 'the group'. In saying this, the issues are still present resonating with the feelings of the examples in the literature.

Language was widely discussed in the literature as a problematic area for international students (Ramachandran, 2011; Griffiths *et al*, 2005; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997). Given that

the majority of the studies conducted on international students has been undertaken in English speaking locations where the academic and national language are the same, there is great confusion in this sample in relation to language. There is no host student to help with language issues within this sample and even if there was, their mother tongue (French, German or Italian) would not be of great use within the academic environment in this institution. Students from the sample did identify language as an issue mainly relating to the level of English the students themselves have, which influences their ability to participate in the classroom. This also influences their ability to participate in group work that is widely used in the lower years of the programme. Even though it was not mentioned specifically in the findings, there is the possibility that language was also an issue for this sample in relation to the lecturers. This could be interpreted from the comment made by the student who mentioned 'teaching style' as challenging (see Table 4.34). As identified by Cortazzi and Jin (1997) accents and pace of speech can influence the level of understanding that takes place. The lecturers within this institution are almost as multicultural as the student base. This relates to the discussion in the literature review by Erichsen and Bolliger (2011, cited in Lillyman and Bennett, 2014:71) where language can create 'confusion, misunderstandings, anxiety, stress concerning participation and presentations, and difficulties with course and programme content.'

Critical thinking is a challenge that appeared through these challenges both in the literature review and the findings of this sample. This issue appeared in both the focus group and the questionnaire. A key here is the lack of understanding of what it is, as identified by Vandermensbrugghe (2004) and is reflected in a focus group respondent's comment:

... My first confusion was, to be honest, about the critical thinking ... critical thinking, critical thinking, and critical thinking but at the same time you are not supposed to express your own opinion. I still don't understand it (FG2; R9; pg23; Bulgarian, entered at 3rd year level)

This fits within the 'cultures of learning' discussion had by Cortezzi and Jin (1997) where the learning of the international student is very heavily influenced by the way of learning that took place in the home location. Many of the students at this institution come from a 'rote learning' background and the concept of critical thinking causes

confusion, the idea of 'discussing' with a lecturer a point of view is unfamiliar to these students. It is not surprising that this was a very common issue highlighted in the sample given the origin of the majority of the students. However, the quote from the student from the focus group is from a student that is Bulgarian that was educated in Germany. Seeing comments like this continue to appear makes it questionable whether students previous learning is being valued (similar to the opinion of students in Ryan and Hellmundt's, 2003 study) or if lecturers are continuously seeing the previous learning that students have as problematic (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004).

In light of this discussion, it was interesting to see the comments made by the students in relation to the intensity of the programme that they chose to be on. This is a key area of interest for this study as the length of the programme is 18 weeks in comparison to the studies reviewed in the literature review which are typically nine months in length. As can be seen from Table 4.35, there were a variety of feelings that were split up into four broad categories. Challenging is a word that appeared very often (67% of students used the word) but it was mixed between both challenging / positive and challenging / negative. When categorising these feelings it was important to let the categorisations emerge from what the students were saying. As with the analysis of the feelings from students in the focus group on the intensity of the programme (see Section 4.2.3), when exploring if feelings were more positive or negative in nature, the whole sentence was analysed rather than the words on their own to get a sense of the tone of the sentence. For example, from Table 4.35

QR58 at first it was pretty demanding, but as times goes by I started to understand how it goes and what is expected of me.

QR35 It is pretty intensive, because everything is done only within 4 months, so it is stressful in terms of the time management.

The analysis of QR58 identified that there is a turn in the tone of the sentence towards being able to understand what needs to be done but still realising it is demanding (going from serious to more accepting), which was interpreted as positive in nature. Whereas for

QR35 the tone appeared to stay quite serious from beginning to end and leading to the identification of stress. This was interpreted as being more negative in nature.

Challenging and positive appeared most often (46% of the respondents were interpreted as having a tone of positivity in their responses) and realising this could be a way to maintain the excitement of the student (see Figure 4.16) that they feel upon arrival in the institution. This has important implications for practice which is discussed later in the work. Examples of the comments that the students made can be seen in Table 4.35.

Table 4.35 Specific comments students made in relation to the intensity of the programme (Q14)

Challenging and Negative	It is extremely intense. I feel it would be better if we were given a bit more time to do the dissertation (QR18; pg85).
	Also, the intensity of the programme really makes it hard for me to actually believe that I have learnt something, because everything is so forced, even now, people ask what I have learnt, I don't even know what to tell them because it feels like I am just straying for the exams rather than really learning (QR32; pg86).
	It is pretty intensive, because everything is done only within 4 months, so it is stressful in terms of the time management (QR35; pg86).
Challenging and Positive	It was good, I learned a lot (QR45; pg87).
	It is challenging but with the library facility at the school it was easy to adapt(QR66; pg88).
	At first it was pretty demanding, but as time goes by I started to understand how it goes and what is expected from me (QR58; pg87).
	Good intensive programme (QR52; pg87).
Not Challenging	I don't feel that the courses are intense and sometimes feel that the standard of quality and challenge level are far too low (QR61; pg867).
	Easy (QR36; pg86).
	Not intense - I have not been challenged enough to start working far in advance to get higher grades (QR26; pg86).
Not Long Enough	Too fast! I hope it would be longer so that what I've learned here will stay in my memory forever and not just brushed through (QR53; pg87).
	I wish the semesters were not as short, not only because everything is so packed but the time spent there was not proportional to the price my parents pay (QR32; pg86).
	Very short period of time to cover a large complicated subjects (QR42; pg86).

An interesting category that emerged through this question (Q14) was the one related to 'not enough time'. This is of importance as it was hoped that in their research prior to

making their choice of where to study (Q5) and their research related to the institution (Q8) that students would have been aware of the length of time it took to complete the programme. As mentioned previously in the analysis, only 9% of the students mentioned the programme as part of the reason why they chose Switzerland as a place to study (see Figure 4.8) and 70% of the students mentioned that they wanted to find out about the programme after they had made the choice to study at this institution (see Figure 4.11).

However, when looking at the comments related to the intensity of the programme 7% of the students said that the programme was not long enough (see Figure 4.17). From this 7%, a good example from a student is one that chose Switzerland specifically because *'it is a fast track to complete BA within 3 years (more or less)'*(QR24 pg63). In relation to the specifics s/he wanted to know about the institution s/he searched about *'rooms, meals, courses, time schedule classes, how does the procedure of the school in terms of any admin procedures'* (QR24; pg70) and followed this with that the intensity of the course was *'too compact and time is the main problem'* (QR24; pg86). This could lead to the question, how prepared was this student for the programme? It was interesting to compare this student with the sources that s/he used (Q9) and the satisfaction level experienced with this source (Q10). This particular student was one from the group that only used two sources of information (general internet search / spoke to a representative of the institution) and indicated that s/he was not happy with these sources as a way of gathering the required information. The specific comment made in relation to why s/he was not happy was: *'I figure out that, based on self experience is more reliable'* (QR24; pg73).'

In contrast to this student's experience, an interesting response from another student in relation to the intensity was:

... I think it can be quite intense but at the same time we choose to come here and you generally have to mentally prepare yourself because it can be quite overwhelming at times' (QR10; pg85).

This is an example of a student who used more than one source to search for information about the institution and chose to come here because of the reputation. Part of the information that s/he wanted to know included the programme and its structure and

s/he was happy with the sources that were used to search for this information. This is an interesting comment by this student as it concurs with the findings from Wang *et al* (2011) who indicated that those that were more prepared tended to be more satisfied with their study period at a foreign institution. Although satisfaction was not something that was investigated in this WBP, it can be seen from this comment that the student used many more sources to try and prepare themselves as much as possible before their arrival and it influenced satisfaction to a certain extent.

These findings and analysis have important consequences for this institution in relation to how the student is informed prior to their arrival at the institution. In terms of both national and academic culture, mixed feelings appear among the students in the sample, of which the majority relate to excitement and anxiety simultaneously. There is increased negativity seen upon arrival when the student meets both cultures together. In line with this, the length of time to complete the programme is quite short as evidenced through the comments by the students. The time they have to adapt is short. The student is expected to almost adjust immediately to all that they are supposed to adjust to in a shorter timeframe than an international student that is studying in a typical nine month programme.

4.4.6 Friendship Networks

From the open question used in the focus groups and the questionnaire distributed, the findings revealed great similarities in responses to how students dealt with negative feelings. The fact that the question was left open in the questionnaire and the responses gained were very repetitive of the focus group findings helped to address reliability in the finding. The categories developed from the questionnaire responses (see Table 4.26 i.e. old friends / family; new friends; focus on work / lecturers; accept it / adapt / think positive) were very similar to the responses given from the focus group members. The emphasis that was put on friends, whether new or existing, was stated by 34% of the respondents in the questionnaire (see Figure 4.19) and all the focus group members (except 1) mentioned friends as a way to help with overcoming negative experiences.

Focusing on the task at hand (i.e. obtaining the qualification) was mentioned by 17% of the respondents and very interestingly 27% of the respondents from the questionnaire used terms like 'accept it', 'adapt' and 'think positively' in order to get through (see Figure 4.19). Table 4.36 provides examples from students regarding how they dealt with the negativities they experienced.

Table 4.36 *Comments from students on how negativities were dealt with (Q16)*

Category	Comment
1. Old friends / family	1. Talk to my friends back home (QR21; pg93). 2. Dealing with everything alone. Contacting my family and friends back home (QR57; pg95)
2. New friends	1. Made new friends (QR20, pg93). 2. I formed a close group of friends who shared my woes, and we managed to motivate each other to make it through school together (QR8; pg93). 3. Blending in, mixing with classmates. Getting the first step to try to make new friends (QR48; pg94).
3. Focus on work / lecturers	1. In terms of the knowledge gap, I researched what I did not know or asked lecturers when I next saw them (QR18; pg93). 2. Study harder. Believe that there is nothing the school can do except for the students to study harder, which is good for the students to understand that things do not go as well as it should (QR58; pg95).
4. Accept it / adapt / think positive	1. I do have some negative feelings but we all overcome it by adapting. For example like shops closing on Sunday we can always go to the sports centre for badminton or ice-skating or else we will be scheduling meeting instead. There are always reports to complete in the school therefore it was always been full (QR55; pg95). 2. Try to be confident and positive (QR1; pg93).

Similar to the analysis of the questions regarding feelings prior to and upon arrival in Switzerland, this question discovered the students used multiple ways of trying to overcome the challenges as can be identified by the following statements:

... Discovered the great in people in school, the nature in the location, got insight in study topics of interest and found a healthy routine to feel good (QR67; pg95).

... I tried to talk with my family and my boyfriend a lot through Skype and also tried to ask my friend from same country for help and talk with him as much as I could (QR35; pg94).

...I usually talked to my friends who stayed in the school or my parents. But usually I tried to solve them by myself either talking, asking for help from lecturers and friends (QR44; pg94).

... Some people may go off and drink, I go for a walk or read a book. Being with a person close to you helps a lot too. Speaking to family and trying to think more positively also a way to out of negativity (QR25; pg94).

None of the students indicated only one way of trying to deal with challenges and none of them chose to do it alone without seeking any help from anyone.

The findings from the focus groups assisted in developing the question further for the questionnaire and identifying different networks that the students could be part of in order to help them in difficult times. Table 4.10 and 4.11 (findings from the focus group) divided the networks up into two groups i.e. internal and external networks. The questionnaire broke this down even further in the form of a closed-question influenced by the Functional Model of Friendship Networks by Bochner *et al* (1977). As friends (either old or existing) were mentioned by so many, it was interesting to see how this friendship network is divided e.g. co-nationals or other foreign nationals.

In the literature review, host national students formed part of every discussion as a network that students try to become part of (Bochner *et al*, 1977; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985; Hendrickson *et al*, 2011; Schartner, 2015), however host nationals were not included in the question in the questionnaire as it is rare to have host nationals in the institution. Host students were substituted with ‘locals in the community’ as an option for the respondents, which will be analysed later in the chapter.

A high percentage (50%) choose students from their own nationality as a support network to help them through their time of study (see Figure 4.20). This finding is different to the findings from Bochner *et al* (1977) who indicated that the first network that students join is that of their co-nationals. The findings from this WBP highlighted that other students of different nationality as the highest choice (79%). The questionnaire did not develop further on why these networks were sought out but the focus group gave some insight as to why co-nationals were important:

... I met Portuguese people because in South Africa I was always the foreigner ... it was always other Afrikaans and Zulu's and stuff and I was always the foreigner and when you come here you are not ... because there are other people from other countries, and what I really liked was that everywhere I walked I could hear people speak Portuguese, I felt like, if I ever need anything I can run and find a Portuguese person (FG2;R5; pg25; Portuguese)

... I spent a lot of time within the Hungarian community, there were about 10 Hungarians within the school and we had very strong connections. So, whenever I was scared because of the reports and everything, then they helped me a lot because they were experienced, they had already done it so they always had good suggestions (FG2; R8; pg25; Hungarian)

A focus group member had an interesting comment to make in relation to why co-nationals might be part of their immediate network of friends by saying:

... I've learned here, when you come from an African culture which, is so different from the European culture, there is a very distinct power distance if I can put it in that way. So if it relating to your lecturers there is that high degree of respect because they are your lecturers, related to your parents. That we share in common, sometimes we would have talks about how other students relate to lecturers and we would be like 'that is so disrespectful, how can you speak to them like that?' So that commonality made our issues the same in that respect and we were able to speak to each other about that and try and understand it (Interview R16; pg45; Zimbabwean)

This comment from the Zimbabwean student is an example of how being able to talk to someone that shares the same cultural values can assist in coping in challenging situations and resonates with Heppner *et al* (2008:84) who indicated that 'coping is an act that occurs within a cultural context.' The co-national group allowed the student to discuss academic challenges experienced that s/he may not have felt comfortable with discussing with other foreign students. In contrast to this though, there were indications from the focus group that the co-national group was not one that was purposefully sought out. This is reflected in the comments made by the following focus group students:

... I flew here from Thailand, I could have come with a whole Thai group but chose not to because I didn't really want to blend in with that group and to be fixed to one specific group (FG1; R2; pg10; Singaporean /Thai)

... I didn't feel comfortable among the Russian speaking community (FG2; R7; pg26; Ukrainian)

These comments reiterate the discussion by Schartner (2015) where international students did not want to be 'harmed' by just remaining in groups of the same nationality.

The highest choice with regards to support networks was those respondents that choose 'other students of different nationality' reaching 79% (see Figure 4.20). According to Bochner *et al* (1977) this network was the third network of friends that students make. When reviewing the various discussions in the literature review in relation to the Functional Model of Friendship Network, Schartner (2015) indicated that the non-compatriot foreign students (other students of different nationality) gained most of the attention. The findings in this WBP study is more in line with Schartner (2015) however this high percentage (79%) could be due to the fact that 'other students of different nationality' are more readily available, which is similar to the critique that was

made of Bochner *et al* (1977) where the majority of students in their study was host national students. When looking at the reasons why the respondents chose this as a group to befriend it mainly evolved around gaining support from having the feeling of ‘being in the same boat’ and they are all facing similar challenges at the same time. This can be seen from the comments made by some of the focus group members.

... I became very close with my classmates ... we were in this together, so we started to discuss things together ... they had the same difficulties, the same challenges and with their help and assistance, I wasn't lost anymore ... they really understand what my problems are (FG2; R8; pg25; Hungarian)

... With being stuck in here all of us together, builds strong relationships, so when you see someone studying and its your friend(s) so you know that you are not going to go out, its a good thing that he's studying, its like a friendship support of each other. You know that the next day there's a report to be handed in, its good to have friends around to remind you of what's going on because there are no parents at night, the teachers are gone so you have to be able to support the way to do the work (FG1; R4; pg14; French)

With this comment from the French student, it is apparent that the ‘other students of different nationality’ are supportive not just in terms of academics but in dealing with the idea of becoming ‘independent, self-supporting, productive and a responsible member of society’ (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, cited in Furnham, 2004:17). With the Hungarian student, the network was more useful in terms of dealing with academic issues.

The environment in which the students in this study are in is an influencing factor in terms of friendship development. It is a boarding facility and the students live and study here which at times in itself causes frustrations and challenges. One student said:

... It is very difficult here to separate your social life or your personal life and then academics. It's pretty much all in one at the end of the day. It felt very constricting (Interview; R16; pg47; Zimbabwean)

One student (who has been here since 1st year level) in an effort to create a ‘real life’ situation for himself said the following:

... I think I tried to prepare already for it by trying to reproduce somehow ... or minimise the effects of coming back to the school environment and again from an independent adult living in a big city ... with your own salary, with your own life ... to coming back to the school where you are controlled and handled like a student. So, in relation to culture shock I think it is important to mention that we have kind of a meta-world. We live outside the school, we have three Hungarians living together so, it could be considered a meta-world in this framework where we get to go home and feel like ... still independent people who are attending university but go home at the end of the day. Then I bought a car ... to be able to move, to be independent (FG2; R6; pg26; Hungarian)

Even though this student chose to live with others of the same nationality there is some effort made in this case to try and integrate with the host community as part of the reason

for him studying here was to gain what he called ‘secondary benefits’ i.e. being part of an international environment (FG2; R6; pg17).

A student who entered in the third year of the programme found solace among a similar group who arrived at the same time as him. They were not of the same nationality but stayed together based on the similar experiences they were having:

... The group consisting of 5 of us, all direct entry and working together for all the reports in third year. We stick together 24/7 and support each other. The group we found ... even though we faced difficulties at the beginning of cultural understanding and work practices, was resulting into friendships (Follow up questionnaire; R10; German)

This is emphasised further by a students in a similar situation (direct entry at final year BA) in relation to academic challenges faced (Q15) where it was indicated that:

... For a direct entry student the previous knowledge that the third year students have is not there and when lecturers refer to theories or knowledge learnt in previous semesters, it is a little unfair. Many lecturers say ‘remember from third year’ and unfortunately that does not apply to a direct entry BA students (QR18; pg90).

Being in this position can influence the friendship networks that are joined. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter there are other entry periods onto the programme and direct to third year represented 31.25% of the focus group and 13% of the questionnaire (see Table 4.28). With these students, other challenges may be faced where they arrive to a situation where students who have been part of the institution since first year level have already established friendship networks that may be difficult to enter into. However in saying this, it is no guarantee that the student who starts at first year level goes through each level of the programme with the friendship networks that they created as some students choose to do an internship period, others might choose to do all the education first and then do an internship period. These choices then influence who they attend the institution with through the different levels of the programme. This can be seen in the comment from a Hungarian students in the focus group:

... I did a year-long internship, and now when I came back for BA, I barely knew anyone. So now I’m with different people (FG2; R8; pg25 Hungarian)

This student spent most of her time with other Hungarian students in first year but now uses the network of ‘other students’ in her class as they are the ones that face the same

challenges as her in relation to the academics. Although progression through the programme with original network of friends was not part of the questionnaire, moving through the programme with different cohorts of students is common among the students. This is partly because of the speed at which the degree can be obtained which was one of the reasons why the students chose the programme in the first place. So a question here could be, how do the students deal with frustrations when their existing friends are no longer with them in the institution? This can be answered by one of the next highest responses in the questionnaire; 43% of the respondents still kept in touch with family back home and 39% of respondents still kept in touch with friends back home (see Figure 4.20). This is similar to the finding by Schartner (2015) who found that many international students use technology to stay in touch with friends and family back home. Schartner (2015) did not elaborate on why the students chose to do this but the focus group students shed some light as to why. Table 4.11 gives the detail of the comments made by the focus group respondents (gained by the follow up questionnaire they were given) but other comments that help elaborate on why are seen in the comments that follow:

... I will talk to my best friend over Facebook because sometimes there are people here who frustrate you and you have no one that you want to talk to and my friends back home are not biased because they don't know who they are so they can give me good advice. That helps me to think about my situation and everything and it's nice (FG3; R15; pg40; Canadian)

... Well, my friends in Hungary, I Skype with them ... of course it is very relieving to talk with them but we don't really talk about the academics. It is very relieving to talk to people outside of the school because sometimes, you just need a very different perspective (FG2; R8; pg25; Hungarian)

The fact that technology is so readily available today makes it easier for the student to stay in touch with family and friends at home, which in turn could help with the repatriation and possibly reduce reverse culture shock, an issue discussed by Griffiths *et al* (2005) and Marx (2001). Although reverse culture shock was not something that was investigated in this study, there was reference made to it by FG2; R6 who spoke of the creation of his meta-world when he reminisced about moving from school to internships and back to school.

It was not surprising to see such a low percentage of students having family in Switzerland (10%) when so few had indicated family as influencing their choice to come to Switzerland to study (7%; see Figure 4.8). However, this category could be combined with ‘family back home’ as a category that students developed / maintained contact with, which makes it 53% of the respondents. Family as a support network was seen by one student as a way of keeping grounded:

... These people are part of who I am and therefore I felt it was important to keep true to my principles. Talking regularly to them could bring me back to some sort of reality and help me see my difficulties with humour. Furthermore, I had ‘explanations’ to give to my mother, as she helped me a lot in making sure I come to Switzerland for hospitality (I wanted to come since I was 15 years old) (Follow-up questionnaire FG1; R1; Portuguese - see Table 4.11)

There is also a reference here to the pressure associated with being at the institution and being successful as this student’s mother was part of the decision making process and provided the financial backing for the study abroad period. Similar feelings were expressed by R16 in the focus group where her priority was achieving what she came here to do (i.e. get the BA qualification) as her father had invested so much in it. This as a priority influenced her need to stay focused despite the difficulties she had at the beginning of her programme to integrate into different networks of students. In her case, she was a direct entry onto the BA programme.

Much of the analysis to this point indicate that the use of co-nationals and other students of different nationalities assist in the adaption at a psychological level i.e. dealing with emotional issues in either fitting into the academic environment or escaping from the four walls of the institution in order to get a different perspective from those not involved in the institution (Ward *et al*, 1998).

With the study conducted by Bochner *et al* (1977) the host national student was the second network that students tried to create. As mentioned previously, there are rarely any host students within this institution and the staff base is almost as multicultural as the student body. The choices in the questionnaire tried to divide ‘host nationals’ into ‘lecturers’, ‘library staff’, ‘other staff members’ and ‘locals in the community’. The first three of these are internal to the institution and the last one is external to the institution (developed from the review of the focus group data). For the internal networks, 93% of

the respondents used these networks as a way of trying to deal with difficulties (see Figure 4.20) and the reasons these were chosen were similar to the discussion held in the literature (Bochner *et al*, 1977; Ward *et al*, 2011) i.e. professional and academic support. The reasons why this network was chosen was not only found through the focus group discussion but also identified through many of the questions asked in the questionnaire e.g.

- Q13 - what words or phrases would you use to describe how you felt when you first arrived in the academic environment;
- Q14 - how do you feel about the intensity of the programme; and
- Q16 - if any of the feelings identified earlier were negative in nature, what did you do to overcome these feelings.

As the literature indicated, each friendship network performed a specific function and this can be seen through the findings from this research also. Teachers appeared to be used in relation to the academic challenges. Examples of comments from the focus group and questionnaire are as follows:

... For me I found it easier to ask questions and in private than air my views in class so I would arrange meetings and things like that with lecturers, put all my questions together and then get what I needed to get. So that was my strategy to winning (Interview transcript R16; pg46; Zimbabwean)

... I think I got support from the teachers here, if I feel I don't know what I should do, I just try to meet with the teacher to get advice from them (FG1; R3; pg13; Chinese)

...In terms of knowledge gap, I researched what I did not know or asked lecturers when I next saw them (Q16; overcoming negative feelings; QR18; pg93;)

...Some teachers helped to ease us into the difference in learning and this helped quite a lot (Q16; overcoming negative feelings; QR10; pg93;)

... When I first arrived, I was really glad and delighted by the kindness of the lecturers (Q13; Questionnaire; phrases used to describe the academic environment; QR54; pg84;)

... Its challenging but with the library facility available it was easy to adapt (Q14; Questionnaire; intensity of the programme; QR66; pg88;)

The findings revealed very few of the respondents indicated that locals in the community (external networks) were part of their friendship network (14%; see Figure 4.20). This is very much in line with the responses gained from Q12 in the questionnaire when the students were asked about the challenges they face with the Swiss culture. From the responses gained in Q12, the Swiss were considered cold, closed, unfriendly

and obsessed with rules (19%) and 10% felt that they had no real interaction with Swiss culture (see Figure 4.15). From those that indicated that they had tried to befriend the locals in the community, no real similarities appeared among this group of students. It was expected that they spoke the local language but this did not appear to be the case. However, in relation to challenges they experienced with the Swiss culture (Q12) 44% indicated that language was a challenge for them which suggests that they did make the effort to integrate with the local community. Overall in Q12, 51% of the sample indicated that language (and food) was a challenge and this could severely influence the ability to have networks external to the institution. The identification of language as a challenge, even though the questionnaire did not specifically ask if the student *tried* to integrate with the locals, suggests that efforts were made. It is interesting to also see that language was such an issue, as prior to coming to Switzerland, 67% indicated that language was one of the things that they wanted to know about Switzerland when they were researching about their choice of location (Q7; see Figure 4.10). In an effort to understand why locals might be important to the students, comments were gathered from various questions in the questionnaire:

... Make sure you manage to have time to walk around in the village to see the nature. It's always breath-taking and brings harmony to life. Also, it's nice to get out of school some time during the weekdays so that the school doesn't seem so isolated. It can easily get depressing to stay in the same building all the time, and see the same people every day (Q23; QR67; pg110; advice that could be given to potential students).

... Because I speak French ... also it was to a great advantage when practicing in French restaurants and much more fun as I understood all the French terms! (Q13; QR2; pg82; feelings upon arrival in academic environment)

Learning the language appeared as a comment by some of the students when asked if they could do anything better prior to their arrival (Q19; 10%). This further highlights the importance of knowing the local language as a way to try and integrate externally to the institution as internally French is not needed in order to cope. In light of the discussion in the literature review, language appeared to be a challenge that students faced at a social level as well as an academic level (Lillyman and Bennett, 2014; Mukminin, 2012; Ramachandran, 2011), however in the previous studies, English was the language of both environments and in this WBP, there are two languages present.

These comments in relation to language and integrating with the host culture tend to highlight their importance in trying and adapt socioculturally and not just psychologically (Ward *et al*, 1998), as the external environment to the institution provides the student with a means to escape the pressures associated with living and studying within the same environment. In relation to coping with these pressures it was interesting to see that none of the students indicated use of the host community networks as a way to deal with issues (Q16; see Table 4.26 and Figure 4.19) but on the other hand 14% of the students indicated that they develop networks with locals in the community (Q17; see Figure 4.20). It is possible given the contradictions in these two questions, that when the question was left open (Q16) that locals in the community are not seen as a major influence in helping to deal with challenges and not the first group of people that students would think about in times of need. Using what is available to them internally may be easier for them to negotiate. Maybe if the local language was not an issue, more networks could have been developed external to the institution.

In relation to friendships, the findings of the study revealed some interesting comments which highlights the differences that exist in individuals and how that influences the way they see these networks developing. Hofstede (2002, cited in Twigg, 2005) indicated that even though shared meaning among groups help people to survive in different environments (e.g. befriending co-nationals), that differences still exist within one cultural group e.g. personality and experiences that may influence their choices in terms of friendships (e.g. befriending any of the three groups of friends). Ward *et al* (2001) pointed out that intercultural contact can depend on many variables which may influence the outcome of that contact (see Table 2.4 for the outcomes of individual intercultural contact) and this can be seen from the comments made by the students in relation to how they tried to deal with negative experiences and if the friendship networks they developed were part of their coping strategies. This WBP dealt with (in part) the critique that Halualani (2008) had in relation to how previous researchers conducted studies on intercultural contact. This study did not try to ‘create’ the perfect environment in which intercultural contact happens as it happens naturally within the institution and the open

nature of the research instruments left it up to the student to decide how they viewed the interactions amongst themselves and the various groups that were available for them to befriend. Although the purpose of the literature review for the WBP was not to go into the great detail on the many variables that influences acculturation, Table 2.8 (ABC's of Acculturation) summarises the vast amount of research that has been conducted in term of how individuals adapt. However, some of the comments gained from the findings can be linked to both the *Affective* and *Behavioural* conceptual frameworks seen in Table 2.8:

1. ... I flew here from Thailand, I could have come with a whole Thai group but chose not to because I didn't really want to blend in with that group and be fixed to one specific group (FG1; R2; pg10; Half Singaporean / Half Thai)
2. ... I want to mention one thing ... it's kind of as well the mentality of some of the students that ... oh I have to have as many friends as possible, its like this idea of networking, just to ... I tap you on the back, you tap me on the back ... let's be friends forever, but I think with the 3 years here you develop kind of a resistance because the time is so difficult to build very strong relations actually that will go beyond this environment. Its not as easy as it seems so really finding good friends that will last is a give, it not ah ... I have a lot of people I know and people that I like but they are not necessarily my friends (FG1; R1; pg14 Portuguese)
3. ... I used, for me the main issue is when issues arise for me I like to feel like I have support so I am really happy that I have a long these years built a kind of network in the staff or in the people that can really help me and can make things a bit easy for me in a way, that was for me a big thing, is creating people that just, not only because I'm Portuguese or because I speak French but being able to create a connection with people that have the ability to really help (FG1; R1; pg13 Portuguese)
4. ... Like ... you can be friends with everyone but you can't really rely on them so you must realise at the end of the day you're not alone but you came here alone and you'll probably leave here alone so yes, they are here in the good times but will they be here in the bad times? (FG1; R4; pg14; French)
5. ... Through the connection I had of the people here ... the biggest connector for me from the beginning was the language when I didn't know anyone ... because language always connects. Besides the English ones, I know all the Germans here, almost all the Russian speaking as well and from my own country, there are just a few people, 2 or 3 only, which I am very close to. And for the academic part, from the beginning, I run to the teachers to explain to me how things work but I also went to the first people I met here ... how everything looks like, what is their point of view about the reports and everything which also helped me to see both sides (FG2; R9; pg25 Bulgarian)

With these examples we can see close links to the contributors to the research identified in Table 2.8. For example:

1. the first comment is from a student that has travelled around every 2 years with his family and his comment could link to *Degree of Life Changes* (Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979); *Previous Experience Abroad* (Klineberg and Hull, 1979)
2. the second and third comments could relate closely to *Personality Factors* (Ward and Kennedy, 1992); *Language and Communication Competence*

(Furnham, 1993); *Quantity and Quality of Contact with Host Culture* (Bochner, 1982); *Temporary Versus Permanent Residence in a New Country* (Ward and Kennedy, 1993c)

3. the fourth comment could link to *Temporary Versus Permanent Residence in a New Country* (Ward and Kennedy, 1993c)
4. the fifth comment could link to *Situational Factors such as Social Support* (Adelman, 1988)

From a different perspective, another student examined the intercultural contact and the development of friendships in a slightly different way. It was almost as if it was other peoples' responsibility to make the first move with regards to making friends (Q17). Upon further investigation, this feeling could maybe have been influenced by the fact that this student was here in the first place because his/her parents '*forced me to do so?*' (Q5 - why choose to study in Switzerland):

... Since when I first arrived I was the only student from my country (or could even say continent) it was difficult to interact with others due to language barriers. However, as time passed they broke out of their shells and started interacting with me more (QR11; pg96; Canadian; Q17)

From the various findings and analysis above, it can be concluded that friendship networks still play an important role for the international student and in the absence of host national students, co-nationals and other nationals are the only other choices for them in the institution. What appeared to be just as important to the student though was the 'staying in touch' with family and friends back home.

4.4.7 Acculturation and Coping Strategies - Analysis

In light of the discussion on friendship development, it is interesting to review the coping strategies that were used by the students in order to adapt to the environment that they found themselves in. As mentioned previously, Q16 in the questionnaire wanted to allow the student to express how they deal with challenging situations and was purposely left open so as to not guide the student in any particular direction. The findings revealed that the largest percentage of the responses mentioned words like 'accept it', 'adapt' or

‘think positive’ (27%; see Table 4.26 and Figure 4.19). This was followed closely with 23% of the sample saying new friends helped in difficult situations. What was interesting here in the findings was the fact that the students referred to the different friendship networks that were available as discussed in the previous section without having been prompted or guided to do so. The development of different networks are important in their survival which, is identified through three of the categories created i.e. old friends / family; new friends; and lecturers which accounted for 51% of the questionnaire responses. Support networks were discussed in relation to the international student in the literature and how it helps them adapt to the new environment. However, it was interesting to hear the discussion in the focus group in relation to this as more varied responses were given (see Table 4.9 for the specific comments). It can be seen from Table 4.9 that the students liked to escape the institution when they could, even if it was something small like going to a restaurant or partying outside or getting involved in sport. The idea seemed to be just leave the institution environment. The focus group also referred to friends, either new or old as a way of dealing with challenges. The use of friends at home was interesting as they seemed to be used for an objective opinion on whatever difficulty was being experienced by the student e.g.

... It is very relieving to talk to people outside of the school because sometimes, you just need a very different perspective (FG2; R8; pg25; Hungarian)

From the coping strategies that were identified through the responses, there are similarities with Folkman and Lazarus (1985) Ways of Coping Questionnaire (see Table 2.10) which identified eight coping scales as can be seen in the following quotes taken from the students:

(1) confrontive coping: *...just keep focus on the report that were due and pushed myself to work hard (QR49; pg94) .*

(2) distancing: *...watching TV series, writing online blogs, online games (QR27; pg94).*

(3) self-controlling: *...just have to think that my parents pay lots of money so I can study here so there will be no excuse to fail in this school (QR6; pg93).*

(4) seeking social support: *...I formed a close group of friends who shared my woes, and we managed to motivate each other to make it through school together (QR8; pg93).*

(5) accepting responsibility: *...I usually talked to my friends who stayed in the school or my parents. But usually I tried to solve them by myself either talking, asking for help from lecturers or friends (QR44; pg94).*

(6) escape-avoidance: *i do have some negative feelings but we all overcome it by adapting. For example, like shops closing on Sunday we can always go to the sports centre for badminton or ice skating (QR55; pg95).*

(7) planful problem solving: *...in terms of knowledge gap, I researched what I did not know or asked lecturers when I next saw them (QR18; pg93).*

(8) positive reappraisal; *... willpower comes with positivity. Therefore I always trying to be positive. Which is great challenge because it made me stronger and stronger (QR23; pg94).*

The WBP hoped to explore how the student felt they had adjusted, rather than try to measure it i.e. did they feel that they had adjusted and how were they describing this. Question 18 revealed that the vast majority of the students (91%, see Figure 4.21) felt they had adjusted. The comments that they made revealed many reasons as to why they thought this and the feelings that they felt could be related to the various outcomes of individual contact (Ward *et al*, 2001; see Table 2.4) and the various acculturation strategies developed by Berry (1997). All the comments made can be seen in Appendix 23 (see Q18 responses; page 98) however, Table 4.37 and Table 4.38 shows the various comments that are made in comparison with the acculturation strategies developed by Berry (1997).

It can be seen from these comments (Table 4.37) that the students show some evidence of trying to assimilate into the new culture. Although the students do not comment directly on the two major issues according to Berry (1997) i.e. how important it is to keep your own culture or how necessary it is to be integrated into the new one, the comments still reveal evidence of this. For example, within the comments associated to assimilation, the students show that there is a need for them to change in order to fit in this new environment therefore the acceptance of the differences that they experienced. With Table 4.38 evidence of integration is apparent where students realised that they wanted to maintain their own culture as well as integrate with the new environment. Comment one is interesting in that it highlights the acceptance of some cultural

differences and adopting them as his/her own in turn making their own cultural norms seem strange.

From all of the comments gained in this question, there was no real evidence of separation (maintain own culture and no integration with the new culture) or marginalisation (no maintenance of own or integration with new culture). It is possible to link this to question four of the questionnaire where students were asked to indicate how many countries they have lived in for more than 6 months at a time.

Table 4.37 Reasons why students say they have adjusted - Assimilation

Acculturation Strategy (Berry, 1997)	Student comments:
Assimilation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, although uncomfortable in the beginning, I can now understand and appreciate the Swiss culture. Academically, I have willingly adapted into the school atmosphere, which is relaxing in its own way (QR27; pg98). 2. I adapt easily and understand fast the way I should speak, look. I am very open to new things, and lived in more than 3 countries, so it was easier (QR25; pg97). 3. I believe so as I would change myself that I usually do as to match the culture, in return have a good result (QR65; pg98). 4. I have improved my French to a working level, and made an effort to meet and befriend people from all over the world (QR61; pg98). 5. What I've learned is Hospitality is all about people. Therefore people is one of the key factor that built me up, in situations no matter if its about people or academic work, friendship is important as I am always assured that they are always there when I need them. I don't need to hide my feelings, I can share with them and they can help me even only by listening and vice versa towards my friends (QR53; pg98). 6. Its just like, when in Rome do what the Romans do. So I just had to blend in to what is already there and live with what I have now (QR48; pg98). 7. I think I was very well adapted to both nature. As I did not gave up while I was scared at first. I accepted it and just moved on. I did not have any big problems in both environments (QR44; pg98).

Figure 4.7 shows that many of the students in the sample have moved around frequently with 44% of them saying that they have lived in three countries for longer than six months and others living in more than 4 - 6 countries. This number of movements among different cultures may be a reason why so many of the sample (91%) felt that they had adjusted to both the academics in the institution and national culture of Switzerland.

Table 4.38 Reasons why students say they have adjusted - Integration

Acculturation Strategy (Berry, 1997)	Student comments:
Integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have shifted to the neutral state in terms of culture: got used to many traditions and norms of other nationalities and even have accepted them for myself. On the other hand, some details of my own culture, which are more apparent to me, have become odd (QR26; pg98). 2. From 1 – 10, which 1 is the least, the rate on me being able to adapt the Swiss culture would be 7. Moderate adapt. I think I had managed to keep my culture as well adapt to Swiss. I really love Swiss people; they are friendly by nature and helpful. The safe environment as well had made me more relax compare to my country, which we have to pay more attention on our safety issues especially (QR24; pg97). 3. Yes fully, because it is similar to my culture and academically also because I always attended international or American schools (QR23; pg97). 4. I have completely adapted into the Swiss culture, I have a job now in Switzerland and I am willing to live and work here for a long time (QR9; pg97). 5. I think I managed well because of the diversity in school that pushes us to adapt and there are also a lot of Malaysian or Asian students that made me feel easier to adapt to the whole environment (QR54; pg98). 6. To compromise, to respect, to cooperate. (QR37; pg98). 7. Academically, based on the results I have achieved, I believe I have adjusted to such academic culture and also to the Swiss culture because Switzerland felt like my second home, when I went back I could answer majority of the questions that my family asked about Switzerland which may show my understanding to the local culture (QR32; pg98).

The moving around from one place to another may help speed up the process of adapting to new locations. Those that indicated that they had not adjusted to either culture gave the following reasons:

... I don't really have culture shock with Swiss maybe because more of the time I spent it for studying. Besides, I'm in an international environment, seem like everybody is open with other culture as well. Hence I would say there are nothing much for me to adjust. For academic culture, yes there are a lot to adjust; the way to study, first time to learn to work in group and present in front of other students and also overload of assignments (QR4; pg99).

...My local language is poor level. I felt difficulties when I try to talk to Swiss (QR15; pg99).

... I have done 3 internships in Switzerland but I found people in hospitality are rarely having Swiss. I felt I faced multi culture more than Swiss culture. Don't really had a chance to experience Swiss culture (QR46; pg99).

Perhaps an issue with this question is the fact that it combined both academic and national culture in the one question. The comments revealed that there are those that included both cultures in their answer that they gave, but for others there seemed to be one reason as to why they felt they adjusted or not e.g. either the national culture or the academic culture. In future research it would be good to separate this in order to really develop on the challenges that the students face with both cultures. It was felt that possibly those that said they did not adjust would be part of the group that joined the programme at later stages e.g. direct to third year or direct to BA but after further analysis this was not the case. Those that indicated they had not adjusted were in the institution from first year level.

4.4.8 Could things be done better - Analysis

Upon examining the way in which students searched for information and how happy they were with the information they gathered and looking at the challenges they faced, the students were asked if they would do anything differently or if the institution could have done anything different both prior to and upon arrival. Question 19 and 20 from the questionnaire examined prior to their arrival, and the majority of the students (56%) indicated that they would not do anything better prior to arrival, while 46% of them thought that the institution could have done something better prior to their arrival (see Figure 4.22). This is a little different from the findings from the focus group where the students believed that both they and the institution could have done things better prior to arrival (67% for both; see Figure 4.2). It was unfortunate that many of the students chose not to provide comments as to why they chose either yes or no to this question but 61% from the questionnaire shared their opinion and 75% from the focus group shared some opinions. From those that indicated that they could have done something better, language and communication appeared often (38%). It was a mix of wanting to learn the languages of Switzerland (French or German) or English with one student mentioning just communication. Language was not mentioned as part of the focus group findings

other than a student who was forced to use the help of an institute representative due to language difficulties at the research stage.

Other things that students would have done differently prior to arrival was try contact either previous or current students as one student indicated that it was difficult to reach this group prior to arrival. Other students would have liked to find out more about the academics and the living situation in Switzerland e.g. cost of living. While it was interesting to see these comments being made, those that gave information on what they would do differently was cross tabulated with the sources that they used to find out their information (Q9) and it was discovered that only 9.5% of them felt the source of information they used was not useful. The majority of the students who made comments in this question used a representative of the institution and carried out some general internet searches. The use of a representative was also commented on by the focus group members as a source, however they indicated more dissatisfaction with this as a source. Some of them went further and used previous / current students to find out more. It is surprising to see so many satisfied with the sources of information, given the things that they say they would do differently now. From this analysis, it is possible to look at the content of the information that is being provided through these sources of information, as this has implications for practices within the institution and this will be dealt with later in the WBP. The themes identified from the focus group is consistent and repetitive of the findings of the questionnaire.

The students that gave comments on why they thought they could not do anything more prior to arrival all believed that no matter what you do prior, it is the experience of being there that makes the difference. This can be seen in the following comments:

... I felt doing experience is better than preparation (QR15; pg101).

... There is only so much planning you can do and if you do not know the environment into which you are going there is not much you can do until you arrive and take it one day at a time (QR18; pg101).

... No matter how much you prepare, your experience always depends on people you meet. You can never prepare enough prior (QR25; pg101).

... No. I came with very little preparation and it turned out just fine. This is because I believe there is no growth in the comfort zone and it is impossible to by-pass the 'pain period' and the cultural shock associated with it. Too much planning prior to coming is a 'mental trap' (Follow up questionnaire; R1; Portuguese).

Within this group of comments their responses were cross tabulated with how many countries they have lived in for longer than 6 months (Q4) and it was discovered that 62% of them have lived in at least 3 countries. It is possible that the experience of moving around has led them to make these comments. With the remaining 38%, they have lived in only 2 countries e.g. Switzerland and their home country. It is also possible to relate these comments to that of Berry (2006) where he indicated that in order for acculturation to happen, contact between the cultures needs to be direct and not necessarily just being *informed* by a third party on what the culture is like. The last comment from R1 (Portuguese) is one that emphasises this thought where he had only been in his home country prior to arrival in Switzerland and just wanted to travel with an open mind.

With regards to whether the institution could do anything better prior to arrival, the key themes that emerged here were: (1) academic information, (2) up-to-date material from representatives, (3) meeting communities of students prior to arrival, (4) facilities and village life. All of these themes emerged through the focus group findings also. The comments made in this question reflect some of the frustrations that the students felt when they arrived and should they have known this information in advance would their adjustment have been easier? Examples of the comments are as follows:

...Offering some kind of real testimonials from current students to be familiar with the surroundings of the institute and Switzerland (QR3; pg102).

... In terms of being a direct entry, I feel it would have been beneficial to us that we receive an outline or at least a list of subjects which the 3rd year students had done or maybe just the theories discussed. I feel this because when I arrived and began the academic semester I felt like I was just thrown in at the deep end because of the knowledge gap (QR18; pg102).

... Warning about the internationality of the institute. Because sometimes I felt like living in Asia. Therefore the Swiss culture would disappear and I was feeling in a University of Hotel Management in Asia (QR23; pg102).

... Arranging current / past students at similar age to meet with the new entrants prior to departing from home countries (QR27; pg102).

... The brochures I read before had misleading information inside, which made me feel excited about the school, but after I felt sometimes disappointed (QR35; pg102).

... Crucial to know the cultures of the group arriving (QR53; pg102).

It is important to take these kinds of comments into consideration as the literature discussed that the more a student is prepared, which is something that is within their own control, then the better they will be able to adapt to the new environment (Twiggs, 2005; Ramburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang *et al*, 2011). The comments above are areas that could be covered via agents, previous / current students which would help lessen the pressure on a new student arriving in the two different cultures.

Question 21 and 22 focused on whether the student or the institution could have done something differently upon arrival in Switzerland. Figure 4.23 indicates that the large amount of the students felt that neither the institute (50%) or themselves (56%) could do anything differently upon arrival. With the focus group, the findings were a little different, 33% thinking the student could not do any more upon arrival and 42% thinking the institute could not do anything better. As with the previous questions, many students chose not to share their comments in this section however, 51% of them gave some sort of reason as to why they thought the way they did. Students who believed that they could have done something differently upon arrival seemed to think that the development of friendships quickly is important as can be seen from the following comments:

...Take the initiative in building a social network (QR27; pg104).

... By being more outgoing. It is likely that people who go to parties more often adapt more quickly. For me and other people who prefer small companies of trusted people to large gatherings it might be more difficult (QR26; pg104).

...I wish I interacted with everyone from the beginning before they built their groups of friends, instead of staying in my room alway (QR11; pg104)s.

...Could have tried to open up faster and allow lecturers and students to help me a lot sooner than I did (QR66; pg104).

Similar feelings were shared among the focus group members in relation to friends and opening up earlier. These comments can link back on the use of Friendship Networks as a way to help deal with challenging times and the idea of friends has appeared as a theme through the majority of the research findings of the WBP e.g. friends influencing the choice of where to study, friends helping and supporting each other through difficult times, and now wishing friendships were made sooner upon arrival.

Those that felt they could not do anything better upon arrival believed that they were well organised by the time they got here. An interesting comment from a focus group member though was that he felt that the institute could not have done anything better upon arrival but he questioned more the expectations that he had and how maybe they should not have been so high.

...Retrospective - no! I should have taken things easier and set my expectations not as high as I did. I do not want to say, that I did not progress through the year and I still consider it as a good decision. I personally grew and many subjects through the support of lecturers, did broaden my horizon. However, my overall expectations have not been met and the value received was not worth the money spend (Follow-up questionnaire; R10; German).

Looking at this comment and reflecting back to the literature in relation to aspirations and expectations (Azmat *et al*, 2013) this student's expectations, which can be influenced by how the institute communicates with the student, has clearly not been met and it is almost like he would not make the same decision again if he was back at the stage of choosing a university. Through his searching for information he had visited the school personally and had used a representative of the institute but found that they were quite unhelpful at providing the information he needed. What becomes important here is how this student would advise a potential student thinking about coming to the institution to study? This issue is dealt with later in the WBP when recommendations are provided by the students.

In relation to what the institution could do better at the time of arrival, the key themes that emerged were more to do with the operations e.g. transportation from airport to institution, rooms and food on offer. Again, the same themes appeared among the focus group members. Some of the comments related to the induction of the student to the institution and environment e.g.

... Providing more talks / workshops / field trips about the culture of Switzerland and delivering culture of the institution itself (QR27; pg106).

...Perhaps a week of casual dressing and adaptation. I felt I did not have enough time to settle down before classes started (QR26; pg106).

...Maybe give more information about the school, people, Switzerland. Or maybe they could have a student from the Student Ambassador Forum who would help the new students with answering questions (QR44; pg106).

... Upon my first arrival, there are too many information and procedures, especially the first weekend. I felt scared, confused and overloaded by the information which really didn't help me to adapt better (QR35; pg106).

The general feeling gained from these comments could relate to the intensity of the programme where the student has only 18 weeks to find out about the external and internal environments. There is a mix of comments here related to both the academic and national culture which has been discussed earlier in the chapter. There is almost a feeling of being rushed to start. Not dealing with issues like this could snowball into longer adaptation time for the student where they do not feel prepared enough to start with the key purpose of their study abroad i.e. obtain the BA qualification. The few that gave comments on how the institution could not do anything better upon arrival were generally satisfied with their experiences, with one student saying '*everything is perfect*' (QR37; pg103). All the comments related to Q19 - Q23 can be viewed in Appendix 24 - 28 (pg 100).

Coming back to the theme of friends appearing through many of the responses in the various questions asked, it is now questionable as to the function each of these group of friends play in relation to both psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Through the literature, co-nationals were generally associated with better adjustment psychologically given that there are shared values among the group and host national students were generally associated with better sociocultural adjustment (see Section 2.6). Given that there are rarely any host national students in the institution how is it that a high percentage of the students felt that they had adjusted (91%)? The findings discovered that the institute itself has become both cultures (national and academic) for the student in the sample, based on the comments that they felt they did not know the Swiss culture. Lack of time and the amount of work that they feel they have to complete limits the time they have to try to focus on getting to know the Swiss culture. Not speaking French was another issue that they struggled with in relation to venturing out into the local village. Very few of them had friends external to the institution (14%).

However, the making of other non-compatriot foreign friends (79%) based on the similarity that they are all in the same boat seemed to also assist with psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Rather than sociocultural adjustment relating to adapting to the external environment of the institution, it may mean to the students in the sample adapting to the non-academic environment internally in the institution. The fourth group of friends that were important to the students in the sample were those back home that a substantial number (82% - friends and family back home) keep in touch with regularly. From the comments gained, this group of friends allowed the student to release tensions and discuss issues with an objective person who was not related to the institution in any way. This also is assisting in the students psychological adjustment, however it is questionable as to whether relying on this group of friends would work in the long-term for the students in relation to psychological adjustment. Many of the comments made in relation to what the student could have done better speaks about making friendships earlier.

4.5 Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter was to state the findings of the focus groups and the questionnaires in order to assist in the achievement of the aim of the study. Table 2.1 from the literature review highlighted the key literature that was included in the WBP and helped construct the questions highlighted at the end of Chapter 2 (see Section 2.8). The responses from the students produced a substantial amount of raw qualitative data and through the framework analysis approach and the development of themes the data was broken down into manageable sections dealing with the key ideas brought together in the conclusion of the literature review chapter. From the findings and analysis presented in this chapter the key questions identified in the literature have been addressed in the following way.

Much of the findings showed similarities to the key literature discussions but there were issues highlighted in this sample that differed from the literature. Key findings that

are identified in this chapter are that reputation is key for these students with that being the main attraction point of coming to study hospitality in Switzerland (Pull Factor from Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002, Push-Pull Model; Country Image from Model of International Students Preference by Cubillio *et al*, 2006). This provided answers to the first questions: What are the deciding factors that influence the students choice for coming to Switzerland? Many sources of information are used in the students' research attempts however, there were variations in the number of different sources that students used for this purpose and the outcome of their research efforts impacted the satisfaction of the effort they put into this research. The questionnaire responses indicated that there was evidence of all of the elements of the Model of International Students Preference by Cubillio *et al*, (2006) i.e. personal reasons; country image; city effect; institution image; programme image. The way in which the students search for information i.e. mainly through word-of-mouth did not appear to be very structured and was quite informal in nature which may have influenced the expectations that they had of the venture to study abroad. This analysis provided the answer for the second, third and sixth questions: what do they try to find out about the new location, both destination and institution? How do they research the information they need? Based on the research that they did prior to coming, did it help them in any way to settle in to the new environment?

Findings in relation to culture shock questioned the plotting of a curve as both positive and negative feelings were apparent for the student at the entry point into the two new cultures and this agreed with many of the critiques of the staged approaches of culture shock (see Section 2.4.1). The challenges associated with the academic culture that the students experienced were similar to those challenges that were identified through the many studies that have been conducted on international students as highlighted in the literature (see Section 2.5). However, in relation to the Swiss national culture there appeared to be more confusion, as both the national and academic culture tended to be seen as one. The students reported more challenges with adapting to the many cultures that exist within the institution. This analysis provided the answer to two of the questions i.e. the fourth question: how do they feel once they have made the decision to come to

Switzerland and the institution and how do they feel once they have arrived in the destination and the institution? The fifth question: Did they experience any challenges with regard to the national and academic culture they encountered?

In relation to dealing with the challenges, the use of friends played an important part in helping the students to adapt to the environment. A new group of friends emerged that is different from the Functional Model of Friendship by Bochner *et al* (1977). This was briefly mentioned in Schartner's (2015) study of international students, however the current findings furthered Schartner's (2015) study in that the students in this sample gave explanation as to why this network of friends were maintained. Friends appeared as comments through a number of questions as a way to cope with challenges that were being experienced. Students commented on many ways in which they tried to cope but friends were a big part of this. This analysis helped in answering the seventh question from the literature review: what did they do to deal with the challenges they experienced, if any? The making of friends is a comment that was common in relation to how the students would have done things differently should they have to make this choice again. As the study was conducted in an institution where there are rarely any host culture students, the other non-compatriot friendships were important to the students as a way of influencing sociocultural adaptation. The use of the friends back home (along with friends from the same culture in the institution) appear to be a way of adapting psychologically. It could be questioned through the WBP study if the external environment support networks that are generally associated with sociocultural adaptation have been substituted with other non-compatriot friendships as a way of adapting. The friendships developed were also identified as a way of dealing with the pressures associated with the intensity of the programme (i.e. 18-weeks in length). Even though at the research stage when making the decision the length of the programme would have been communicated (and a reason why students chose it in the first place), it still produced negative feelings which influences the adjustment of the student to the academic environment. In light of this though, 91% of the students indicated that they felt as if they had adjusted and many reasons as to how they were describing this

adjustment linked to the friendships that they developed while here. The discussion on the friendship networks (see Section 2.6 and Section 4.4.6) helped in answering the eighth question from the literature review : how or did they use the friendship networks as a way to cope with difficulties? Who were the friendship networks? How was the host culture network substituted?

The next chapter will deal with the implications of these findings and will be followed up with suggestions with regards to recommendations that have been put forward by the students in the sample.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion and Implications for Practice

This study set out to discover how international students studying in a foreign location, Switzerland, cope with living in a different national culture and studying in a different academic culture in an 18-week programme where few host national students exist. The applied nature of the WBP used a case study with the purpose of exploring the issues in great depth so that practices within the institution could be reviewed and improved and dissemination to a wider audience could be undertaken. Key questions asked in relation to this started off by exploring how the students make their choice of institute and destination and what kind of information they sought? How they sought this information was important as it was felt that there could be a link between the information they receive and how it influences the way in which they cope with the challenges that they experience in the 18-week period. The aim of the WBP was achieved in that it was discovered that there are many challenges that the student in this context experience, many of which were similar to the literature reviewed. The students tended to use the friendship networks to cope with the challenges experienced and many of the recommendations provided by the student sample indicated the development of friendships either before the arrival or more quickly upon arrival in order to help them cope. With the exploration through the WBP study, it became apparent that the information that was gathered by the student was important but was problematic in that it appeared to happen in an informal basis, tended to influence the challenges experienced and in turn led to comments relating to whether expectations were met or not. With regard to implications for practice there are key areas that can be highlighted which are discussed in this section.

In the wider context of the institution some of the implications for practice are quite considerable. The findings of the WBP identified the sources of information that the student used to determine where they should study and word of mouth was highly influential in the decision making process (61% speaking to both current and past

students / 76% speaking to representatives). The students from the sample that were generally dissatisfied with their sources tended to only use two sources i.e. general internet search and an institution representative (i.e. agents). From a practical view point, this finding should guide those that can influence the decision of the potential student i.e. the marketing department and agents. The models discussed in the literature i.e. Mazzarol and Soutar's (2013) Push-Pull Model and The Model of International Students' Preference by Cubillo *et al* (2006) were evident in the findings of the WBP in relation to decision making and the information sought by the student. These models could be drawn from as a guideline for the agents of the institution to assist in providing the information that is required. The provision of accurate and trustworthy information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) at the 'search for information' stage of the decision-making process (Kotler *et al* 2005; Maringe and Carter, 2007) is of paramount importance as it could result in the student being better informed and more prepared (Ranburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang *et al* 2011) for their arrival to the institution. Implication for the institution agents include: who should be involved in providing the information to the student? Should the alumni (who potential students speak to and tend to believe more readily) be used more effectively and mentored on the specifics of information shared with the potential student so that realistic previews are given? This question emerged from a problem identified through the findings that the 'dinner' or 'lunch' organised by representatives was more informal and potential students did not really know what to ask of the alumni (see comment FG1; R2, pg8). As identified through the literature, both positives and negatives should be shared with the potential student. Even though this finding has implications for the wider context of the institution and how they strive to attract potential students, it will have ramifications for the practices of the lecturer in the classroom and the speed at which the student may adapt. If the student is armed with the most realistic preview as possible then maybe it would help to minimise comments like '*not what I expected*' once the student arrives at the institution.

The findings also discovered that culture shock is experienced by the students but the typical U-Curve is not so easy to apply as also identified through the literature. A lot of

mixed feelings were experienced by the students at both the decision making stage and at the arrival stage, e.g. happiness, excitement, anxiety, fear and sadness. The culture shock stages within this sample seemed to start at the pre-arrival stage rather than just the arrival stage with the same kind of mixed feelings being demonstrated at both stages, however, there was an increase in the negative feelings being experienced upon arrival. The findings indicated that at the decision making stage excitement was cited by 80% of the questionnaire sample and upon arrival it was cited by 61% of the sample. Shock did seem to appear upon arrival when students started to compare how things are done in Switzerland in comparison to how things are done at home. More in terms of frustrations were highlighted at this stage i.e. being annoyed, irritated or disappointed being cited by 13% of the sample. This is more fitting with the research that identifies 'survival' (Hyde, 2012) as the first stage of culture shock rather than excitement. This finding contributes to the model by Hyde (2012) that could be developed further to include the pre-arrival stage for the student.

This too has implications for those involved in helping the student to make the choice to study abroad. At the institution level, this finding has implications in that an effort should be made to maintain the excitement that the students have at the decision making stage through to the arrival stage and through the suggestions above in relation to providing a realistic preview, minimise the feelings of frustrations that appear. The simple things that caused frustrations related to opening hours of shops, where to find food, working out the transportations system etc. Agents and alumni sharing this specific kind of information might help the student to be more aware of logistical information, which may influence the level of frustration upon arrival. Again, this is leading back to the idea of realistic previews with accurate and trustworthy information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) regarding what is to come in this move to the foreign location, which may assist the student in focusing on their ability to cope in the classroom setting.

Both national and academic challenges discussed in the literature review were evidenced within the sample for the WBP study also. The findings indicated that both cultures (national and academic) appeared to merge into one for this study, which is

different from the literature reviewed. There was a stronger distinction between the two cultures in the literature reviewed. This could be explained given that the context of the WBP case study is different in that the lack of host student minimises the link that can be established with the Swiss culture. The institution provides for all the needs of the student, so the institution itself is seen as both Swiss and academic culture with students indicating that they did not know much about the Swiss culture (10% of the sample) and very few of them trying to make networks of friends outside the institution (14% of the sample). At the institution level the implications for practice here relate to the sharing of information to the potential student. There is a need to separate the two cultures in an effort to maintain the excitement that the students' expressed to experience the reputation that Switzerland has for hospitality (74% stated reputation, renowned for hospitality education as reasons for coming here) but in reality felt that they did not manage this. Having feelings of disappointment at this early stage can have consequences on how the students will then cope with academic challenges. Challenges in one 'culture' will influence how the student can adapt and function within the 18-week period.

Language was a key finding from the WBP research. With the previous studies on international students discussed in the literature review (e.g. Lillyman and Bennet, 2014; Mukminin, 2012; Ramachandran, 2011), language was an issue in relation to adapting in the academic environment but also socially. However, a substantial issue with the WBP sample was that there are two languages for the student to adapt to in order to adjust to the academic environment and the local environment. The findings indicated that the lack of French made it more difficult for students to integrate externally leading to less opportunities at developing networks outside the institution (51% citing language as a challenge and 38% of the respondents recommending that language is something they could have done better prior to arrival). From these findings, an implication for the institution relates to being explicit about the fact that two languages exist. Attending language courses (whether French, English or both) could be recommended prior to arrival, which may influence how prepared the student feels upon arrival (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009; Wang *et al*, 2011). From a wider perspective, could proficiency of the local

language be made a condition of acceptance to the institution, a condition that is currently expected for the academic language, English. However, even though English proficiency is a condition of acceptance, language internally in the WBP institution identified similar discussions as the literature review with regards to levels of understanding with many of the WBP students commenting on the variation in levels of English understanding. This has implications for the institution in relation to helping students to be able to cope in the academic environment when they arrive given the difference in education system they have arrived in. This finding is particularly relevant in relation to the student feeling that they can cope in the academic environment. It has crucial implications for the classroom setting where it influences the pace at which a lecturer can adopt if there are variations in the levels of English. Even though there is an IELTS requirement as a prerequisite for acceptance, does this show enough evidence of the level required for academia? The findings from the WBP indicated that the various levels of English was a cause of frustration.

The findings and analysis of this study revealed similar friendship networks being developed as in the studies conducted in the literature review, influenced by the Functional Friendship Model developed by Bochner *et al* (1977). The literature highlighted the many studies conducted using this model by Bochner *et al* (1977) e.g. Furnham and Alibhai (1985); Hendrickson, Rosen and Aune (2011); Schartner (2015) and all highlighted similarities in networks developed. The main difference in this WBP study and these previous studies discussed was the fact that there are rarely any host students in the WBP case study institution to help with the academic and professional development of the student. As identified through the analysis, even if there were host students to befriend, they would not be able to assist with the academic aspect due to the language of the institution being English and not French (local language of the area) and also the education system is not Swiss but British, which would also be new to the Swiss student. What they could assist with though is the introduction to the local Swiss culture which the findings indicated was missing among the student body at this institution (evidenced by the 10% that cited not having any Swiss interaction). Reasons given for

the development of the different network of friends were very similar to those discussed in the literature but the majority of the sample kept in touch with family and friends (92%, either family in Switzerland or family and friends back home) which is not a group identified by Bochner *et al* (1977) but was one identified by Schartner (2015). Given that international students are in steady demand by institutions and they will be faced with issues of coping with challenges, Bochner *et al* (1977) provided a valuable starting point within this WBP to explore how friendship networks are used. However given that use of technology is commonplace among students today, Schartner's (2015) study which identified the maintenance of relationships from home as additional to the three initial networks is worthy of more exploration particularly within institutions similar to that of the WBP case study institution.

It can be seen from the findings in this study that there is a blurred line between psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment as the term 'friends' were seen throughout the study as a way to cope with challenges that were faced. Schartner's (2015) study identified friends back home as an emerging group that students keep in touch with but the study did not develop on the function that this group play. What this WBP study contributed to Schartner's (2015) study was the reasons that were given as to why this group exist. The theme behind having this group of friends indicated 'escape' and 'objective views' and this could be explained by the nature of the boarding type environment that the WBP student exists within. The students in this WBP study indicated that speaking to people removed from the institution helped to keep things in perspective for them. The 'boarding school' type of environment that exists in this institution makes it difficult for the students (regardless of whether it is same nationality or different nationality friends that are made) to escape from the challenges in the 18-weeks, which is partly the function that the host culture students would have played. Implications for the wider institution in this instance relate to the way in which 'escape' is facilitated for the student. Perhaps at the stage when the students are getting information about the institution, they could be encouraged to keep networks of friends and family at home.

These findings are important for this institution at both the local level (i.e. in the classroom) and also at the institution level. A recommendation seen in a student response from the study indicated knowing more about the cultures that exist in the institution prior to arriving. Prior to arriving, the realistic preview could discuss issues related to relationships that can be developed and provide information on the breakdown of the other cultures that attend the institution.

Implications of these findings in relation to friendship development are plentiful in helping students to be more prepared upon arrival given that they have to adapt quickly. The literature and the findings indicated that those that were more prepared upon arrival tended to be happier with their experiences. The practicalities of this finding could be in the creating 'groups' either virtual or in physical locations for potential student wishing to start at the same time and this could be the start of the network development. These were specific suggestions made by the students indicated in Q20 when asked if the institution could do anything better prior to arrival (see appendix 25; QR27; pg103, QR59; pg104). In relation to the host culture student, it is unlikely that the institution will grow in this market so the institution may need to think about how networks can be developed internally to help with sociocultural adaptation while at the same time showcasing the Swiss culture in some way so that the students see the academic culture and the Swiss culture as two separate cultures.

With reference to more specific implications of these findings to the more local level (i.e. in the classroom setting), the findings have highlighted areas of concern in relation to many aspects of the student experiences expressed. As the findings revealed, it is upon arrival where the lecturer gets to experience the student excitement (61% of the sample), anxiety (36%), sadness (11%), disappointment (6%) and other frustrations e.g shops closing early (13%). This causes complications in how to deal with those that are 'down' and try to maintain the happiness of others that may be present in the one classroom environment. Discovering that it is *'not what I expected'* as indicated by students, influences how they integrate with other groups in the classroom. With regard to the intensity of the programme and the specific academic challenges identified, the lecturer

faces ramifications in the classroom. For example, students indicating that the programme is not long enough (7% of the sample), students challenged by course work pressure and time management issues (30%), teaching and critical thinking (13%), independent study (13%) and too much reliance on group work (9%) are all issues that the individual lecturer has to deal with on a daily basis. Questions like those indicated in Section 2.7 (Implications for Practice) arise from this i.e. how are expectations of each group (lecturer and student) communicated early on? How is the use of group work explained? How are groups created? How are the students supported to engage in independent learning or to think critically? Are lecturers reflecting on their own practices in the classroom?

The findings indicated issues with language by those that felt confident in English but also by those that felt weak in English. This finding crosses over all of the questions identified above given that the language of instruction is English, and not the mother tongue of the students or some of the lecturing team. This finding could also encourage the lecturer to question the level of participation in group discussion in the classroom, is the discussion topic understood or is the student afraid to share opinions due to language level? Should lecturers question more why participation is lower among certain groups? Is it language related or culturally influenced e.g. saving face as identified in the literature.

Finding that the students seek help from lecturers as a way to deal with challenges (17% indicated this in the open ended question (Q16) but 50% indicated lecturers within the school in the choice question (Q17)) this should encourage lecturers to question how they make the support available to the student. This finding could indicate that the host culture student is partially substituted by the support that is within the institute to assist with academic challenges. The kind of support and how it is offered needs consideration in every day practices given that the student only has 18 weeks to adapt and perform. The findings relating to the other networks of friends that the students befriend i.e same nationality (67%) and other nationalities (79%) could influence how lecturers deal with group work that is expected. Should students create their own groups or should the

decision be made for them? These issues will be further discussed in Chapter 6 - Dissemination when there is a reflection on practices as a result of the findings.

Even though the key discovery of the WBP was not to investigate in detail the decision process or the factors influencing decisions of choice of institution and destination of study, the findings have revealed that this stage of the student life cycle can influence their adaptation. The contact they have with those providing the information and how realistic the information is influences the expectations that the student has of their study abroad experience. As the development of friendships was identified so frequently as support, it is worth considering how these networks can be built sooner prior to arrival in order to have a more positive effect on feelings upon arrival. It was seen through the findings that those that arrived with friends or knew people upon their arrival felt more comfortable. As the length of the programme was highlighted as pressuring, at least having a friend group prior to arrival may ease the psychological adaptation upon arrival minimising the challenges experienced. The findings agreed with the statement by Sam (2014) that contact had to be first hand in order for the students to really adapt rather than the use of third parties (which relates to the word-of-mouth that the students in this sample relied heavily upon) where students commented that there was only so much you could do prior to arrival in relation to preparing yourself, you discover more upon arrival when you have to live in the new environment. The literature indicated that it is good to experience some form of shock but indicated that it should be viewed more as a process towards growth, so how information is shared with potential students could be more informative and structured to help ease their entry into the new environment.

5.2 Contribution to Theory

In light of the conclusion and the implications of the findings for practice, the WBP study has demonstrated how contribution to theory has been achieved. The examining of the Model of International Students' Preference by Cubillo (2006), specifics have been highlighted on what influences the choice to study abroad (Personal Reasons; Country Image Effect; City Effect; Institution Image; Programme Evaluation) all of which were

in agreement with the findings of the WBP. However, the specific content in each of these areas were highlighted in the WBP study as problematic. Literature suggests that accurate and trustworthy information is needed (Oliveira and Soares, 2016) to facilitate the right decision being made in order for better adjustment to happen. The model could be developed further in relation to the best sources of information that could be used particularly in relation to providing structured content given the intensity of courses that exist (like that of the WBP institution) and be more focused on what international students *should* be informed of rather than leaving the student to work it out for themselves though informal means.

Hyde's (2012) model of culture shock, which was developed specifically with the international student in mind represents the first stage of culture shock being 'survival' and this could be extended to include a stage before i.e. pre-arrival. The literature reviewed highlighted non-consensus of what the initial stage actually is; excitement or anxiety (e.g. Brown and Holloway, 2008; Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013) and the findings of the WBP highlighted the same issues with students showing evidence of both feelings upon arrival. However, supportive of the study by Quan *et al* (2016) the findings of the WBP discovered that there was also both positive and negative feelings present once the decision to study abroad was made. In light of this identification there could be inclusion of this pre-arrival stage in Hyde's (2012) model.

The literature discussion on the staged models of adaptation were varied in their reference to how long it takes to reach the final stage of adaptation but all of those that mentioned 'time' were different to the context in which the WBP case study operates within i.e. students undertaking a short intensive programme with increased pressure to feel comfortable quickly. This is worthy of further exploration especially within institutions that have short intensive programmes where there are few host culture students to assist with the coping of stressors that are encountered.

As an overall contribution to research, the WBP has explored issues related to a specific context i.e. international students attending short intensive courses in two different cultures (national and academic) where there is a lack of a host culture student

to assist with adjustment to the new location. The seminal works of The Functional Model of Friendships Network by Bochner *et al* (1977) provided a basis for the examination of how students use these networks to cope. The WBP has contributed to Schartner's (2015) identification of a fourth groups of friends i.e. friends and family back home by highlighting the function that this fourth group of friends play within the specific context of a boarding type institution such as that in the WBP case study. Within this type of context, the host culture student friendship network becomes redundant.

Having highlighted the areas that have contributed in some way to theory / research, the findings of the WBP have helped identify areas for further research, which is explored in the following section.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

As a result of the conclusions in this research there are a few areas that could be suggested to deepen the study. This study did not deal with the critique that was suggested in the literature review regarding these types of studies being cross-sectional in nature. Through the findings there are areas that could benefit from a longitudinal study for example, using a sample of a particular group and following them through the different years of study to investigate their use of the friendship networks. The sample in this study relied on memory in relation to what it was like and how they felt when they first made the decision to come and how they felt when they arrived. It would be interesting to track these feelings immediately upon arrival and examine who they initially make friends with and observe how these friendship groups might change as they progress through the institution. This was considered difficult to carry out in the time frame of this study given that students vary whether they progress immediately on to the next level or do a standard internship or an extended internship. This suggestion of further research using a more longitudinal study will add to the original Functional Model of Friendship Networks by Bochner *et al*, (1977) which has seen changes in the way in which students use these networks and could build on the identification of the fourth network of 'friends back home' (Schartner, 2015). Questions that could be asked relate to

why this fourth network is used, whether it is used more at initial stage of a study abroad period and does it lessen as time goes on as other networks appear?

Another area that would be of interest to investigate further relates to how the students attain the information they need in order to prepare themselves for coming to the institution. Many students indicated that prior to arrival they met informally with current and past students in their home countries. As this area was not really considered relevant to the key question of the WBP, the findings do point to an interesting area of study i.e. how are students informed via the use of agents? How structured is the information that is being supplied? How are the alumni being used? It would be interesting to get more perspectives on this i.e. from the agents involved and alumni that are part of this process. This suggestion of further research could add to the research on The Model of International Students' Preference by Cubillo *et al*, (2006). Knowing the factors that influence the students choice, there could be further exploration on how is this information provided to them to help influence the choice made.

As language was a finding that produced many feelings in this WBP study, a possible area of further study could be to focus on more institutions like the one in this WBP to explore more if similar issues are experienced. The literature in this study was mainly from research conducted on samples of students who attended a university in a location where both languages (local language and language of instruction in the institution) were the same i.e. mainly English and there were host students present.

Another area of future research could be from the management view point e.g. management at the institution and management at the UK partner University. The challenges that the students face directly impact the student experience, how they adapt and their overall performance. It would be interesting once the findings from the study are disseminated to know how they view the issues that have arisen through this research. The sensitivity of the topic at times led to the student feeling the need to stray off topic from this specific research but raised questions nonetheless as their straying off topic indicates frustrations that were challenges for them. How could the institution and the UK partner assist in minimising the shock that the student experiences so that they can

feel more comfortable starting, giving them a better chance to perform in the 18-weeks of the programme? The institution itself have direct links to the marketing, how could they encourage the development of support networks for the potential student prior to their arrival?

5.4 Recommendations for the Institution - Comments from Findings

It was felt for this section that an analysis of the comments that came from the students themselves would be beneficial as recommendations to the institution given that they (the students) are the ones that are directly affected by what the institution does to help with the student experience. The focus group suggestions on how they would advise a potential student really examined the research that the student does prior to making the decision to come and also highlighted the benefits of making friends or acquaintances prior to coming (see Table 4.13). The research focused on doing more than just relying on one or two sources. This has implications for the institution with regards to how information is shared to a potential student via the marketing team (as discussed previously). As identified in the future research section, how could this be done? Other suggestions from the focus group indicate that potential students should test out the industry prior to coming to see if it is really what they want to do. This has wider implications for the institution as this would impact numbers of students and profitability however, is important as it may alleviate the frustrations that students feel in the classroom in relation to group work and non-participation from those who have arrived at the institution because their parents wanted them to be here. Specific recommendations that result from this are (1) ensure that both accurate and trustworthy information is available and shared with potential students via the different means used. Examine the content of the information that is currently being provided as students from the case study sample did not feel that the information was reliable enough from many of the representatives. (2) The institution could explore further the recommendation to introduce potential students to others who are joining the same institution and have more organised pre-departure meetings so that students arrive already with 'a friend'.

The questionnaire produced some different ideas on how they (the WBP sample) would advise future students. A lot focused on the need to be positive and come with an open mind. Be accepting of different cultures. Be good at time management, learn French and English. Implications here for the institution also relates to how the good and the bad are communicated to the potential student through the use of marketers and alumni (see appendix 28, pg108). These recommendations from the students should be integrated into whatever means of communication that is used to inform the potential student.

What is interesting in the suggestions that came from the students is the need to make friends and not just within the same nationality but to broaden it. Throughout this research friendships have played an important part in helping the student to cope with the environment, both the national and academic culture, which further supports the need for the institution to explore this as a specific recommendation.

5.5 Personal Reflections

This research from beginning to end was a continuous learning path for me. Spending 15 years as a supervisor of BA final year and Masters level dissertations encouraged me to take on this level of study to push myself in terms of my own personal development. Having spent a long time in institutions like this one and having been in a management position, the issues being researched were close to how I could perform in my job. Deciding on a broad topic for investigation was relatively easy as my teaching and reading were around the area of culture and culture shock, and examining how the students face these issues in an 18-week programme, was intriguing in terms of how they cope with challenges.

The narrowing of the topic was a challenge as even in its current state, there were many questions that could be asked and even though I finalised an aim and objectives, my reading kept bringing me to other areas of interest. I never found it a waste of reading and used it to build the class content that I was delivering on a weekly basis. I felt that after participating in the research methods module it gave me much more confidence in guiding both BA and Masters level students through their own dissertation

process. The feedback that I gain from students who I supervise is very positive where they have placed great confidence in me as their supervisor.

I was particularly challenged at the collection of the primary data stage of this work as I did not feel particularly confident in conducting focus groups and felt the distribution of a questionnaire would be easier for me, however, I felt the need to push myself and try it. I was generally happy with the outcome but in hindsight, I think I would think a little more about how to control the flow of information that was created as a result of this technique of gathering data. My inexperience led to the groups going over time and not actually finishing with everything that I wanted to do. At the analysis stage of the raw data I was also particularly overwhelmed (as most students are) at how to put my plan into action. I knew what I wanted to do and it felt natural to follow the path in my head but fitting it into a framework to guide the analysis so that a trail could be created was a challenge. I still think I have a weakness in this area but as an inexperienced qualitative researcher this can only improve with time. There are things that I could do differently e.g. be more confident with the approach to analysis prior to the collection of the data as there should be less of a struggle on how to do it when the time actually comes.

Time was a real issue for me during this process and life managed to get in the way at times which forced me to rethink how I manage time e.g. balancing a family, two jobs and study. There were good times and bad but I felt that I learned a lot in relation to prioritising and picking out the positives in things rather than getting dragged down by the negatives. This I feel is something that influences my work e.g. when students come to see me when they are down but also on a personal level when things are not going according to plan.

A final thing that I think I have learned is that this truly is an independent journey and the expectations you have of people should never be too high as that way there is less chances of getting hurt.

CHAPTER SIX: DISSEMINATION

6.1 Introduction

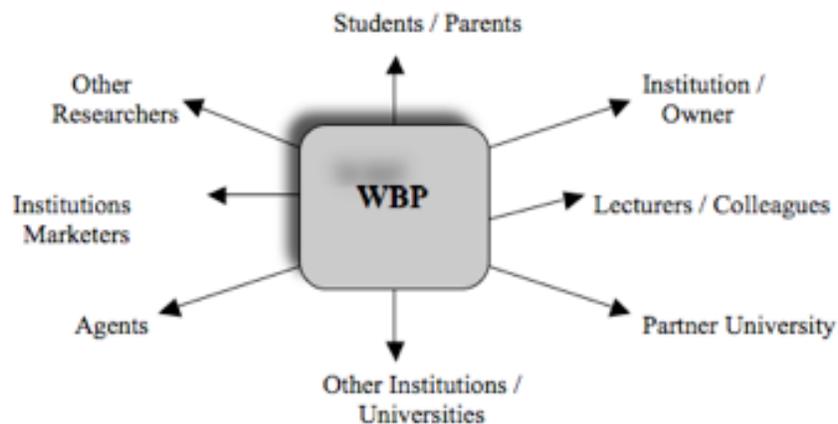
The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the knowledge gained from this WBP can be shared among the many stakeholders so that it can lead to improvement in practices in an attempt to improve the experience of the student. As indicated in Section 3.2 (Nature of the Research), this WBP is applied in nature. The discussion pertaining to the divide between pure and applied research and relevance of the knowledge that is created as a result of the research undertaken (Binkman and Rog, 2009; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003; Hodgkinson, *et al*, 2001; Starkey and Madan, 2001) influenced the methods in dissemination chosen. Further discussions have been held with regards to the divide that exists between researchers and practitioners (McGahan, 2007; Jacobson, Butterill, Goering, 2003; Rynes, Bartunek and Daft, 2001; Rumsey, 1998) and how this knowledge that is created needs to be accessible and appropriate for the end users (Drake and Heath, 2011). This also was a consideration in relation to the dissemination strategies of the WBP.

In relation to the production of a thesis such as the WBP, dissemination is considered a way of sharing and contributing to knowledge in a particular discipline (Roberts, 2004). It involves the use of different methods to share the information gained from the production of the thesis and closing the loop by getting feedback on this information. It needs to be planned in such a way that the various audiences and the methods used to reach them are given consideration (Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan and Nazareth, 2010). Dissemination has become commonplace within education language and it is best to think about it in relation to dissemination for awareness, understanding and action (Harmsworth and Turpin, 2000). They further describe it as ‘delivering and receiving of a message’, ‘the engagement of an individual in a process’ and ‘the transfer of a process or product’ (Harmsworth and Turpin, 2000:3). Particularly in the case of the findings of this WBP the intention is to reach the various audiences (see Figure 6.1) so that the

outcome of sharing this knowledge will result in reflection on practices in order to influence change resulting in an improved student experience.

Figure 6.1 outlines the stakeholders that would benefit from the findings of this WBP. The remainder of the chapter highlights the strategies for dissemination of research to the wider academic community as well as at a more local level within the institution. This chapter will take the key stakeholders (in no particular order of importance) and outline a provisional plan relating to that particular stakeholder and the consideration that needs to be given to sharing the information with them. The framework identified by Harmsworth and Turpin (2000) is adopted as a way of giving the necessary consideration to the areas in developing the dissemination strategy.

Figure 6.1 Stakeholders for dissemination of findings from the WBP



However, given the applied nature of the research, it was considered important prior to identifying how the findings of the WBP are to be specifically disseminated, to reflect on how the research has influenced changes to practices in the classroom. This is discussed in the following section. Based on this reflection, the remainder of the chapter discusses the intended techniques to be used in dissemination.

6.2 Changes to Practices influenced by WBP findings

The findings from the WBP have been influential in the reflection on the researchers day-to-day practices in dealing with the international student. The practices that have been changed at this stage as a result of the findings are as follows:

1. Given the identification of frustrations, disappointment and challenges of the sample at the start of their study it was felt that it was important to start the module with a clarification of expectations that students have of the researcher as their lecturer. It is followed up with clarity on the exceptions that the researcher has of them in the module. A comparison of each parties expectations of each other is now made together in an effort to identify any gaps that may exist.
2. The finding related to the over use of group work encouraged the practice of allowing students to choose their own groups rather than assigning groups given that they do not have a long time to get to know group members. The discussion on what friendship networks were made and why influenced this practice as a way to help the student to feel more comfortable with their own chosen 'friends'.
3. Technology has been introduced in the classroom in the institution. Each student is given an iPad on arrival. This was seen as an opportunity to encourage participation from more of the students as the variations in the levels of English was reported through the findings as problematic. The use of certain Apps (e.g. Nearpod) were experimented with in the class. It allowed the student to ask questions, answer questions, discuss topics and remain anonymous among the larger class group and were only identifiable by the researcher.
4. The finding in relation to language encouraged the questioning of how language should be viewed in the classroom? For example, in the institution students are supposed to speak English in public areas and in class however, in the class when break out discussion groups are part of the class activity, the students have been allowed to use their own language (if the group is made up of same nationalities) for these discussions. When the class reconvenes they have been encouraged to appoint a spokesperson who feels comfortable sharing the thoughts of the group to the wider class.
5. Given the various challenges associated with too much work, not enough time and the expectation of independent learning, the week-by-week schedule for teaching for the researcher has been altered to integrate more individual time to deal with individual issues that the student may be experiencing as a result of the module with the researcher. This was also in an effort to substitute the lack of host culture students that are present in the institution. Lecturers were highlighted as a network that the students use as a way of coping with stressors with the academic environment.

Given these changes to date in daily practices, the following sections detail the dissemination strategy that has been created.

6.3 Dissemination Strategy

A key consideration when disseminating information is the audience (stakeholder). The stakeholders in this study vary in the way the information needs to be shared e.g. writing an academic paper for publication in a journal will not necessarily reach an 18 year old deciding on where to go to study whereas it can be of use to other researchers, institutions and universities. In creating a strategy for each of these stakeholders, key questions need to be considered and the guidelines provided by Harmsworth and Turpin (2000) were used as a starting point. In applying this dissemination strategy it is hoped that awareness and understanding of the findings will be created and actions will result for the benefit of the key player in this research i.e. the student. These questions include:

1. 'What do we want to disseminate?
2. Who are our stakeholders and what are we offering them?
3. What are the most effective ways of disseminating? Who might help us disseminate?
4. When do we disseminate?'

6.3.1 What do we want to disseminate?

There are many elements of this WBP that can be disseminated and what is to be disseminated can be very dependent on the stakeholder that is on the receiving end. For example, other researchers and other universities or institutions similar to the one of the study may be interested in the literature review of the research and may be interested in the findings and any recommendations that are put forward. With the context of this study being substantially different from many of the studies reviewed in the literature (i.e. no host culture students, intensive courses), those in similar institutions may be interested in how studies like those conducted by Hyde (2012, discussion of the 'survival period') and Schartner (2015, identification of a fourth network of friends) can be contributed to through the findings of this WBP. Potential students however might be more interested in

actual findings and the various challenges that are experienced by students as a way to help inform themselves prior to arrival at the institution. For example, the findings from the WBP that would be particularly relevant to potential students relate to specific issues that lead to frustrations e.g. the weather, the operating hours of the shops, transportation systems. More specific to the academic environment they could be interested in knowing more about issues relating to the intensity of the programme (although this is a reason that influenced the choice of programme), challenges created through work pressure and time management, teaching styles and the concept of critical thinking, the independence that is expected of them and how group work is used in the institution.

Lecturers and colleagues may be interested in the literature to help make sense of the challenges that they face in the classroom with foreign students. If there is increased understanding of the challenges, then on a practical level, they may also be interested in the findings in relation to the challenges discovered i.e. language, group work, expectations, teaching style, independence to see if this can inform their practice in any way through action. The partner university may be interested in the findings to see if further support can be provided to the delivering institution. The findings indicated that some of the students were not fully aware of who the awarding institution of their programme was. As can be seen from this list of examples drawn from the findings, knowing the audience or stakeholder becomes paramount in deciding the medium to use and how the information is communicated.

6.3.2 Who are our stakeholders?

From Figure 6.1 it was possible to group different stakeholders together for the purpose of dissemination and this is outlined in Table 6.1. There are commonalities among the different stakeholders that allowed for the grouping of them, which can be seen in Table 6.1 along with the reasons as to why the three main groups were created.

In relation to dissemination, it is important to deal with the question of *who* as not knowing the audience will result in ineffective communication. Knowing this influences the *what* is to be communicated as identified above.

Table 6.1 Grouping of stakeholders for dissemination purposes

Group	Stakeholder	Reason
1	Institution / Owner Partner Institution Lecturers / Colleagues	Internal to institute of the research and relatively easy to access and share information.
2	Students / Parents Institution Marketers Agents	The WBP findings revealed all these groups are influential in the decision on where to study.
3	Other Institutions / Universities Other Researchers	External to the institute of the research and more difficult to share information.

Jacobson, *et al* (2003:95) discuss the audience and issues of familiarity i.e. knowing who the user group that the research is attempting to reach and identify a number of questions that need consideration:

1. ‘How big is the user group?’
2. What kinds of decisions does the user group make?
3. What actions are available to the user group?
4. What sources of information does the user group access and use?
5. For what purposes does the user group use information?’

Each of these questions identified by Jacobson *et al* (2003) need to be given consideration within each of the groups of stakeholders identified for dissemination of these research findings. Each of the stakeholder groups differ in terms of their size or their decision making influences or the actions they can take as a result of knowing the information. If each of these questions is to be considered when disseminating then it helps with the content of what is to be disseminated and influences the choice of medium that is used to share the information and when this dissemination should take place. Examples of the dissemination media will be seen in the next section and in Table 6.2.

6.3.3 Dissemination Media and When

Table 6.2 has taken the three groups of stakeholders and examined different ways in which they could receive the information that needs to be shared from this WBP. The first two groups identified are of utmost importance in this work and are discussed in

relation to the implications that the findings have had on practices to-date. The third group is related to the wider context of higher education and the growth of the international student body across the globe.

Table 6.2 Stakeholders with potential dissemination media

Group	Examples of Dissemination Media
1 including: Institution / Owner / Partner Institution / Lecturers / Colleagues	Workshops; Face-to-face discussions; Professional journals; Internet; Intranet; Learning Resource Centre; Wiki's and Discussion Forums
2 including: Students / Parents / Institution Marketers / Agents	Flyers and brochures at education fairs; Intranet; Internet; Presentations; Workshops; Videos; Non-academic journals
3 including: Other institutions / Universities / Other Researchers	Academic journals; Books; Chapters in texts; Conference papers; Discussion papers; Wiki's and Discussion Forums

The following section outlines the plan for dissemination for each of these groups.

GROUP ONE

The findings will be shared with the institution owner via a presentation of the findings of the WBP followed by a discussion. This is the first point of dissemination as permission to do the research in the institution was granted prior to starting with the understanding that the findings would be shared with management.

Dissemination among colleagues and lecturers within the institution has already begun albeit in an informal manner. The techniques used to-date are via team briefings and team meetings that take place regularly within the institution where best practices are shared among the team. Many informal discussions have taken place outside of these meetings, which has generated further discussion. This has been beneficial as a dissemination technique given the two-way nature of meetings like these and the necessity to be able to discuss ideas of best practices in order for action to happen (King, Hawe and Wise, 1998). A more official forum that was used in the dissemination of the findings to colleagues (and the changes that have taken place already in the researchers classroom) was through a presentation given on the implementation of the Nearpod App

in the classroom. This was followed by a question and answer session, where many questions were generated from colleagues.

Given the positive response to the initial presentation to colleagues of the Nearpod App in the classroom, the intention is to create a workshop for colleagues in the same institution (but also other institutions in the group) which take place each summer when there are no students on campus thus, ensuring more of the lecturing team being present. The workshop will take place within the week of staff training sessions where wider discussions on issues related to the specific challenges the student faces and the ways of coping they identified (use of friendship networks and how lecturers fit into this network). The intention is to be specific on the challenges related to the academic and national culture discovered.

Other plans of sharing the findings of the WBP beyond the specific WBP case study institution i.e. with other colleagues in similar institutions belonging to the same Group and the British Partner University is via the various conferences that are held. The intention is to participate in the next Research Conference (held at another institution within the Group every April/May) and the next Collaborative Conference (held every July / August at the Partner University) and present a poster presentation of the key literature findings in comparison to the specific context of the WBP research. The audiences at these conferences are wider than the WBP case study institution. Each of the other institutions in the Group operate within a similar context i.e. short intensive programmes who operate with a mix of British, American or Australian Universities, where very few host culture students exist. Attendees and other participants at the Partner University Collaborative Conference include other foreign institutions who they are in collaboration with, as well as other British Higher Education Institutions who have agreements with foreign institutions. This audience (at both conferences) will benefit from all the findings related to both academic and national culture challenges that are experienced by the student and the highlighted ways in which they cope.

This group (group one as per Table 6.1) is easy to reach as they are colleagues of the researcher and relationships with the Partner University are healthy therefore the sharing of the findings should be relatively straightforward.

GROUP TWO

The findings of the research indicated that the use of representatives from the institution and students (both past and present) were hugely influential in trying to prepare the potential student for arrival at the institution. The findings also revealed that parents were involved in the decision-making due mainly to financial backing for the foreign study period, thus relevant as a group to receive the information from the findings of this work. The institution of the study has regional offices and agents all over the globe and it is in these offices that the potential student can get the information that is needed to help them prepare themselves. The initial dissemination to this group will be during the Agents Summit, which takes place on a yearly basis in Switzerland (for all agents of the Group and not just the WBP institution). The intention with this group is to present the findings related specifically to the challenges that the students face from both the national and academic culture perspectives. Key findings that will be shared with this group include:

- The accuracy of the information received that the WBP students showed concern over when searching for information from the institutes representatives.
- The issue related to the informality that appears to be associated with speaking to alumni when searching for information when making the choice to study abroad. Potential students did not really know what they should be asking.
- The recommendations made by the WBP students related to the creation of friendship networks prior to arrival at the institution.
- The many challenges associated with the intensity of the academic programme and the expectations at this level of study.
- The many challenges associated with integrating into Swiss culture and seeing just 'one culture', that of the institution.

The presentation of this information will then be opened up to a discussion to allow opportunities for feedback from agents with workshops to follow on how best to disseminate more specific information to the student. The intention thereafter is to explore the best ways identified through the workshops to provide this needed information to the student so that they can be better prepared for their study period. A further objective of the workshops is to establish ways in which the use of alumni (whom the agents use) could be made more structured and informative for the benefit of the potential student. The aim of this is to help provide information that the potential student *should* know rather than leaving it to their own devices. Examples of the possibilities to disseminate to potential students include the use of flyers, brochures or videos which could be made available at the local agent offices or at organised education fairs. The production of this material would not be the direct responsibility of the researcher but the content could be influenced by the findings and the outcome of the workshops held.

At the same time as the agents are informed of the findings, the institutions marketers are also important in influencing the student choice. The intention with this group is to share the findings through similar means as that for the agent in the summer months where there are no students on campus and a little more time is available. Marketers need to be aware of the same issues as the agent however, in addition to this the findings revealed that the use of the internet was highlighted as a way of searching for information prior to making the decision to coming to Switzerland to study. This form of information gathering is difficult to control but making sure that the student finds what they are looking for becomes important. ‘Using descriptive rather than obscure titles which will make retrieval from an indexing system difficult’ (Whitfield and Peters, 2000:154). Make it user friendly and easy to read e.g. non-use of jargon (Martland and Rothbaum, 2002). In taking this onboard and in light of the findings of the WBP, the intention is to share with the marketers the need to provide a realistic preview for the student through these dissemination media. The findings revealed that even though internet searches (e.g. Youtube, Facebook) revealed negative comments about the institute, the student still chose to come here as a result of using many *other* sources to do their research as well.

Providing a realistic preview particularly in relation to living in Switzerland would be beneficial as the findings revealed that many of the students did not feel like they knew much of the Swiss culture. Simple things like food, opening hours of shops, transportation etc specific to the location of the institute could be integrated well into a video. Through the sharing of this information with the marketing team, it is hoped to create discussions as a starting point on how best to proceed with the dissemination to the student. Given the high usage of the internet among the student age group the creation of student testimonials and short informative video clips on the institutions web site may attract the attention of the potential student. The web site needs to be viewed as a source of accurate and trustworthy information (Oliveira and Soares, 2016). As mentioned, the production of this kind of material is not the direct responsibility of the researcher however, the content of it could be influenced by the findings of this WBP and the discussions held as a result of sharing the findings.

Word-of-mouth was identified in this research as a major source of gathering information about the institution and Switzerland. In terms of disseminating the findings of this WBP, the current student body could be a method that is worth considering as these students will end up being ambassadors for the institution. How the student on campus feels as they go through their study period may influence the way in which they discuss the possibility of study here with potential students. The findings revealed that a substantial amount of potential students spoke to current or previous students when searching for information about their study in Switzerland. However, an issue with this revealed that much of the information gathered in this way was informal in nature and the information given was not very standardised. The plan for this group is to hold workshops at the beginning of the new term. It is felt that within induction week of the new term where students are being introduced, specifically to the new academic system it would be good to explore expectations of the student, to share experiences of the WBP students and highlight the findings on how the WBP students coped with the various challenges. Following on from this, the intention is to do further workshops in the middle and at end of the term and 'mentor' them to become the potential ambassador who

will have the ability to provide the realistic preview that is needed with more structured and useful information for potential student. It is felt that in order for them to be the provider of information to potential students, they need to know what the findings revealed, be able to compare with their own experiences so they can be (1) more aware themselves and (2) be able to be specific with potential students. The wider plan with the workshops with current students (which will take longer to create and share), is to generate testimonials from students with short videos with the researcher and the student ‘discussing’ various experiences and how challenges are dealt with. These are then to be made available via the institutions website for those that have made the decision to come to the institution and the institutions intranet communication channel.

GROUP THREE

With regard to the wider group (group 3 in Table 6.1) this would involve more of an academic focus but also disseminated in such as way as practitioners in institutions like this (ones who cross over between being businesses and educational institutions) would find it beneficial. There are several options available to those wishing to disseminate the findings of research e.g. academic journals, professional journals, books, conference papers etc (Guthrie, Parker and Gray, 2004). If taking the *dissemination for action* point into consideration (Harmsworth and Turpin 2000) then attention needs to be give to the writing of information i.e. the gap that exists between researchers and practitioners needs to be closed.

Bearing this gap in mind and looking at how information can be written up and published through the use of journals, the researcher needs to be aware of the external influencing factors involved in publishing information in a journal. Two areas of consideration relate to the importance of both the audience (user group) and the requirements of the journal. Choosing the appropriate journal that matches with the appropriate audience is imperative. Rumsey’s (1998), statement that ‘researchers are encouraged to design their research to address significant issues or questions in education that will benefit students, teachers, schools, colleges and others involved in educational

practice or policy' is an important issue in the decision for the researcher in the writing of the information and the decision of which journal to publish in. With journal publication Rowley and Slack (2000:23) identify that 'business and management fields have journals in the following categories: scholarly and research journals; practitioner and professional journals; and professional popular magazines and newsletters.' Each of these will have their own audiences but each of these will also have their own requirements in relation to style and format of writing. The initial step in planning to publish in an academic journal was the review of the reference list produced for the WBP to establish where key articles were located. The first one that has been decided upon and deemed appropriate is the *International Journal of Educational Management* as some of the articles reviewed for the WBP stemmed from that journal. Given that the process of acceptance for publication in this journal is 'double blind peer review', it was considered suitable as a medium to share the findings to a wider academic audience. To date, a first draft of an abstract has been created to submit to this journal that has taken into consideration the manuscript requirements (see Appendix 29). It was decided to co-write this article with an experienced publisher as a way to build confidence in future publishing efforts.

Other potential journals that are being considered for dissemination of the findings of the WBP are *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Journal of Research in International Education* and *Journal of Social Psychology*. These journals have been chosen for the same reason as above. The WBP was informed through articles retrieved from them and given that the researcher exists within an institution that crosses over the business / academic divide, the readership for these journals could be in a similar position, this however needs further exploration prior to submitting abstracts.

The timing of publication in journals such as this however will take much longer to reach the intended audience given the peer review process that is undertaken. Thompson (1995) also highlighted that through this process of putting papers forward for publication it is important to be prepared for rejection, however it should be viewed as an opportunity for growth for the researcher.

With all of the groups of stakeholders identified the question of when dissemination has been identified however, this should be on a continuous basis to showcase any changes that may occur in the situation e.g. changes in the programme or the identification of any new / different challenges that may appear among the student body. Continuous gathering of feedback from current students and disseminating this to the representatives of the institute is important. Having current students see that efforts are being made to ease their adaptation into the two different cultures should help in the word-of-mouth that happens after they have left the institution.

Overall, there have been some important findings generated through this research and although they may not be generalisable to other institutions they do have great implications for the institution of the study and should be disseminated to wider audiences given the difference in context that exists in the WBP institution and the many more that have a similar environment. Students are the main 'product' of the institution and therefore it is important for management to understand their issues so that their student experience is as positive as possible which in turn may influence the word-of-mouth marketing that currently takes place.

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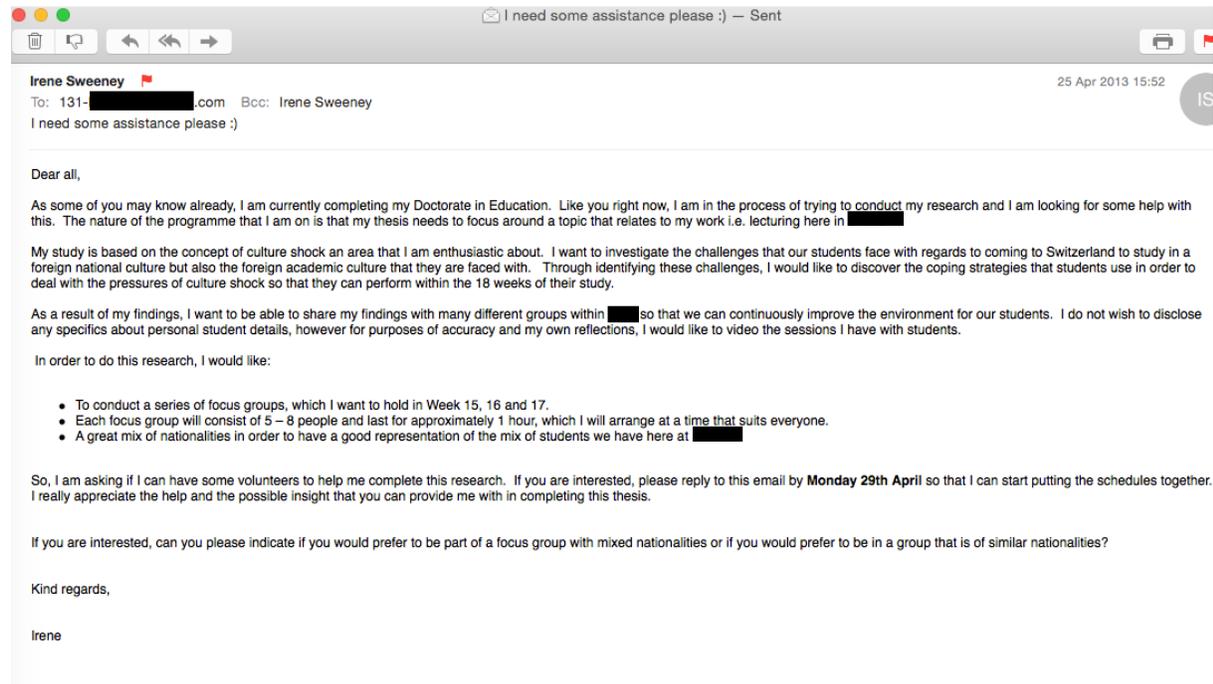
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Email sent to seek volunteers



Appendix 2 - Focus Group Question Guide

INTRODUCE MYSELF AND PURPOSE OF MY STUDY

- Doctorate of Education with University of Derby.
- Partly taught and partly thesis ... I'm on the thesis stage
- Focus is on culture shock ... academic and national. Main purpose is to look at the challenges that students face and how they cope with those challenges within 18 weeks.
- Purpose is to be able to share my findings with all those that are involved with the student e.g. students / parents / the institution / Partner University / Lecturers / institution marketers / Agents / Other researchers / Other institutions
- ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL ... FEEL FREE TO COMMENT. Video is ONLY for my use and memory aid to increase accuracy.
- Any questions so far? Thank you for being here.

FORMAT THAT THE HOUR WILL TAKE:

1. Everyone introduce themselves
2. Discussion about PRIOR to arriving in Switzerland
3. Discussion on ARRIVAL in Switzerland
4. Concluding comments – suggestions from students
5. Any questions yet?

1. EVERYONE INTRODUCE THEMSELVES

- Level of study – ALL BA STUDENTS IN GROUPS except one HD student in Group 2
- Country of origin
- Length of time in Switzerland
- Age
- No of countries lived in prior to Switzerland ... name them
- Why did you choose to study in Switzerland? What age were you then?
(*Reputation?*)

2. DISCUSSION ON 'PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN SWITZERLAND?'

- Who made the decision to come to Switzerland to study?
- What was your feeling once you knew you were coming to Switzerland? Explain.
- What things did you (or the decision maker) consider as important in making the decision to come to Switzerland?
(*trying to find out here if they considered the difference in national culture and did they think about how different the academic environment would be*) Language / UK education / weather?
- How did you prepare once you knew you were going to come to Switzerland?
- Did you research for yourself or did you rely on an agent / parents / others?
(*Looking to see who took control of the decision / research ... student or parent or agent*)
- What did you know about the national culture prior to your arrival? How did you feel about it?
- What did you know about the academic culture prior to your arrival? How did you feel about it?

3. DISCUSSION ON 'ARRIVAL IN SWITZERLAND'?

National Culture:

- What words would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived in Switzerland (**National culture**)? Think of positives / negatives. Why use these words?
(*Look out to see if more positives or negatives*)
- What specifics would you highlight as challenging with the **national culture**? Please explain.
(*Things I'm looking for relate to language due to French being the local language, location ... up a mountain, weather etc.*)
- Now that you have been here a number of years ... how do you feel about the differences / similarities now? Does it still cause excitement / frustrations?

Academic Culture:

- What words would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived at the institution (**Academic culture**)? Think of positives / negatives. Why use these words? *Think about first year.*
(*Look out to see if more positives or negatives*)
- What specifics would you highlight as challenging with the **academic culture**? *Think about first year to third year.* Please explain.
(*Things I'm looking for relate to language, different styles of learning, different expectations in terms of grading, referencing and plagiarism*)
- Now that you are 15 weeks into the BA British programme, what would you highlight as challenging? Please explain.

Coping Strategies:

- How different do you feel things are here (national and academic culture) to your home country?
- What was easier to get used to ... the new academic culture or the new Swiss culture? Please explain.
- As a result of the feelings you identified earlier, what did you do to help you overcome the negatives? What were the key mechanisms that you used in order to adapt?
(*Looking to find out the coping strategies here.*)
- Did you try to recognise the positives from your situation and try to benefit from them? Please explain.
(*Did you tend to focus on the positive feelings to help in overcoming the negatives ... how?*)
- Did you take control of the situation when you did arrive? Did you feel as if there was a situation to take control of? Explain?
(*Article - Chinese students' satisfaction of the study abroad experience*)
- How did you do this?
- How often did you try to mix with the local Swiss culture? How did you do this? What is easy / difficult? Why did you want to mix with locals?
(*Want to see if they saw this as a support network?*)
- How did you adjust to the challenges associated with your academics?
 - From first year to third year?
 - From BA?(*Things I'm looking for are friendships, lecturers, and home support?*)

- How did you adjust to the challenges associated with the difference in you culture and the Swiss culture? *(Things I'm looking for are similar to academics.)*
- Who did you seek out as support groups within the institution? *(Did you choose to mix with the same culture or did you try to mix with other cultures? Please explain.)*
- Do you feel that you managed to adjust well to both cultures? Explain. What indicators are you using to measure your level of adjustment?
- What feelings do you have regarding the intensity of the programme that you are part of and the way in which you have adjusted to it? *(Positives / Negatives)*

4. CONCLUDING COMMENTS – SUGGESTIONS?

- Do you think that you could have done anything better **prior** to your arrival? Please explain.
- Do you think you could have done anything better **upon** your arrival? Please explain.
- Do you think there are things that the institution could have done better **prior** to your arrival? Please explain.
- Do you think there are things that the institution could have done better **upon** your arrival?
- What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about coming to this institution or other similar institutions to study?

Appendix 3 - Transcript from Focus Group 1

TRANSCRIPT FROM FOCUS GROUP 1 Thursday 16th May 2013

Participants:

R1:

- Origin: Portuguese. Born in Brussels, Belgium. Both parents Portuguese.
- Length of time in Switzerland: Sept 2010 arrival. 3 years.
- Age: 21
- Other places: Only Brussels. Came directly to Switzerland.
- Why Switzerland: Always wanted to do hospitality ... Switzerland has worldwide reputation. Had other options ... stay in Belgium, Holland ... decided to come to Switzerland ... struggle with parents due to differences in fees. Open days allowed him to look at the campus' of the different schools in the organisation, etc. Chose this village also for sports ... ski lifts, environment ... thought in the beginning there wouldn't be many distractions.

R2:

- Origin: Half Singapore / Half Thai. Born in Thailand. Singaporean citizenship but born in Thailand. Mother Thai and Father Singaporean.
- Length of time in Switzerland: In Switzerland for 3 years. On 3.5 years. Direct entry onto BA from HD.
- Age: 24 years old.
- Other places: previously in 8 different countries, moved every 2 years when younger. Indonesia / India / Vietnam / Malaysia / Taiwan / Hong Kong / Thailand / Singapore / Switzerland.
- Why Switzerland: wanted to study Hospitality. Came when he was 20 or 21. Research and application done by R2 ... went to the army prior to Switzerland. Switzerland or Australia were the choices. Switzerland had a better image for hospitality. Narrowed down to Switzerland and then examined different schools. Choose the school specifically because *they said they had a nice gym (giggle from the participants) and good facilities but that might not be the reality (giggle from R4)* ... because he likes sports and to exercise and the other schools didn't have this.

R3:

- Origin: China originally.
- Length of time in Switzerland: 8 months (came directly to HD and then directly to BA)
- Age: 23
- Other places: Canada for 3 years for Diploma in Hospitality. Internship in America for 6 months.
- Why Switzerland: Special arrangement between the school and the Canadian school and could continue the BA here for 1 year. To complete in Canada would have taken 2 years. Faster here ... most attractive reason for coming here.

R4:

- Origin: French. Lives in South Africa.
- Length of time in Switzerland: 8 months. Came directly into HD and then directly into BA.
- Age: 23
- Other places: Madagascar. Early life in France
- Why Switzerland: First and second year in South Africa. Wanted to explore a little bit, saw people traveling and decided it was now or never. Was introduced to the school by a friend who was going to come here (she had an agent ... then they split up after 6 weeks). She told him of the school structure. She told him about Club Med and the sports facilities that were here and this was a big plus for him as well. The idea of the village didn't strike too much as it would be a culture shock coming from South Africa anyway. Just went for it. So far ... was happy to visit here, very happy to leave (**giggles from all**). Are negative points but it will never be 100%. Great experience. Worked longer after his second year in SA than he was required to do ... worked for 1.5 years in Radisson Blue in Jo'burg.

1. Prior to coming to Switzerland:

ME: Who was the key decision maker in terms of your study here?

R1: mother due to financial issues. Had to get OK as he needed financial support.

ME: In terms of choosing you (R4 and R2) had indicated that you interested in hospitality ... R3 was already in a hospitality programme in Canada and R4 had done Diploma in Hospitality ... you had that interest ... was that *your* interest?

R4: Like I've explained, I've travelled quite a bit ... on holiday ... hospitality, hotels, service all interested him. Luckily enough there was a school where I did my first and second year down the road, it was reputable enough so I just went for it. It was mostly practical and convenient and I actually liked it so I thought I'd stick to it. After 4 years I'm still very pleased and wouldn't have studied anything else.

R2: apart from finances ... choosing what to study and where to study, I think I made my own decision. I don't think I had thought of studying anything other than hospitality but closer and closer to the date I had a bit of difficulty choosing if I wanted to go to Australia or Switzerland.

Me: It was always hospitality but where was the deciding point. That's an interesting point for me in relation to the research you did prior to making the decision to come to Switzerland. I mean when you had found out ... OK hospitality is what I want to do, now here are all my different options on where I want to go ... What kind of research did you do on Switzerland and maybe the school.

R4: Switzerland is like the aura of hospitality if you think about it so first of all the country was already a great choice and then comparing ... it was mostly ... it was a lot about gambling ... like ... choosing the right one without really choosing because I didn't personally come to Switzerland to choose and experience ... it was mostly internet based and just like opinions from diverse people but mostly like luck if it was a good choice but then again I'm sure no matter...

ME: So you had kind of did research on the internet and what people had said ... maybe word of mouth ... we've had quite a few SA students in the past ... did you know people that maybe you talked to or ...

R4: it was mostly the person that helped me ... she organised a dinner with previous students and made sure we got an eye and got to each other and got information to each other so it was like well organised that was the key factor as well compared to other school which may not have done such. So it was well organised on that point.

Me: So you did a lot of that research yourself?

R4: Yes. It was just mostly personal research.

Me: And how about you R3?

R3: Done personal research but I got most of the information from the agent. I did the research and know that it is the biggest hospitality school in Switzerland and also Switzerland is world famous for hospitality. Also like I mentioned before it only takes one year to finish the BA degree so that's the reason I choose Switzerland.

Me: So that was the key attraction point for you was the intensity of the courses. Alright ... you guys (meaning R2 and R1) what kind of research did you do to really decide on the school?

R2: I think the first thing I examined was Google (*giggles from all*) I think everybody basically did that. This was before contacting the agents, because at that time the agents weren't as prominent in Thailand as they are now, especially for this group they have definitely become more active. Other than the schools website, I wanted to hear about what other people's experiences were so I actually found a forum which was talking about the school, there were a lot of people complaining about the school ... about the internet and about the food, so I actually contacted the agent and I talked to them about this ... *is the internet connection really bad, is the food really bad* or what they did was the same thing as R4 was to introduce me to some previous students who were either doing internships in the country or finished their studies. We had a little dinner, we had a lunch, we talked about what school life was like and whether or not it is a good choice to go to this school. So firstly, internet based and after that word of mouth for my research.

Me: Word of mouth I think because a lot of the students we have they go back home and they are contacted by agents to see can they come and speak to potential students ... R1?

R1: I was not really decided until I came to the open days and for me I think it was a good choice because I wanted to see. I didn't do a lot of research by myself and just felt that it was a good choice and when I came here and examined different schools I thought *yea this is good this is right for me* and I had the other option of staying in Belgium or Holland of similar culture and for myself I wanted to go a bit further away.

ME: So were there specifics you were looking for when you were doing this research ... was it purely based on sport for example?

R2: I think first it was the academics, what courses they provide and the length. For example if you do a traditional BA it's usually 4 years, if you do it in Switzerland its 3 years ... not counting the dissertation study. Like in Australia, if I'm not wrong, one of the schools provides a 2.5 year, so the length of the course, the course modules was one thing that I found online and the different pathways you can choose. I think that's pretty much it and the leisure facilities.

Me: Were there specifics R4 that you were looking for?

R4: The 5 months course was a real plus because for us it was a 1 year for a Bachelor so the 5 months was a great advantage and one factor was maybe the campus, the in-house campus, such as the rooms in campus would have

been a good adaptation to the environment and not having to find your own flat or apartment, that was a great plus as well. Everything was right here.

R3: I think the image of the school because I want to know what kind of image I can put on my resume because I'm already in the hospitality industry so why do I go to the famous place to study hospitality and put the school on my resume. Also the biggest reason ... in China ... it might not be the best one but it's the biggest one in Switzerland ... the best one is Lausanne .. EHL.

R2: it's questionable.

ME: I'm not going to comments because I don't know enough about it (giggles). But it does have a good reputation. SO ...**R1 ... the key things you were looking for?**

R1: reputation for me was very important and also I like the structure as well, the first year, going on internship and coming back doing second year and doing an internship, third year and then graduate. For me that was important as well because I thought that obviously they have connections in the country and I could work and I ended up working in Switzerland in my first year. It was good to have work experience in Switzerland.

Me: OK that was kind of an attraction point for you, the kind of sandwich course that's delivered here. So reputation seems to be something that was attractive and looking at some of the academics in terms of the programme that was being delivered. So you did a little bit of research about that. What about looking at actually coming to Switzerland, forget about the academics for a moment what were your thoughts on preparation on coming to Switzerland? What did you know about it? What did you try find out about it?

R2: that it was cold. I think for a lot of students ... I remember in first year I brought a lot of things that I didn't really need because I didn't really know what life would be like living in a colder climate, so I had to bring a lot of things back. In second year I came a little more prepared and third year even more so. So I think the climate was one of the major concerns. Before coming here ...

Me: Yea, so how did you prep yourself to come ... so you packed a BIG CASE

R2: full of warm clothes because I came in September and I checked the weather on the weather calendar to see when winter would come, the temperatures and I knew that I would only get 2 months of warm weather. So for me it was the climate, I was quite used to moving around a lot already so I wasn't very worried about that. Coming to live on the top of a mountain.

ME: And location, coming here is a really interesting one because if you are coming from somewhere like massive cities and you come here its like OMG (shared my first thoughts coming up the mountain)

R2: the first day I got here I remember the clouds came down, there was a lot of fog, so when you got off the train you couldn't even see the epicerie ... you didn't even know if the school was on the left or the right, you just had to follow the large group of students rolling their bags ... thinking they must be going where I'm going and hopefully not LAS or the Japanese High School.

Me: So big things for you were looking at the weather and the location of where you were going ... **R1?**

R1: for me Switzerland was kind of a mystery, I knew about the people, I knew about the banking sector, etc ... watches and some other things but I really didn't know about it and I didn't do research about it ... I was going to the unknown and that was fine with me.

Me: But was that exciting to you that you were going to the unknown?

R1: yes, for me, with my friends, sometimes I get the feeling that you are trapped in your city, you're in your comfort zone, for me, now I realise ... of course it was exciting but moving out was a plus for me because when I went back I knew I'd made the right decision ... I was more open minded. That was really the intention to become more culturally competent ... be able to say ... pack your bags in 15 minutes and go ... don't think about nothing, just go and then you arrive here. The first thing that struck me here was, I lived in a big city, Brussels, it felt like there was no way to escape ... just one way here on the train ... *is this the only option ... the train ... to get out of here ...* and that I thought was scary ... I thought *my God, how am I going to do this?*

ME: And you've always been in this campus – never the others?

R1: yes

ME: So not too much research on Switzerland in terms of where you were going?

R1: No

R4: the most exciting part was ... this sounds childish ... the snow was really attracting ... I grew up in Madagascar where its hot all the time. The snow was a big plus. Being on top of a mountain ... I knew it wasn't going to be for too long so whether I would get sick of it or not, I wouldn't have time to realise it, I knew it was going to be for a short time experience so the idea of being on top of a mountain in deep Switzerland with snow everywhere was attractive.

ME: And did the reality stay true ... did it stay attractive or did you get fed up with it?

R4: its still beautiful, the view is amazing.

Me: you've just had one winter though?

R4: yes but I liked it. I could see a lot of people complaining but for me it was quite fun ... very childish but a lot of fun.

ME: **But its ok to have fun mixed with the academics. So you knew that before you came and you came prepared for that (the snow)?**

R4: I believed I was ... I bought some thermal t-shirts and long sleeves but it didn't last for very long. My winter was with many layers instead of one thick jacket which I never through of buying. Super layers ... but like I said it wasn't going to last forever so I thought just suffer for now and have fun.

R3: I didn't concern a lot, for me it was the location of the school, on top of the mountain so I'm afraid that maybe I won't get used to the height, maybe my ears wouldn't feel comfortable. But before I began to live by myself I was 19 years old, so I'm quite independent and wasn't afraid of everything new here. I didn't concern a lot.

ME: **So the idea of coming somewhere with a different language didn't worry you, you've moved before and lived in different locations. Weather and location seemed to have been the main issues.**

R1: This village is known for the fresh air and I knew that. As well for sport, if you train in high altitude and when you go back down it is better. That was interesting.

ME: **So prior to your arrival, did you think about the schooling you had just come through (secondary) ... in your case (R4 and R3) its going to be a bit different as you had done higher diploma somewhere else but for you two (R2 and R1) you came to first year did you think about how the academic world might be different or did you look at what the academic culture might be like here before you came?**

R2: I think it was very difficult to see what the academic culture was like, like what I said earlier, you could see the structure of the programme and have some sort of an idea. One thing that R1 said earlier, I agree with is the 6 or 5 months study and one internship ... back and forth for 2 years was very attractive because I had already been out of school for 2.5 years. So coming back, I was used to work. Coming back here I didn't want to go to a school where I had to study for a full year for 4 years, so being able to study and apply the knowledge into work and having that work be part of the curriculum was very attractive for me.

ME: **But what about ... you had a lunch with previous students, did you ask them any specifics about what were the lecture like, what kind of expectations did they have of you?**

R2: I asked them if it was tough and what they told me was that if you speak English, its fine. And I said ... oh OK. I didn't really, honestly most of our topics weren't on academics ... which classes were good or which were bad ... it was more ... how's the gym, how's the food, is there anything to do, if there's bars, how many bars, good food ... not much about academics. The only time they talked about it was when they did the presentation with the agents where they talked through the PowerPoint with the agent. That was the only time they focused on the academics. When it was up to me and just the students talking we didn't talk academics.

R1: well I didn't research about the programmes, I don't know if its laziness or bravery. I didn't really look at the programmes. The English was important because I studied my whole life in French but towards the end I went to a European school where there were different section ... I was in the French section but there was a Portuguese, Swedish section etc. so I knew that the mix of cultures wouldn't be a problem. I was used to dealing with people ... well Europeans. I didn't know to be honest there would be such an Asian community here ... I didn't know about this. It's not something that frightened me or anything like that. Yes, English, the fact ... I had some lessons in English but I felt that I need to work on this language to make sure I can pass etc.

ME: **So the language of instruction was something that you highlighted. So you two guys (R3 and R4) coming from previous schools, you were used to whatever method of delivery in your higher diploma did you think about how that might differ prior to coming here?**

R3: totally different I can say. When I was in Canada, I think the school is very flexible ... I only had 2 – 4 hours class per day from Monday to Thursday so I had a lot of time every day and here it is like the high school in China here ... wake up early and have class from Monday to Friday. I did come here for the hospitality class as they are much better than I had before but for the general classes like Economics, Communications, Computer ... I think it is not really good.

ME: **So now you notice there is a difference in your previous years but when you were thinking about coming here did you think about questioning what was the expectation from the academic side?**

R3: expected? maybe more professional in hospitality industry like hotels but for some classes I think what I learned before was much better than here **(not sure the question was really understood here)**

ME: **So content wise what you are getting now is not what you would have liked to have got?**

R3: yea.

ME: **We might come back to that in a little while in relation to what you expected and what you actually got and what some of the differences might have been. R4 ... what about you?**

R4: no, like I said staying in school was going to be very different for me because my first and second year ... traveling to school, coming home, done. Not like here we're very close, we get to be very good friends and we grow within a community together because most of us here are foreigners and the actual school as in sitting in class is

very different ... like high school it was class of thirty ... you do this, you do that ... here is much more open, group works. What you also do, you don't do 5 months and 6 months practical you do 2.5 months where you study those modules where you would then apply on practical's for 2.5 months ... you do housekeeping then you do 2.5 months of housekeeping in a hotel and then for front office, accounting, kitchen there was 6 little 2.5 month periods of internships which I did not like ... so that was very different. But overall, a school is a school is a school and we hear, we sit down, we learn we apply it on the tests so it was much better here but still it was easily adaptable.

ME: OK so some of these issues I hope to come back to.

2. Arrival in Switzerland:

ME: Lets move on to thinking about when you actually got here. We've examined prior to your arrival ... what kind of things you were aware of, what kind of things you tried to research before you got here ... how you packed your cases etc. When you got here ... what words would you used to describe how you felt when you arrived here for the first time?

R2: Expensive, I remember the moment I had the pick up for the school, they picked me up, I went to buy a coke first at the airport and it was CHF4, I didn't think much of it but then after I bought it and I had a very long bus ride I was calculating how much it would be in my home currency and it was frightening. I don't think I'd been anywhere where it had been that expensive, even travelling around Europe compared to back here in Switzerland, its horrible and expensive.

ME: Good word. Any other ones?

R2: say the first week here?... I would say international ... because I have travelled quite a bit but I've met people who's parents are from Italy ... mother's from China but they were born in Korea and they can speak four different languages and it made me feel like the world is a lot smaller than I thought it was because back in high school, I was maybe one of the few people who has actually got the chance to travel around but here everyone you meet has a story. Its pretty normal for everybody here, like if you meet somebody who ... I've met Europeans who can speak

Mandarin, I've met Asian people who can speak fluent French **ME (interrupted 😞) told my story about student who could speak Gaelic**

R2: yes, so even if they have a certain country flag they might be able to speak 3 or 4 different languages. Very, very international this school.

ME: R1 ... a couple of words that describe your first arrival in Switzerland?

R1: like I said, I felt like ... OK now I'm trapped and there's no going back but I thought nice view, nice environment and like when you first come you're like WOW this is incredible, the mountains, the view. Some things that amazed me in the first weeks was that there was a huge Portuguese community here in the school and the village that I didn't know about. When I found out there was Portuguese beer, Portuguese shop, Portuguese working here in the school, everywhere (**others ... technicians, housekeepers, Director of Operations now**) so that was for me very interesting, the food as well ... the fact that it was so early ... 1730 and close at 1900 ... I used to eat at about 2030 – 2100, so for me it was ... and as well expensive. Coming from Euro, for me I just, I didn't want to make a calculation so I just said 1Euro is 1CHF but still like that it was expensive.

ME: OK ... R4?

R4: well to mention as well, very expensive, so expensive that it ruins entertainment. Like to go and have dinner, to know you are going to have to spend so much, you don't enjoy the meal as much as if it would be cheaper because you would wonder ... maybe another bottle of wine will be a bad idea not for irresponsible ideas but for the actual price of it. So, price of everything was very very frightening. Apart from that, international too ... because in my high school I went to a high school that was very different from all the high schools in South Africa, not knowing ... of course first I was in the French system and then I went to the English system and I didn't know what I was getting myself into ... there were only actually 4 white people in the school ... a school of 600 black people so I was ... **(40:45mins)** so I felt very different and then I come here and everyone has been to millions of countries and speak 5 languages so I came here with my two languages thinking ... so international and expensive.

ME: You arrived here with two appropriate languages, French, so you could integrate externally if you choose to do that and English as the academic language

R4: both I know rather well but I wouldn't mind having more

R2: you're just missing Mandarin (Giggles from everyone)

ME: But you can use your opportunities here to start learning Mandarin.

R4: well I'm actually going to Beijing to learn Chinese ...

ME: Are you going to work?

R4: yes ... in the Grand Hyatt

ME / R2 ... excellent, congratulations.

R4: it's actually something I wanted to do, not ever since I've been here but learning a language ... if someone speaks your language you feel very surprised and I remember last term there was a white person that spoke Chinese and I thought I wouldn't mind being that person.

ME: **So being here has maybe sparked an interest in learning something else.**

R4: yes, absolutely

ME: **R3**

R3: the first time I came here, the first time I saw the timetable I was so nervous, I need to handle 13 or 14 different classes, different subjects. I was very very nervous, I didn't know if I'd be able to handle all those classes ... all the subjects.

ME: **What about though when you first arrived in Switzerland? Forget about the academics for a minute.**

R3: I found the pick-up person so cold, he let me stay at the airport for 3 hours. Because I came here one day earlier than the check-in day.

ME: **So your first thought was unwelcoming?**

R3: yea.

ME: **DID YOU ARRIVE ON YOUR OWN?**

R3: yea

ME: **Did you come on your own R4 or did you come with others?**

R4: yes, yes, yes ...

ME: **Yes what ... on your own?**

R4: I arrived in Switzerland on my own. No one else

R2: Ah ... come on ...

R4: I came here with an ex-girlfriend but she came here one year prior to me. So, she was like the person that helped me get along but it didn't go according to plan. But at first I arrived here alone. But she studied here as well.

ME: **She studied here as well ... i don't need to know the details but were you together for example for ...**

R4: prior to, we came together but her personal adaptation to the place didn't go according to what she expected.

ME: **So when ... I don't know how to ask this without sounding to nosey ...**

R2: did you come because of her?

ME: **No ... but you can ask that if you want but I'm just looking at support networks for example, you come with someone you feel a little more ... ah, I have a crutch to lean on ... do you know what I mean? So in that situation R4, your ex-girlfriend as it is now, were you together for how long ... maybe a month?**

R4: we were together for two years and she was South African so I was mostly that person that she could rely on because I spoke French ... I was one of the main reasons that her parents let her come here, I was able to support

ME: **So while the two of you were here together, approximately how long were you together for?**

R4: she left after 6 weeks.

ME: **OK that's all I need to know from that conversation ☺ we don't need to put the rest on video ☺ R1 ... you came on your own?**

R1: yes

ME: **R2 ... did you come on your own?**

R2: yes.

ME: **OK ... was that exciting to you or was that frightening?**

R2: I could have had a choice of coming with ... I flew here from Thailand, I could have come with a whole Thai group but chose not to because I didn't really want to blend in with that group and be fixed to one specific group.

ME: **But was that group coming to here also?**

R2: yes they all came to this campus. I got to know them here but I knew them beforehand but I didn't change my flight to be on the same flight as them.

ME: **So others did come with you. what about you (R3)**

SHOU: because my father booked the wrong flight so I came here one day earlier so I stayed at the central residence.

ME: **But did other students come from that school?**

R3: I didn't know anyone else. But I know a lot of people come from China at the same time. We had online communities where we talked with each other, we can go together but I chose not ... I just kept the flight that my father booked for me.

ME: **So there was a community of other Chinese students that were coming that you knew were coming for September of last year, and did you know them prior or not?**

R3: no.

ME: **So we've had our words to describe your first thoughts on Switzerland, what did you think were going to be some of the challenges in terms of living in the village?**

R1: well for me it was the fact that I had a roommate. That was tough for me to think about this idea ... living with a man in the same room. Am ... but he ended up alright but for me it was ... I was not used to being in the school ... getting out of your room and into the class room ... for me it was a bit scary as well. You are constantly at school all the time, you're not at home ...

ME: So more challenges with you came with the actual environment that we have here, not so much the local village but just the accommodation in the school?

R1: yea

ME: What about others ... any challenges of living in the village?

R2: biggest challenge for me was the language, if you talk about 3 years ago, a lot of people in the village were not willing to speak English for example the epeicerie, 3 years ago they didn't really speak English that much, but now they are used to all these students that can't speak French and I think at Coop as well, they have staff that can speak a bit of English, at Denner, the Tourism Office, at the bakery ... all of them speak a little English now compared to 3 years ago. But the biggest challenge was definitely French, which is why I chose to study French and not German, to help me to adapt to a place that didn't have English at that time as such a prominent language.

ME: R4 ... any specific for you?

R4: with me, adapting and like I said, I knew it was going to be a short term so ... suck-it-up for now ... its going to be over soon.

ME: That's a perspective that you can take ... look to the future and see how long it's going to last and then you say ... how do I get there.

R3: I think for me, this place is very inconvenient, it is very hard to get to the cities, to shop, to eat ... I think I'm totally separate from the real world.

ME: So the village is a like a little bubble that's not part of the real world ☺ ok.

R1: I have a friend that says we live in the clouds here, stuck in it for weeks, with the fog etc ...

R2: its like a snow globe.

ME: OK so looking at language and location were some of the challenges you might face from just living in a place like here. what about now?

R2: I actually prefer it, if I had to go back and change location, I wouldn't. when I visit my friends in the closest city, whether its either of the other two campuses of the organisation, I actually prefer this village a bit more. More to living in the city because 1. there is less distraction ... I know I'd be very poor if I I studies in the campus in the city and 2. Its more beautiful ... compared to the city, this place is just amazing. I have friends who come to visit and stay at my place and in the morning, I just find them looking at the view. You can tell the difference in 1st, 2nd and 3rd years ... 1st years are always taking out their phones taking pictures of the views like outside when they are eating in Market Place and we're kinda used to it already, there are still moments that take my breath away literally, some days it can be really beautiful up here but down in the city its not the same. If you're in Switzerland you may as well live in the mountains.

ME: That's one way of looking at it ... yea it is a different experience. so how about you R1 ... after 3 years?

R1: yea, you get used to it but sometimes you just force yourself to say ... look, this is beautiful. I got used to it of course, I think ah that's what I'm a bit scared of, when you leave, it's probably then that you will miss the view and miss these moments. But I constantly remind myself that I'm in a great environment, the view etc.

ME: Do you find you have to constantly remind yourself, are there times here that you would describe as frustrating ... and you say ... no ... I have to remind myself that this is beautiful?

R1: possibly yes. I do it quite often. I think there is a danger of just getting used to the view and I don't like getting used to things. For me I have to look at the view with a different eye and it gives you so much you can think about, about why you are in such a place. It makes you think a lot and that's good I think.

ME: So after three years you think you are ... or would you describe yourself as settled or comfortable in this environment ...

R2: in comparison to when we were here first, for me yes.

ME: You think you are adapted to what is here e.g. local culture ...

R2: yes, we know what time the epeicerie is closed, we know what time Coop is open, which restaurants are open on which days and things like that. I'm quite used to life here.

ME: OK, you give examples and then you laugh but these points can all lead to frustrations for people. when you come from somewhere where things are open 24/7, simple things like that are frustrating points until you get used to it. So you think you have adapted, do you think you have adapted well?

R2: I think I have adapted over time. Because you live here for 6 months and then you go work, for me I went back to a large city ... Bangkok, when I went back there was traffic and it was polluted, even though every thing is open all the time, I got sick of that life and when I came back here I got sick of this life ... the grass is always greener on the other side ... when your in a big city you miss here where everything is calm and quite and when you're here

you wish everything was open and wish you were in a big city. So, I have adapted but I see the benefits and negatives of living in both areas. It has given me a better perspective.

ME: So you think maybe, living somewhere like this has helped you to become more tolerant?

R2: yes.

ME: So what about you in your 8 months here (R4) do you think you have adapted to Swiss culture?

R4: actually I think we've no choice, having the kitchen close at 1000 for me was ... like a midnight snack is a usual thing so ... going to Davinda or the Station at 1030 and they don't even sell you a burger, they eventually had hotdogs at Davinda, they expect you to know this and that is kind of frustrating ... so see that they have 3 hour lunch breaks ... you see in South Africa the workforce is more prominent because they need the jobs and all that and here I feeling comfortable now that I've got into it, its obviously a personal point of view and it's the way they are over here and I can't change everything but adapting at first was quite a struggle but its almost over now and if by now I haven't left or broken into a shop in the middle of the night to get some food ... its fine.

ME: and what about you (R3) do you think you have ...

R3: yea, I think. I didn't struggle, with my lifestyle, I think its OK.

ME: OK, so give me a word that you would used to describe ... when you first experienced some of the academics and the culture that exists here in terms of academics ... think back to when you first arrived.

R2: basic, a lot things I studied at high school were more challenging than first year, especially like the reports and the accounting classes, I found that was very very basic but I like the practical classes such as learning Opera and doing kitchen and service and housekeeping but academic wise I found it to be quite basic.

R1: same for me, I think the lectures in the classroom and the way that the exams are designed as well ... when I knew that it was multiple choice I thought ... OMG this is crazy. I think the good points in the first year is the practical side where you work the first nine weeks in the kitchen, service. That to me was interesting, the first experience in service and kitchen ... that was a good point.

R4: I'd say personal development, like the way ... for example at BA we almost have no classes, so it is up to use to do what we want to do, how we want to do it, obviously it has to be through the curriculum but like ... for first year, they come at 19, used to stay with their parents, they have to be organised ... do their laundry and all that so it is a great way to grow into business life and to grow up ... it's a very nice way.

ME: so were you shocked in any way in which you did your higher diploma 1st and 2nd year and what you experienced here in your higher diploma?

R4: one thing that maybe didn't shock me but was very different was maybe the laptops ... for me we were not allowed to have laptops, you just have your books or if you don't want to do your books, you just stand there ... texting was like ... you don't text, so it was very high school type (in the previous one) ... so here you have students on their laptops, doing other work that they want to do, then missing classes for a certain amount, was something different. But, like the school emphasises a lot on personal development, so if you don't want to come to class its your problem but then don't complain ... its your personal choice, you don't have mum and dad around here so you have no excuse with traffic, you stay one floor down.

ME: and how about you R3 coming from Canada and what we do here?

R3: I think the amount of subjects that we need to learn is a lot but I think it's quite easy, it's not that hard as I thought before. I think I did pretty well, I was very nervous but then I think it's OK, if you can manage your time properly it will be OK.

ME: So the level seemed to be a little bit less than what you anticipated it might be. Was that a positive thought for you or a negative one? Because you could think ... yea I can fly through this or you could think no ... this is not challenging enough.

R2: I think it depends on the class for example ... nah I won't give examples but some classes we've had since first year, to second year, to third year that basically taught us the same thing over and over and over again and I found it very frustrating that I had to do the same exam, the same report and listen to almost the same lectures. There were classes that I felt were too easy that they didn't really benefit me in any way and there were some classes that were a bit more difficult that I found were actually making me learn new things and although it was difficult, it was more rewarding. So some of the easy classes I felt really frustrated that I'd studied them and the difficult classes I actually enjoyed because I was actually learning.

R1: I was happy about this since I knew I was going to do the BA and if the first year is easy then it's a smooth adaptation and as well they (the school) puts a lot of emphasis on just learning outside the classroom ... that was important. You really, I still believe that you can learn a lot outside the class dealing with people from different cultures as well for example, grooming for instance ... might sound like a word but it has a real intention, real purpose ... its important. The last change ... we don't have a uniform anymore etc ... people dress to a certain extent how they want ... the suit etc. I didn't like this at the beginning, why have a uniform, why all be the same with the same uniform.

ME: So lets look now, you are 15 weeks into the BA programme do you think the academic culture has changed from maybe 1 – 3 year to what you are doing now and the expectations that are of you now?

R1: yes

ME: Is that something that has frustrated you or is it something that you saw as challenging or ...

R2: I'm actually very happy, 1 -3 didn't feel like going to college or university and now BA life is ... it's true we get a lot more free time but the classes are more demanding. There's actually a proper structure to most of the lectures. The grading scale is a lot tougher than it was 1 – 3 year. So I'm actually learning for example Strategic Management ... there's a lot of new theories that isn't being repeated over and over again, it's new ideas that we're learning so ... yea, I'm very happy with the BA course so far, it's more demanding but if you manage your time, you have a lot of free time so, I think its better than having students like in 1st year, staying in class 8 – 6 every single day, just forcing them to read in class and do homework ... that's bad. It's not something that I enjoy doing.

R3: I think the higher diploma, everything is structured, like we have a very clear goal, clear purpose but with BA, everything is so random, we don't know how to think, actually everything we need to do by ourselves that is a problem, I feel totally lost actually at the beginning but now I think I am doing OK.

ME: So going from week 1 of the BA programme to week 15 what were some of the things you would say ... ok, I'm lost ... what do I do to get to the stage where I feel comfortable? or have you got to the stage where you feel comfortable?

R3: getting to ...

ME: R4 What about you do you notice a difference coming from higher diploma to BA

R4: BA is mostly about personal discipline, I mean we can still ... it's about wanting to do stuff and realising that you are doing this for yourself and it's not like someone is going to help you get it. The teacher is going to say come to class ... 8 – 6 and then do your reading and then you'll pass, if you don't do your reading no one will know and it will be seen on the results ... so BA is I think well structured, it was nice doing such things in 1 – 3 year to adapt and to realise that this is behind us, time for the big stuff and especially discipline that we then take into the outside life of working.

ME: I want to focus a little more on the last 15 weeks and you have noticed a difference from what it used to be like and the academic culture is different from 1 – 3 year to whats expected in BA and the pressures from the UK university side and what is university level ... so was there a point where you realised that this is going to be challenging for me and what kind of things did you do to try and deal with those challenges that you had identified?

R2: I think the biggest challenge was time management and what R4 said, having the motivation to do things. How did I adapt to them ... I think, I don't have a physical planner but I actually plan for each day if I have a lot of free time, I'll sit down and do some of the reports, making sure I get everything done before hand rather than just waiting for everything to be done at the last minute, like I did from 1 – 3 year. So I think, how would you motivate yourself ... I think for me securing a job before hand, knowing that I have to graduate, just doing the work before hand just to make sure I don't get too much pressure on me.

R1: I would say, I still haven't mastered my time perfectly or I still haven't ... I think for me the importance was as well how the school looks at you at BA, you have more consideration ... you are really treated more as an adult, I thought 1 – 3 year they expect you to do mistakes but at BA I feel they really treat you as an adult as a possible future GM etc. I used, for me the main issues is when issues arise for me I like to feel like I have support so I am really happy that I have along these years built a kind of a network in the staff or in the people that can really help me and can make things a bit easy for me in a way, that was for me a big thing, is creating people that just, not only because I'm Portuguese or because I speak French but being able to create a connection with people that have the ability to really help.

ME: Can I maybe just move on to that, in terms of support, what kind of support networks did you try and build for yourself, you're here, you realise 3rd year to BA is a little bit different, there are things that are a little bit challenging, what kind of support do you think you had?

R3: I think I got support from the teachers here, if I feel I don't know what I should do, I just try to meet with the teacher to get advice from them and I also ask the previous students to know what exactly I need to do for the BA courses.

ME: Previous students?

R3: yea.

ME: What about the networks in terms of other students that exist here ... who do you think would be primary group of friends ... are they people of similar cultures or are they very mixed ... for example R1, you speak Portuguese and French and you could have an external group of friends that don't exist within the school ... so if you think of your networks of friends, who do they consist of?

R3: for the academic support?

ME: No for your own personal, that can maybe help support your through challenging times ... you know there is a lot expected of you in terms of the academics and yes, if you can go to the lecturers as one form of support that's a plus point but you spend a lot of time away from the lecturers ... who are your other support networks here?

R4: with being stuck in here with all of us together, builds strong relationships, so when you see someone studying and its your friend so you know that, I not going to say that its just one friend, he's studying so you say ... I'm not going to go out, it's a good thing that he's studying, its like a friendship support of each other, know that the next day there's a report to be handed in, its good to have friends around to remind you of what's going on because there are no parents at night, the teachers are gone so you have to be able to support the way to do the work and how you do the work and stuff like that ... so building strong relationships as friendships is something helpful in adapting to the location and as well as adapting into the work required. And try not to be seen as the bad influence by supporting by being supported.

R1: I want to mention one thing ... it's kind of as well the mentality of some of the students that ... oh I have to have as many friends as possible, its like this idea of networking, just to ... I tap you on the back, you tap me on the back ... let's be friends forever, but I think with the 3 years here you develop kind of a resistance because the time is so difficult to build very strong relations actually that will go beyond this environment ... its not that easy as it seems so really finding good friends that will last is a gift, its not ah ... I have a lot of people I know and people that I like but they are not necessarily my friends.

ME: So acquaintances as opposed to real friends.

R1: absolutely, there are people who are in this school who are of the mentality that I want to be friends with everybody etc ... I think that this 18 weeks is so short in a way to build strong strong ... I don't mean just with a girlfriend but even with a friend, you kind of have this shield, you kind of select very carefully who you want to go beyond that ...

ME: But you've been in the situation where you've come in 1st year ... have your friends in the same first year come through to the same second year, come through to the same third year, come through to BA?

R1: no it's not the same.

ME: Its not the same, its different groups that you've come through with? how about you R2?

R2: some do and some don't.

ME: So if you think of a time when you've been really frustrated, whether it's the expectation of in-house in terms of the lecturers or if it is something that is happening outside, what do you do? Do you have people here that you could sit down and discuss with or do you call home for example or have you made friends in first year that, maybe they left in higher diploma but is in the locality somewhere that you could go off in a train to visit ... who are the crutches here that can help you get through some of these times of frustration?

R4: well discipline being very tight in the school, doesn't allow for much anger to be procrastinating to someone else so the fact you can't really get into an argument ... because with an argument ... these people ... you have, well I'm friends with that one ... so if there's an argument then I'm supporting him so arguments can't be taken very far, makes us still be together and not always together like you can be friends with everyone but you can't really rely on them so you must realise at the end of the day you're not alone but you came here alone and you'll probably leave here alone so yes they are here in the good times but will they be here in the bad times ... that's something up to you and the way you (1:13:48)

ME: So how do you deal with that kind of thing ... I mean, you've used the term which I think is appropriate ... suck-it- up ... I've only got 3 weeks left, is that the way in which you deal with things that are ... driving you mad, you don't want to be here any more ... you sit back and say ... I've only got 3 more weeks?

R4: yea.

ME: Do others have ways of venting that allows you to cope with ... ok I have to concentrate, I have to perform in 18 weeks and I am dealing with ... whether it is simple things ... but it's the little things that cause the bigger frustrations ... so what it is that you do to try and cope with the little things that cause frustrations from an academic view point or a Swiss view point? Do you say for example, ah ... I'm going for a beer?

R1: yes that's one way, or playing pool or hitting the bag, I used to do Thai boxing so for me ... getting everything out. Because I think that is the danger of accumulating frustration and then there comes a time when you are going to explode and there is no reason and you are going to be in the wrong ... so I think it is important, yes sports for me was an out for me.

ME: So sports is an out for you ... did that make you feel fresh afterwards and release the tensions. R4, you're a gym user ... is that where you go to let off steam?

R4: yes, releasing and getting the feeling that it's going to be OK, things will move on and then think its probably stupid gossip and it will move on and just don't let it get into you and it will be OK eventually. And then again, it also depends on personality ... because you can be a strong person that thinks it's going to be OK but then I've seen a few people complain saying ... it's not OK, I don't like this ... and the more you think about it, this negativity

coming towards you and I think it's the way you take it, the way you adapt yourself and understand what's happening.

ME: OK, so you are kind of becoming aware of yourself and how you try to control situations. ok ... so if you were to describe to me for example ... my way of coping is ... what would you say?

R2: my way of coping is ... taking it a step at a time, and when it's too much go to the gym.

R1: my way of coping is ... for me to say ... to accept that you are vulnerable, it's OK to be vulnerable and it's OK to ... it's not because you've been hurt once or a friend has let you down, you should accept that you are vulnerable. I was fortunate because I have people here who I know will go beyond this time here who are real friends who is always supporting me when I need it.

ME: And are these people student?

R1: some are students, some are staff, some are ... yes ...

ME: so you would see them as your primary group that you feel are closest to you where you can vent to should you need to?

R1: I mean with the staff it is a bit different because there are some limits with the interaction between the staff and students but for me its important.

ME: so your way of coping is R4?

R4: like I said ... suck-it-up. It'll be OK. I mean if start being a brat, this is your education, it's going to get worse from here, if you have problems already, I mean ... if you are complaining already then you are going to have a tough one. So realise that this is still the beginning, it is still easier compared to what's ahead will be like.

ME: so are you ... what your actually trying to do and correct me if I'm wrong, you're looking at a negative and try to turn it into a positive so that you can benefit?

R4: whatever negativity you have you caused it, I'm not saying that if it crashes then it's your fault, its like, if its happening it's because you've probably caused it or indirectly caused it so, you can only blame it on yourself

ME: internal locus of control ... everything that happens you seem to question yourself first? is that you?

R4: if it's happening you said this, do that ... what goes around comes around.

ME: very interesting ... and you R3?

R3: I would call my friends back home, and talk to them and it makes me feel much better and also I will tell myself that tomorrow will be a new day so everything will be fine.

ME: I'm concerned that I've over run on time ... let me just look at the comment where you said you've already adjusted ... why do you think you have adjusted?

R2: I feel comfortable

ME: you feel comfortable with everything, academics and Switzerland?

R2: in comparison to first year, definitely.

R1: I don't know, I think I'm fairly comfortable, at least I have the chance if I want to come back here and people will have me so I have the ability to come back to the village whenever I want.

ME: so you have generated little networks of people that you feel are there? OK.

R4: because of the factor of building friendships and having fun and saying what you want to say and how you say it ... if you have then you've got friends so ... the adaptation of friendships and building relations was a good factor.

ME: and do you feel you've reached that stage where you have managed to ...

R4: well I'd like to believe (**giggles from all**) well, obviously there are some people and everyone has different personality and the way they play the game is different. There are people you can rely on ... not for every thing but for certain things you can't but yes there are something's you can say, yes I can trust them for this.

ME: and you R3 ... do you think you have adjusted in the 8 months?

R3: yea I think so

ME: and what is your way of determining ... this is why I think I have adjusted ...

R3: I think it is self-motivation ... I tell myself this is the way it should be and I will always face new things in the future so its what I should do.

ME: OK so you are trying to think positively and taking the best out of your experiences.

ME: Last few things I want to look at ... if you now, and hindsight is a wonderful thing, do you think there is anything you would have done differently in terms of researching prior to coming here?

R4: save more money.

ME: So you would look at things like the expense of where I'm going to live ... so if you were going to live in another country for example one of the things that you might consider is the cost of living?

R4: yes.

ME: OK ... what would you do R2?

R2: I don't think I would do anything different, I think ... no? I think with the cost of living thing, I'd still come to Switzerland only it might be a different school but the cost of living would be the same.

R1: same as what I've done, you don't need to ... you can make all the little arrangements that you want, in the end you are still going to have the initial shock that you have ... the pain period if you want, that you have to go through yourself or with some support or whatever ... I don't think it is good to try and make everything much easier for yourself, you have to go through that period.

ME: **Interesting point, you think that regardless of what you do prior to coming you are going to still feel that shock.**

R3: I think I would do more research about the academic system because I didn't know that I had to wait half a year for the dissertation result, that's what I didn't know.

ME: **AH ... because one of the things that you wanted was the intensity of the programme and now you've found out that you have to wait another 6 months.**

Guys, I'm not finished but I have a few more questions that I'd like to ask you but I want you to go for dinner. can I email these questions to you ... there's only a couple more that I haven't covered so far. i really appreciate you spending 1.5 hours with me. I'll put the questions in an email soon.

Appendix 4 - Transcript from Focus Group 2

TRANSCRIPT FROM FOCUS GROUP 2 Monday 20th May 2013

Participants:

R5:

- Origin: Portugal
- Length of time in Switzerland: 4 months
- Age: 22
- Other places: 2 – South Africa and Portugal. I was 7 when moved to SA.
- Why Switzerland: Parents decided where I was going to study ... also because of the reputation and where I studied formerly in SA there was a link to this school. My dad allowed for this to happen. I came when I was 22. My dad had decided already when I was 18.

R6:

- Origin: Hungary
- Length of time in Switzerland: Since 2010.
- Age: 22
- Other places: Prior to 2010 I never lived in another country. 4 semesters purely in Switzerland plus one internship in Geneva. I lived in Paris also in the meantime
- Why Switzerland: partly because the education and hotel schools here are good but why hotel schools in another questions. I had some friends in Hungary that actually knew about the school itself and also it is a good level of education I think and also the secondary benefits ... its an international environment, possibility to travel to meet new people and work in different countries and all that, that is connected to make it Switzerland and hospitality.

R7:

- Origin: Ukraine
- Length of time in Switzerland: 4 semesters
- Age: 21
- Other places: Britain but in between, lived in Spain and Ukraine
- Why Switzerland: reputation and the standards. When I moved out of home I was 16 but when I came to Switzerland I was 17.

R8:

- Origin: Hungary
- Length of time in Switzerland: Since 2009 – 4 semesters.
- Age:
- Other places: I haven't lived abroad before I came to Switzerland. I came here when I was 19. But since coming here, I have also spent some time abroad in Germany and also in Belgium.
- Why Switzerland: Reputation and basically I wanted to study abroad in a very international environment.

R9:

- Origin: Bulgaria
- Length of time in Switzerland: 10 months
- Age: 24
- Other places: Germany for 3 years and Bulgaria until he was 20
- Why Switzerland: the name the name that the country has in hospitality ... that's the main reason and I was 23 when I came here.

1. Prior to coming to Switzerland:

ME: So a lot of you examined the reputation of studying in Switzerland as a pointer in the fact that you are here in the first place. So, once you or the key decision-maker had decided Switzerland, what kind of research did you do prior to your arrival?

R9: well, I can say that through my work in Germany, I new Germans were going to Switzerland because it is strong in hospitality and is a very very high level and this school was basically recommended to me through alumni from a long time ago who used to study here and he basically told me about the reputation, that's its very highly seen and its going to help me throughout my career to have this diploma here. The research was basically from the people that I met in Germany who told me about Switzerland and that it is very high level in hospitality and this is how I connected ... hospitality is very high level, the school must also be very good and the education must be very high.

R8: well, I also had someone that I knew that was already coming here and basically I know the school from her but also we have examined reputation of schools ... a list of school ranking within the hospitality industry and this was one of the top 5 ones. Most of the schools were located in Switzerland in the top 10, so we decided that Switzerland has a very good reputation and this school ... well, they were very pushy and had very good marketing. They also came the education fairs in Hungary. And in the international school they had the best marketing I would say.

R7: I was looking at the universities in Canada firstly and I was even visiting some of the universities in Britain because I was doing my foundation there for journalism at that time and when I changed to tourism it was Switzerland as the first choice and I also examined the ranking of the universities.

R5: for me, my dad saw the advert in the newspaper and he called up and we attended more than one seminar, so that my dad could know everything.

ME: but your school (R5) had a link anyway, was there any information available that way?

R5: not really, we were just told that there was the link and they gave us one or two brochures and the contact but further than that it was just us and we attended the seminars.

R6: I remember comparing the ranking on the universities but I remember maybe being biased a little bit because of this friend that I knew from this school and the stories about how it would be and maybe those stories didn't point out the most important educational factors about the university ... so looking back, I realise that marketing wasn't bad for sure but maybe I should have done a bit deeper comparison of the schools that are available in Switzerland and ... I don't know what the choice would have been but I should have also examined what other options there were and not only inside the group but the other schools around.

R8: you were not critical enough I guess ☺

ME: but if you think back to the age you were at the time, you are making life changing decisions, hindsight is another thing I will come back to near the end to see if you would do things differently, so hold on to those thoughts.

So, I find it interesting that word of mouth for R6, R9, R8 ... what about you R5 (because we have had quite a number of South African students here ... did you meet any?) or R7?

R5: no

R7: no.

ME: so, in relation to the research and deciding on this school, you realise, it's in Switzerland ... what did you know about Switzerland

What did you find out about Switzerland you realise this is going to be for the next three years of my life ... what do I need to know?

14:50

R5: I just bought a travel guide (everyone laughs). So I just read the travel guide, because we know people who live in Switzerland, they just told us what it was like but they lived here many years ago, but I couldn't really depend too much and want told me because it was 30 years ago so ... yea, I just read the travel guide.

ME: so in terms of the travel guides did it just tell you nice places to go?

R5: a little about the history their cuisine the people, that's all.

ME: OK. What about the rest of you? What did you want to know about Switzerland?

R8: well I tried to get in touch with Hungarians living in Switzerland and tried to ask if it was a culture shock for you because the Swiss mentality and the culture is very different from what we have in Hungary like they are organised and sometimes the Hungarians say they are even too organised and it is very hard to adjust at first, so I was talking to people who were living in Switzerland outside of the school, so they were not in an international environment. So I tried talking to them and asking for more contacts and I was also talking to my friend who was attending the school already ... what to expect.

R9: I didn't do any extra research on Switzerland most of it was just what I'd heard. Actually I was interested in how expensive the life was here because everybody said it was very expensive. Really that's about it that I was looking for I thought the cultures would be pretty close to Germany but they are not they are still very very different. So it was not that interesting for me to research is very deeply as I thought it would be similar.

R6: I thought a little bit the same actually before coming because I spent more time in Austria and sometime in Germany so I pretty much thought it would look the same (but I was much younger) ... everything is clean in the mountains and yes it turns out that it's partially true and partly it's not true and I remember also that I looked for specific information from the agent, the Hungarian agent who was recommending the students to this organisation and I asked him for a list of what to do what to prepare what to know what to buy what to pay attention to and actually he had a list, it was maybe makeshift ... I don't know, a list of things to do, a list that he prepared for would-be students. But he didn't give a copy ... he didn't sign it for sure.

ME: So, he was semi-informative?

R6: yes.

R9: I would also like to add to what he is just said I also received some information from the agent and everything was written there about the life in Switzerland and what it would be and this also give me an insight into what to prepare.

ME: And this was from the German office?

R9: Yes.

R7: the thing is many of the agencies are doing this because my age and gave me information also. But for me it was not so much of a culture shock when I came here because I was travelling before a lot and I lived in a couple of countries for a couple of months or for a couple of weeks in Europe and I knew what to expect from Switzerland.

ME: So ... you weren't too worried?

R7: well I was worried but it wasn't (pause) ... I knew what was going to be. I knew what to expect from them.

ME: And what about when you examined this school ... you examined reputation and you spoke to people that had been here before, did you do any extra research in terms of ... for example a link to a UK partner university did you look for information on what kind of education system ... the British education system as opposed to where you came from before?

R9: I personally didn't look for anything like that. Nothing.

R8: well nothing about the UK University but about the study plan of the school, for the BA.

ME: Looking at the course content?

R8: yes, (and agreement indicated by others).

R9: Maybe it was written somewhere but it was not emphasises that this was from a UK partner university from what I remember, and different brochures that I received from various campuses within this organisation.

ME: So you all came in at first year did you?

R9: no, I came in for Higher Diploma.

ME: So at that level you might not hear a lot about the UK partner university anyway.

R7: I remember looking at the list and seeing the UK partner University was quite low but the BA was so far away it might change by then.

ME: What about you R5 did you know it was linked to a UK partner university?

R5: I knew it was linked but I didn't know much about the partner university.

R8: I think it came up at that stage when we had to decide between BA and BBA (this campus or another campus within this organisation) ... because then we had to kind of compare the American and British system. And then we really had to kind of pay attention to what do we really want to study and what do I really want to do so actually we were comparing the two courses.

ME: And that was when you arrived in Switzerland?

R8: well before we had to decide whether we wanted to go to this campus or another one and also afterwards we want to decide if we want to continue to do BA or BBA and that's when I decided to take a look at UK University partner and the American partner University.

2. Arrival in Switzerland:

ME: so let's move forward a little bit to your arrival here some of you indicated that you weren't worried because you had done a little bit of travel before you thought it was the same R9 and you R6 thought it would be similar as well ... so what was your initial feelings when you arrived here?

R5: where am I? Yes you come up the mountain and you keep going up and I was like ... where is this guy taking us, where are we going?

ME: was it a good feeling or not a good feeling?

R5: well it was a good feeling in that we're here and after a 12 hour flight you just want to get to where you are going. It was exciting when we got to the airport it was like ... yes we are on our way.

ME: so, semi excitement through the tiredness. So, what about the rest of you ... first thoughts on arriving in Switzerland or in the village?

R9: The very first day I was actually disappointed in Switzerland itself because I had very high expectations of Switzerland because everybody in Germany said it was better, it was much better and when I came here I expected there to be even more discipline than there is in Germany and I came here and it was difficult for me to find the way to the village because there was not enough information for me because I was used to in Germany there is so much information even if you're blind you're going to find your way and I thought Switzerland would be the same but it was not and for me it was difficult to find the village until I met students who showed me the way. I was hoping for a little bit better weather I even checked the weather for the location and it was supposed to have sunny days and it was raining on the day that I arrived and I thought not again because I was used to that weather in Germany. It was like London weather where I am in Germany always raining always dark and I was hoping for basically better weather. One thing that was very negative for me that I heard was that Swiss don't seem to like foreigners. For example when I asked for directions in Zürich the way they answered me was not very polite when I asked about the trains and everything. Whereas in Germany if you ask people for help they will help you it doesn't matter where you come from.

ME: You speak German R9, and you had your conversations in Zürich in German and you still felt that they were not polite?

R9: yes. It is interesting because even though I speak German they speak Swiss German and they think that I'm German and even that for them is a stranger ... even a German is seen as a foreigner even though they speak the same language.

ME: OK, so, your first impressions are a little negative.

R9: yes

ME: ah ... have your impressions changed?

R9: some of them but some of them have stayed.

ME: what ones stayed?

R9: for me, and what I have experienced, and what my friends told me, the bigger cities are colder and not as friendly and the smaller places like this village it is not like that. Everybody is greeting on the street, which is something that I personally like, even if you don't know the person he always greets you. The nature also changed a little bit because the view is very beautiful here especially when it snows and when it stopped raining ☺

R5: Actually for me I found the people in the cities a lot friendlier than here like for example when I went to the post office here for the first time and I attempted to speak some French and the lady just examined me like I was an alien. I was put off immediately and found that people here just look at you funny whereas if I went to other cities in Switzerland and ask for help even if they can't communicate attempt to try ... you may still get lost but at least it was more of an effort to help. There is more friendliness and they are not so impolite.

ME: The post office is an interesting example as I have experienced something similar also (all laugh).

So, do things like that cause frustration or do you think ... I'm here now for five months and I have to go to the post office. How do you deal with the frustrations that you feel by some of the things that cause negative?

R5: I didn't go back

ME: Did you send someone else for you?

R5: no, I just didn't bother I thought I'm not going to go back to that woman if she's going to speak to me like that. I just felt the day that I needed to send something she had that attitude towards me so I thought I'm not going back there again if she speaks to me like that. Even the people in Coop, you greet them and they ignore you ... I said hello to you and you didn't say anything back to me. And that's weird for me because in Portugal you greet anyone and they greet you back and in South Africa it's a bit different it depends on the place for example in the post office in South Africa it's worse they'll ignore you for two hours and then you have to make a big fuss for them to actually. When you go to Portugal it's different they help you. But here I thought it would be a little bit similar to Portugal, I knew it wouldn't be but I did expect certain things like people would greet you on the street when you walk past. But when I went to the post office and was completely thrown off. I felt like crying I thought maybe I made a mistake.

ME: It just wasn't what you expected. So, any other comments on first impressions?

R6: when my first impressions were of another campus in this organisation.

R8: well I came by car, so we didn't really get lost. Well it was a culture shock the school itself because it was so international and I remember when I first went down to the closest city and when I met locals ... well some of them were very nice and some of them were not and I guess it's the same everywhere but it's when you see something that's negative maybe you tend to generalise more and you think that they treat you like an outsider and they don't want you to stay there. I think I had that impression a lot, in Switzerland they tolerate you to study here but they don't want you to stay afterwards. That was my impression.

ME: So would you describe your first impressions as positive or negative?

R8: when my arrival was positive but after this honeymoon stage I met people who were very unfriendly and I met them in every day life situations and that's when I thought in Switzerland people do live good and they do tolerate that you are here until you finish your study but afterwards they would prefer if you would leave.

ME: That's interesting ... R6?

R6: for me the arrival was ... well for the welcoming of the people I'm not so sure actually if a village like this or even the closest city is ready to welcome you know, 1500 people turnover pre year mostly coming from Asian countries, I'm not sure that a little village like this is ready to welcome an institution like this one, the only thing is it's bizarre that the image of the village is our school itself, the rest all fits together.

Others interject here to say, the three schools ... (two other international schools are in the village)

R6: For the arrival in the other campus it was a complete flow experience but also thanks to the physical evidence provided by the marketing department, which was another campus in this organisation and the mountain and everything, which is incredible. And even throughout the year, I was satisfied, I remember saying I could not be in a better place but that has changed over the years however. It was definitely a flow experience

ME: What do you mean by a flow?

R6 and R8: What I mean by a flow is ... an experience that is very positive and ... it's a term in positive psychology its like ... playing for musician or running for a sports man ... it completely involves you and switches off your mind for some time and when you come out it's like coming out of the water it's like shiny positive experience and you think that you belong there and that now you are in the right place and that's what you should be right now.

ME: you say that changed over time?

R6: Yes which is kind of normal for flow yes I mean my satisfaction for the overall experience has changed but that is not connected to a topic I think. But for the arrival in itself I cannot say anything negative. It was a huge change time for adapting to new people and new requirements and doing things fast you never heard of before or adapting to all sorts of new tasks and situations, a new life and living in the building that you don't know, seeing the same people every day and every night, every weekend. Meeting the same 200 or 300 people in the corridor and living just one floor up from where you work in the classroom it is really something that one has to absorb.

ME: yes, a very different kind of environment to get used to.

R8: and also I think upon arrival the Swiss culture is very convenient they're very organised so actually when you come to the school and you have a very positive impression because they are ready with everything they are updated they know where your room is, like there is no ... like I guess if you go to somewhere like Italy or somewhere you would have difficulties upon arrival and maybe that could influence your first impression. But here in Switzerland because everything was so organised and everything was ready and in order, we had a good impression. We thought we were in a good place they are ready for our arrival and that made a very good start.

R5: you see like for me I'm a bit paranoid, I was always emailing for example can I have a room here or can you please make sure there's a safe in my room etc. So when I came here I already was like ... this better be done because I have asked for it and they said they would do it. I remember emailing plenty of times asking for things like can I have a room on this floor away from people ... with a safe blah blah blah. So I was very pedantic in terms of that. But I think my transition was a little bit easier because I came with a friend because I knew this friend from IHS ... so I came with somebody who was from home and when we got here we immediately found people who had studied at IHS from South Africa or even in Zimbabwe. It was like when I got here I felt like I was in South Africa even though I was in Switzerland because you saw people and talked about South Africa etc. So I don't know, I think if I had come alone I think I would still have adapted because I have already moved around but I think it would of taken longer.

ME: So you think that the fact that you have people from another school this helped you?

R5: yes

ME: were the things you wanted ready for you when you arrived?

R5: yes

R7: When I first came here I was one week late because I was ill so I missed the induction weekend and the induction week and stuff so I was pretty lost when I came here. So coming on Saturday afternoon it was pretty empty and I have nobody to ask any questions off, I needed for example some basic stuff like an adapter to charge my phone and it all closed on Saturday and Sunday so the first weekend for me was like where am I? So that was not a good impression but it changed of course

ME: So moving on can you tell me what words you would use to describe the academic culture of this school? So what were your thoughts on the programmes if you think of your first weeks in class? Be as honest as you can as this is all confidential. Was it different from what you have come from was it what you expected?

R5: I was extremely anxious because I came here from another campus, which is very different from this school. I was very worried I was like ... I had fear. I didn't know what to expect, I knew it was a different level but I didn't think there was such ...

ME: So you are talking about coming directly into the BA.

R5: yes, so for the first week I thought oh my gosh what did I get myself into. Initially it threw me off a little I didn't know where I was standing.

ME: Did the anxiety stay with you for long?

R5: yes, because everything just came at once boom boom boom boom this report that report, deadlines were so close it's not like in South Africa where you do all your reports at the end, you've got time, or your exam is in three months so you just procrastinate more and here it's like two weeks. Like in South Africa you didn't have journal, you didn't have access to all these different kind of things. You hear everyone talk about Emerald and I'm like ... what the hell is Emerald? I didn't know all this stuff. We didn't have things like Moodle ... you print your assignment, you bind it and you hand it in, so even that made me more nervous because now I had to figure out how to use Moodle and all these other things as well.

ME: I'm going to come back to talk about BA stuff with the rest of you also but I want you to think about when you came into first year first. Then maybe you can think of the differences between 1st to 3rd year and then the change that you made coming into BA in terms of the academics.

R9: For me for example, the third year probably felt like the first year for them. The first shock that I had was the language because I never had to speak that much or listen to that much English in my entire life. Basically, I used almost a month before I start to understand the lectures that we had ... I listened and I understood the single words but I was losing it along the way ... I don't know how to explain. I just couldn't receive the whole information. The other thing was the writing of academic reports, I never had to do it, I didn't know how to do it. This is one of the first things that I went to ask ... how should I do this report. I didn't even know how to reference to be honest.

ME: Who did you ask?

R9: The programme leader. She said that if we needed any help to come to her so I went to her first. She gave me a list that I still use to help with writing my reports. That was my first shock. And then to the knowledge, I didn't know what to expect in the beginning. I read what the programme was going to be and then I waited to see what was going to happen. I was going to wait to see what knowledge I was going to get.

ME: One day at a time ☺ And this was for the Higher Diploma.

39:34

R7: As I said, I missed all the first explanations and for me it was like ... I didn't know what Moodle is and stuff and they were doing something from Moodle and I didn't know who to ask firstly but then I don't know ... it came with the time. They didn't provide this explanation for the people who are late. So probably there should be something done for those that are late.

ME: so, the induction sessions, there should be catch up sessions for those that don't make it in the first week?

R7: yes

ME: so, how long did it take you, do you think, to get to a stage where you think you felt ... now I think I have grasped everything I need to know.

R7: I think it was quite long ... about a month or so.

ME: which is quite a long time when you think about the amount of time you have ... and I'm not saying it took you a long time to adapt, but that's a long time when you think about the 18 weeks that you have to get to grips with everything and still be able to perform with the reports and assignments and different things.

R7: well, actually it was only one report in first year, all the others were exams, so it was easier.

ME: you guys? Other words you would use to describe the academic at first?

R8: I was also lost because of the language. I mean, I spoke English before but to learn everything and to read everything in English, like I understood everything that was being said in the lesson, but they ... the teachers seemed to have very very high expectations, so I was scared a bit. But I had friends in second and third year and they said that it will not be that hard, then we will help you. Actually, they explained everything to me and I was very lucky and I only got confident after the mid terms when I got to see what is being asked of me and what are the standards. And when I saw that I meet those standards, then I was confident.

R6: The first evaluation for me was also a milestone, evaluating my performance. Of course at the beginning there were some normal problems, it was hard to adapt to English, 24 hours a day. I never had a problem with English but reading everything and saying everything, at first it was a shock and there was fear at the unknown systems, the online system that we also didn't use in Hungary, for example, realising that the major communication was by email here, not by personal contact ... it was surprising also. Yea, I remember some fear, which I think is quite normal, about whether I'd be able to perform as well as I was in high school in Hungary in a new international environment where there would be native speakers of English ... I suppose they would have an advantage. The first mid-terms I

remember I got an overall evaluation about how we performed, that must have been a bad moment for some of us but for me it was good, it confirmed that I can do it.

ME: so ... now that you are 16 weeks into the BA programme what are your feelings towards the academics and the expectations that are off you now?

R6: looking at the differences between the higher diploma and the BA?

ME: yes, because this level is a British degree and is associated with the a partner university and I'm not so sure you know a lot about that when you are coming through higher diploma. So, what were your feelings when you moved into BA?

R8: well, I was very confused and I didn't really know what was expected but I really like this system because it is more university like. I found the system that we had in higher diploma was more like ... everything that we learned in practice, like F&B and housekeeping we would have learned that on our internships and I really like the programme of the BA because here we have a system from our teachers and lecturers but we basically can decide what we want to write about, find the topic that is interesting to us and then go read about it. It is very much dependant on how much effort we put in it. And I like that. We can choose, most of the time, topics that we are interested in ... I found that very motivating ... challenging on the other hand.

ME: challenging can be seen as a positive and a negative ... which way did you view it?

R8: it was something that I had to ... I mean, I really had to develop myself and grow up to it, because in the systems before, we didn't really have ... it was very straightforward, we didn't have much independence but I really like it, now we are challenged in that way. Our time management and ... I enjoy.

R9: OK, for example, I was also very very confused at the beginning because the programme is very different than the third year but for me personally, the third year was harder because I was also new and I liked it more than the BA right now ... much more. My first confusion was, to be honest, about the critical thinking ... critical thinking, critical thinking, critical thinking but at the same time you are not supposed to express your own opinion. I still don't understand it ... how am I supposed to think critically and draw conclusions from things and I have to justify again, so its not my thinking ... it is from someone else? I still can't understand it. The fact that we have to learn by ourself ... I think for me personally, its like 50-50 ... you need someone to put the pressure on you to make you learn, because when you know its on your own, your probably not going to do it. This is how most people think probably. For me this is an issue and I think this responsibility should be for the school and not for the student or the person themselves because I think that school should give more pressure into that, to show more self-initiative to that. I think that the school be motivated to do this because you have to motivate yourself first to motivate others and for me I'm not a self motivator when it comes to things that I don't see the implementation of, I just done see for some subjects the implementation for real life and I cannot motivate myself to do them. But for things that I see that can make me grow, I can motivate myself. It makes it easier for me to do it if I think this is going to really help me and I enjoy doing it. There are other things that I don't realise that probably they are going to help me and I need someone else to push me to do them. This is going to then help me later.

ME: So are you looking at the level of independence that is thrown at the student at this level and whether that is appropriate or not?

R9: yes

R8: The thing is, I think its good that we learn to study independently but what I see is that there is a huge gap between third year and BA. So maybe if the third year would be more like the BA we would have more independence then people could adapt more easily and then we would have a bit of an experience of time management because it is very different from what we have been doing in third year and maybe the gap is too big.

R9: I agree, there are two sides basically.

ME: so, R9, you have come in and in the space of 8 months have come through 2 different systems and both were quite difficult to come to terms with. Everything you thought you got used to in higher diploma in three months then all changed.

R9: yes, exactly.

R5: But like for me personally I knew the challenges that would come because I expected them. For me I have done the higher diploma and I knew this is what was expected this is what I need to do. But now if I'm doing BA honours I know it's a lot harder so I know it's going to be different. So for me I knew there was going to be a bit of a jump it wasn't something that was unexpected.

ME: OK but was the jumps bigger than you anticipated?

R5: Well like yes and no ... but I knew it was going to be like that ... like initially it was like ... wow ... but when I got over it I knew this is what was expected.

R7: For me it was not that difficult to adapt because I was studying in Britain before and I was expecting this British system, the system of grading and the system of critical thinking from the first year ... like this is what I was waiting for ... like we have in the BA now. So in BA it was actually easier and better for me in terms of this we depend only

on ourselves and maybe it is not the best hospitality quality not depending on other people at all but I like to do my reports by myself.

ME: Which is different there was a lot of group work in higher diploma

R7: In Britain I was preparing and expecting to do things on my own.

ME: so when you can enter first year were you disappointed that you didn't have the system that you were expecting?

R7: in first year it was just one group work, in second year it was a couple more. But in third year I think we were overloaded with it I would say. If that could be spread out over the three years it would've been different ... maybe. Right now I much happier with the BA system than the other system.

R6: From a very abstract point of view I would say making the jump to this kind of learning where you can learn by yourself through finding the information and synthesising information is an amazing thing ... it means for the rest of your life you don't need to be guided by somebody, not holding hands with somebody but you can learn by yourself in anything you want which is very reassuring. In the practical point of view there was a gap between the third year and the BA that we all identified but there were difficulties it was a little bit like coming to first year there was a lack of ah ... for example like the performance like I mentioned ... there was a lack of feedback. We knew that according to the teachers and programme leader that it would be impossible or almost impossible to get a first class honours degree ... they said it is very rare and only a few people ever get this per semester... don't even aim over 70 ... which was a little bit strange and we were a little bit surprised and we didn't know how we were going to be evaluated and we then expecting to get 50's and 40's and stuff which is very disappointing after aiming for 90's in the other system so grading was difficult to adapt to and of course we were lacking feedback ... if you look we are in week 16 and we got our first results 2 weeks ago so we had to wait a lot of weeks to see if what we had done is what we were supposed to have done ... to see if we need to adjust but of course if you adjust now, it is already too late. So there was a lack of evaluation at least for me ... I wanted to see how I performed already so that I could continue to adjust. And the teamwork is a very good point ... I like also that you really have to perform yourself and that is what you are going to get. You don't have to wait for people who are not there or not motivated, who don't come or don't speak English, who don't like the task, etc. etc. etc. And this affects your grade. This time its up to you ... if you're lazy, you're lazy, it's alright ... you do it well you are fine ... you get what you deserve.

ME: so you like the idea of the independence?

R6: yes.

ME: OK ... so, interesting views. There is no right or wrong answer here, I'm just exploring different avenues and looking at things ... a lot of what you have said, I have heard in the past from various students, some like it some don't like it. Some see it as very challenging; some see it as something they expected ...

So what I want you to look at is ... in terms of coming to live in Switzerland and being in this new environment, being in these four walls with 600 students and you live and breath this environment for 18 weeks ... I want you to think of ... in times where things were challenging for you what did you do to say ...

OK ... I'm here now ... how am I going to cope?

Pause!!!

What kind of things do you fall back on to bring you back to that state of mind where you can now work though this?

R5: for me it was the fact that I knew I was going to go home.

ME: so you thought ... it is 18 weeks and that's all I have to put up with?

R5: yea that was basically it. But now it's a lot better. I don't have that same feeling ... now I want to stay, I don't want to go back ... I have my friends.

ME: you arrived with a friend and you said you met with others from South Africa from the same school ... did that help in terms of ... we're all in this together?

R5: yes, but now I have met others from previous quarters and its like ... I don't want to go back ... I just want to go home because I want to see my parents, but now I want to stay because of my friends. That's basically it.

ME: so you feel that you've come to a stage where you're comfortable ... being in the school and the ...

R5: no not in the school ... I want to get out of here ... I get irritated, I want to get out more.

ME: why would you say you get irritated ... is it because you are living and breathing the same people all the time?

R5: yes ... you see people all the time, there are people you don't like ... they irritate you ... you don't want to be stuck in your room the whole day ... it's the same monotonous routine every day ... it irritates me ... I just want to get away.

ME: OK so you want to stay in Switzerland ... with your friends?

R5: for now ... I don't know ☺

ME: would you say the people you arrive with were kind of a crutch for you to lean on at the beginning when you found it a bit challenging?

R5: yes, but then I met Portuguese people because in South Africa I was always the foreigner ... it was always other Afrikaans and Zulu's and stuff and I was always the foreigner and when you come here you are not ... because there are other people from other countries, and what I really liked was that everywhere I walked I could hear people speak Portuguese ... I felt like, if I ever need anything I can run and find a Portuguese person. For example when I went to Manor and I want to buy a cream and I spoke to this woman and we weren't understanding, so I said ... is there anyone who speaks Portuguese and then some lady came and I was happy. So for me, if I know I'll be fine if I go 'there' someone speaks Portuguese.

ME: so would you say you have a network of friends that speak Portuguese?

R5: yes

ME: What about the rest of you ... in challenging times, who do you use as a crutch to help you though? Or do you do it all yourself? Are there people there that you can share your experiences with?

R9: for me, in the very beginning when I came here I was really fascinated by the environment itself ... we're talking about the people environment right?

ME: yes, everything, the people, the school, the academics ... how do you deal with the frustrations?

R9: Through the connection I had of the people here ... the biggest connector for me from the beginning was the language when I didn't know anyone ... because language always connects. Besides the English ones, I know all the Germans here, almost all the Russian speaking as well and from my own country, there are just a few people ... 2 or 3 only, which I am very close to. And for the academic part, from the very beginning, I run to the teachers e.g. the programme leader to explain to me how things work but I also went to the first people I met here ... how everything looks like, what is their point of view about the reports and everything, which also helped me to see both sides.

ME: so if you were to describe your group of friends, would you describe them as all similar cultures?

R9: no, not at all. It is so mixed.

ME: but, is it tied with language?

R9: not necessarily, in my case, my friends are very, very, very mixed, some of them we share the same language but it was not the main point why we became friends in the first place.

R8: well, in first year, I remember I spent a lot of time within the Hungarian community ... there were 10 Hungarians within the school and we had very strong connections. So, whenever I was scared because of the reports and everything, then they helped me a lot ... because they were experienced, they had already done it so they always had good suggestions. Afterwards, I became very close with my classmates ... we were in this together, so we started to discuss things together. So first with the Hungarians, then after with the people I was working with ... they had the same difficulties, the same challenges and with their help and assistance, I wasn't that lost any more.

ME: and what about now R8 ... do you have the same group of friends that you did then?

R8: no, because I did a year-long internship, and now when I came back for BA, I barely knew anyone. So, now I'm with different people.

ME: so, now in times of frustration, have you created a new network of friends?

R8: well, partly, some of them are from the same Hungarian community, but also with classmates that face the same challenges, who really understand what my problems are.

ME: so, do you have an external network of friends outside the school, or do they all exist inside the school?

R8: well, my friends in Hungary, I Skype with them ... of course it is very relieving to talk with them but we don't really talk about the academics.

ME: that's OK, you don't have to talk about the academics, sometimes talking about other things allows you to escape some issues so that you can then free your mind of things so that then you can come back and face them differently.

R8: I understand ... well in that case, I have to say ... it is very relieving to talk to people outside of the school because sometimes, you just need a very different perspective.

ME: yes, when you are in this environment and seeing the same people all the time ... it is good sometimes to have an outside group ... you don't have to talk about the academics but something different so that you feel relieved that you have off-loaded something and then you can come back and face the challenge because you've had a break from it ... maybe it is not such a challenge anymore?

So what I'm really looking at is the coping mechanisms that you use to get through ... and maybe that is one of yours – speaking to your friends back home as a way to distract you so you can come back and face the challenge differently.

R5 ... do you have any external groups?

R5: yes

ME: Portuguese?

R5: no, they are students here but they are away and it feels so much different (I think he means they live out) ... so when I get a break it is a huge relief.

R7: in first year, I just dipped myself into studies because maybe of my personality, I didn't feel comfortable among the Russian speaking community, then I started to ski a lot, every weekend and I started to get to know the locals, and more people around. Then maybe the Russian speaker in the school and then the other people in the school and it got better with time. And friends at home.

ME: was it difficult to get to know the locals?

R7: no, at the skiing there you got to meet interesting people.

R9: I don't have any locals as friends here ... probably because I don't ski. I go to the gym in the village but there is nobody there except the people that work there ... I have a small talk with them but I cannot say they are my friends. It helps me to get out of this environment here. I also have a lot of friends in Bulgaria, in Germany and I Skype with them almost every week, which helps me to switch off.

ME: so, what is your primary reason for going to the gym ... is it to escape from here?

R9: yes ... from everything.

R8: I think that a hobby that is not related to study it also really helps because after you can concentrate more. You need to get away sometimes mentally, and go jogging or something and then you are more concentrated, you are more focused and you start studying again.

ME: so, you find it helps if you can get out and then come back to it.

R6: I think there is a lot of change during the four semesters here ... so there is ... home country, study, internship, study, internship ... however you want to organise it and that therefore includes lifestyle inside the school and then individual independent lifestyle and for me it was very hard to adapt so when I was coming back to this last session at this school where I knew I would have to cope with coming to third year and then direct entry into BA, I knew I would have to cope with one year of this school environment ... I think holding on to family or friends in Hungary is a strategy but I think I tried to prepare already for it by trying to reproduce somehow ... or minimise the effects of coming back to the school environment and again from an independent adult living in a big city ... with your own salary, with your own life ... to coming back to the school where you are controlled and handled like a student. So in relation to culture shock I think it is important to mention that we have kind of a meta-world – we live outside the school we have 3 Hungarians living together so, it could be considered a meta-world in this framework where we get to go home and feel like ... still independent people who are attending university but go home at the end of the day. Then I bought a car ... to be able to move, to be independent. I go sometimes to work as an extra in Hotel Mercure, which was getting into another community. It helps also that I speak French as it makes it easy to communicate with the locals. Even the French-speaking students in the school, they all know each other and maybe feel like they know each other better than the others. I think trying to reconstruct the independent lifestyle was one of the ways to ease the frustrations of coming back into this life.

ME: so, you came into third year, already living outside?

R6: all the time I have been in this village, I've lived outside. Back in the other campus for first and second year, I lived inside and experienced all the things we just talked about.

R5: for me, like you said ... something as simple as a car ... especially frustrates me here is the fact that I can't just get into my car and go wherever I want. It frustrates me that I have to wait on a bus and if I miss it I have to wait for an hour ... that frustrates me immensely. If I want to go somewhere I have to walk. It adds to my frustration of not wanting to be here, as I don't have a simple means of getting out. Rushing to get trains

ME: so, how do you deal with frustrations that happen externally ... how do you ...

R5: I call my friend to come fetch me ... I'm not walking.

ME: so, you have a means of getting around it?

R5: yes, but it is very frustrating.

ME: Do things like the organisation (something R8 mentioned earlier) actually annoy you?

R8: sometimes I am surprised because they are not as organised as they claim to be and that frustrates me.

ME: is that externally in the Swiss culture or in the school?

R8: in the Swiss culture. In the school, I don't think they are that organised. I had the impression that the other campus in the organisation was much better organised. And sometimes I see in the village, even though I don't live in the building, they are very disorganised ... that frustrates me because we are here in Switzerland and what they require from us is something totally different. This was not the expectation.

ME: do you think you are the type of person that tries to recognise positives out of situations in order to get you through or do you get overwhelmed by the negatives? We've had very much a mixture of positives and negatives ... what do you think you are ... how would you describe yourself?

R9: I'd like to say for my own culture, Bulgaria, people are very very negative, its part of the culture. Its like ... the glass is always half empty. It is something that I always hated ... even in my own country and I was not infected

by that ... so I turned to the other direction and in relation to here and even the culture shock in Germany, I never seen something as really really bad because there is worse. I always was happy to have the opportunity to be here, its good enough and there is nothing that can basically ruin it. I see problems like challenges and not problems and I always think positive.

ME: and is that how you felt about some of the frustrations that you felt coming from higher diploma to BA? Glass half full ... opportunity?

R9: I still try to think of the positives and if I don't find any positives, I don't see it as a negative to be honest ... I basically ignore it ... this is my way. Either it is positive or I just ignore it.

ME: so, if there are negatives, you try to ignore them and look for positives.

R7: this is what I learned to do here as well, I was affected by ??? because now when I come back and people smile ... like reverse culture shock ... in Russia I have to force myself not to smile on the streets because people look at you like an idiot.

ME: so, you try to focus on the positives if you are challenged?

R7: yea, this happens subconsciously ... maybe the European mixture.

R8: I think it is very important that even if you think of the positives that you actually realise the problems and challenges and realise how challenging a situation is. I always try to evaluate the situation and then I think I see the glass half full. I am quite positive but I like to know how deep the problem goes. I see every challenge as a way to develop myself so when I overcome it, I actually become a stronger person. I don't see that there are no challenges or there are no problems but if I overcome them then it helps me to develop myself.

ME: so, there is a sense of personal achievement there.

R6: because there is no growth in the comfort zone and there is no comfort in the growth zone. I don't really see if I see things positive or negative. I don't think I grasp the point of the ... I think we have to get out of the comfort zone.

ME: do you feel comfortable out of your comfort zone? Some people are really afraid to move and others will just try ... where do you see yourself?

R6: the point is not to feel comfortable but I force myself.

ME: not everyone will force himself or herself.

R8: Also, even if I don't succeed and because of trying and getting out of my comfort zone and doing something that I don't really do or something that I don't have the skills for ... I still win because I've tried.

R5: at first I look at it (and I think this stems from the Portuguese culture) negatively and then I start looking at it and start changing my point of view. Like everything I do, I always seem to look at what's bad first and think less about what's good and try to fix what's bad.

ME: OK, lets look at ... thinking back again to prior to your arrival, do you think you would have done anything different or better in terms of the academics or the actual coming to Switzerland and the different culture that is here?

R8: I would have done more research on this school and on hospitality in general. I think that if I could advise something for this school, it would be to do an internship prior to the first year jus for people to be sure that they want this path. What they said at the beginning is something very different to what we see now. I know it is also due to the crisis our employment possibilities ... I think they draw a very different picture of hospitality and the school ... so I would advise ...

ME: so, who are 'they'?

R8: the marketing ... and maybe it's the lack of knowledge but also it could be that they are a bit biased.

ME: that's a very interesting suggestion in terms of going to industry first to see if you like it.

R8: actually, I heard from other people who went to EHL, they actually informed that this is required ... entry requirement. So, if you are not accepted, you are advised to do an internship first to see if you really want it. I think it would be good here. This school doesn't seem to have a filter system ... English is not an issue, nobody takes a look at your grades in high school and I think it would make sense if they filtered people to see if they are determined enough or if they are hospitality people, if they know what they want to do because a lot of people only come here because their parents sent them. I think this is bad for the reputation of the school as well because when we go to the IRF and represent the school outside, they give a very bad impression and that affects the school.

ME: which affects you also because you are going out there with this school's name attached to your CV.

Thanks for your honesty.

R7: because you have to study with these people as well and the lecturers adapt to the lowest level in the class ... they explain the same thing three times in first year ... they adapt to the people who understand less so when we came in the first year and for the people who don't yet speak English ... there could have been some sort of separation, some test in the beginning, before they come here ...

ME: OK ... so when you came, that was not your expectation when you look at the level, you recognised that there wasn't enough filtering of who is let on to the programmes in the first place ... so it didn't meet your

expectations of what you came here to do did it?

R7: no.

R8: well, at first I didn't realise because there was no feedback, there was no tests, but afterwards it came across that there are people who want to do this and who are interested in what they are doing and there are those who are not and they are still passing, they still have this school on their CV and they give a very bad impression.

ME: so, how would you have tried to research this further ... in hindsight, you said you would have researched more on the school ... would you have tried to seek out more people who have been here?

R8: for example, I think with LinkedIn today you have a much clearer picture of the students who graduated from this school ... where do they work, in which industry, in which hotel group, in which positions and what departments ... operations most of the time ... and what we have been told prior to coming to this school is very different from what I see now.

ME: so, advice that you might give to someone else that is thinking about coming to Switzerland or the school to study would be ...

R8: to research on LinkedIn and alumni ...

R6: to speak to an impartial, objective person who is not asked by the programme leader to present for the school or asked by the Dean to represent the school, that does not work for the school, that has no financial interest in the school, who doesn't do laundry for the school ... somebody who could say the things we have just said to the people who are not yet here.

R8: and also we have an alumni group in Hungary and those people are not really bias ... they know the school, they know the benefits and the drawbacks, they know other hotel schools, they know the hospitality industry ... so I would advise them to take a look at LinkedIn and also try to connect with someone from the alumni, because they have it in every country now.

ME: it is interesting because you had said that you spoke to someone prior to coming here and also spoke to previous students but do you think that they were a little bit biased in the information they passed on to?

R8: also, but they were still in school so they couldn't really see the worth of their diploma, the value of this school in the market.

R6: I'd also like to highlight something that was said ... the number of people who have become disappointed with hospitality while learning about hospitality. Coming to this school, being very happy about all the different factors ... international blah, blah, blah ... beautiful building ... over the time they become disappointed, myself included and seeing people who really did complain about this to different parties, that becoming disappointed over the course of hospitality education with the industry itself. I think there are aspects of hospitality that should be highlighted ... there is an uplifting side and sides that you can explore ... to help preserve people, countries, food, cultures, plants, animals, whatever ... but it has to be emphasised that hospitality is more than giving food to somebody and waiting for them to sleep and getting the money. I'm not saying we don't because we in certain modules that we did this year and we loved this and it could be emphasised to students more that hospitality is something of human value, creative value etc. Its not only a tough industry ... don't get a private life, there is not much money. I think there is a lot more to it than that. I think it would be good to emphasise this more.

ME: but that idea might be good to emphasise at the stage when you are speaking to agents and marketers and if they could paint that kind of picture as well and do things like suggesting an internship prior to coming to study ... interesting thoughts.

R8: actually, its supposed to be seen as a huge investment of money, time, energy so I would really recommend people to do research and I think it is worth people doing an internship prior to coming to this school.

R9: what they are saying ... if it could be possible it would be amazing, I personally think it will never happen. I think it is an ethical issue for the school that they should take the responsibility to do what they say but from a business perspective, it means fewer students and less people going into the industry ... seen that way. A great idea but I don't think it will happen ... are you going to lie to him and take his money or are you going to tell the truth and if I will take his money.

ME: you've got an interesting train of thought.

R9: it is very straightforward ... very business but I think this is how the people think here ... especially the organisations group, its extremely business oriented. I think there are a lot of ethical issues, I'm sure that the people who are managing the place and leading it, they know about it and they know much better than we do and they don't need the students to tell them about the problems because the **know** the problems but then they look at the balance sheet ... I don't think this will ever change.

1:29:49

ME: it depends on how you tackle change ... maybe something will come of this research ☺ Glass half full? Very interesting points ... it is a business ... so ... they should be looking at all elements e.g. branding,

reputation etc ... all influence the balance sheet. It's about balancing everything. Valid points.

R9: yes, I agree, there should be a balance. If there was more balance here then probably it would be much better. Here money is the ...

ME: so, in hindsight now this is the way you think, what would you have done differently, what would you say to other students?

R9: to be honest, I ask myself that question many times. Its strange to answer it even though a lot of things have happened here ... this school has helped me to achieve my goal, my personal goal ... which is to leave here and work for the exact company that I want to and have the exact position that I want ... which has actually happened. Influenced by my culture ... I think no matter who you are, you are always going to say that your school is better and sometimes you do a lot of research, I sometimes think it is not going to be very accurate because ... I heard a lot of stories e.g. other campuses in this organisation are better than this school and then when I go to other campuses, they say ... oh, this school sucks, your school is much better ... who am I supposed to trust now? The best reputation of all the schools is the one in Lausanne, EHL, this is probably the one that all the directions are pointing at. I'm still not convinced how good that school is because I have also heard negative things about it too.

ME: so, in some respects you are trying to pacify yourself that you have made a reasonable choice to get you to the goal that you wanted to get to.

R9: yes. I personally as a person, I am ready to suffer the problems to get what I want to get.

R5: I would have come since first year ... if I knew then what I know now, I would have come in first year.

ME: do you think that would have made it easier to come through the whole system rather than come in at the final stage?

R5: yes

Me: If you were to go back home and people spoke to you about the possibilities of study in Switzerland ... what would be the advice you would give them?

R5: well, I would say that they should come and study here because I do believe that the education system is very good here. I would recommend that they come but from first year.

R7: I would do it the other way around, I would come to do the PGD rather than do the whole programme. I would have finished the education at home and then come here for one year and do it all at once.

ME: which programme would you do?

R7: Hospitality PGD ... finish the BA at home and continue here.

R9: you are probably not going to get that much information about the industry because a lot of the PGD's come from different backgrounds and also a lot of people come to this industry from different backgrounds and they can still be at the same level as you are finishing the PGD to be honest.

R7: less money, less time.

R9: yes

R8: but I think it also depends on the person, I mean like hospitality is something that you are either good in hospitality or not and I think that's ... all of the things that I've learned in second and first year, I would have learned those during my internships.

ME: So you think the programmes themselves could change?

So, you think you could have researched a little more prior to your arrival, speaking to more objective people ...

R6: The problem though you are talking about is the business strategy of the overall organisation, which is my favourite topic, which is why I have been quite. I've been paying very critical attention to the strategy of the group for 4 years now but I don't want to let anything out of the box. But it is very difficult to research and it is good to research this in advance but a lot of people don't even care for example. It is pretty difficult to research in advance, even by talking to ex students or ex people if you want to understand this information, to understand the low admission criteria, if you want to understand the permanent growth strategy of the group, if you understand why they are doing intensive marketing overseas ... its supposed to be hospitality in Switzerland. If you want to know why they are doing acquisitions, you have to probably know that the group is owned by a private equity company So, all these students don't care?

ME: at 17 I'm not sure you would know where to go to search for that information.

R6: the problem is ... that kind of information explains a lot of things that happen today.

R8: its not a non-profit institution, it's a profit oriented.

ME: I mean I am amazed that if you look at the alumni ... you are going to be alumni soon ... how are you going to advise them if that is the kind of information they are looking for ... word of mouth is phenomenal among the students that are here ... nearly all of you indicated that you spoke to someone ... do you not look back at that person and say ... you didn't give me the whole picture ...

R8: they didn't have the whole picture ...

ME: looking at you as an alumni how will you deal with the questions ... what's it like to live in this village,

how will I come prepared, what's the academics like, what expectations? If they don't ask those questions are you going to offer it to them?

R5: I would ... like, they said they would like to speak to someone objective ... I would like to speak to someone subjective, because I would like to know the truth, I would rather someone tell me ... this is bad, this is bad, this is bad ... so that I would know ways to overcome it.

ME: but you can have someone that has an objective opinion that says this was bad and this was good

R5: I prefer it that way it that way ... tell me what's bad and tell me what's good about it, because IHS, they were amazing about it as well, everything is blah, blah, blah and when you get there everything is different and as well, the agent in South Africa, the way she described this school was also all good and when I got here I was like ... this woman was lying to me. So if someone was to ask me I'd tell them what's good and what's bad ... I wouldn't want them to come back and say ... but you said this place was like this and it wasn't.

ME: so, do you think from your half, you would have tried to find out a little bit more and in hindsight, its not that easy to do when you think back to the age you might have been to make these decisions. Do you think you could have done anything better when you actually arrived?

R9: do you mean in terms of the school ...

ME: both, in school and outside ... living ... should you have made more of an effort to get out more ... to help switch off ...

R8: I think it is good in first year to live in the school because that is when you get the whole picture. After a while I got tired of it but I think it's a very good start to start in ...

ME: I think it also give parents that little bit of comfort that they know their child is somewhere that they know but after that, I think it is because you are the one that is living in this environment maybe making the decision to move out suited some people.

Do you think this school could have done anything prior to your arrival ...

All laugh and someone asked if we had 2 more hours!!

FOLLOW UP EMAIL ON SUGGESTIONS

R9: I think ... maybe my culture ... that it doesn't matter what I say, and I don't feel motivated ... for example, the student survey ... I didn't write much because I feel that it is not going change ... I feel that this survey has been done before and the comments are still the same and the problems are still the same.

R6: because the nature of the business strategy dictates there is a turnover of 2 times per year of all these people right, so by the time you have brought the perception of bringing any change to this organisation, you are out, the B permit is retrieved ... goodbye

R7: but they are changing things ... since 2009 they have changed the majority of the programmes, they added up new modules, opened spa, changed the way French restaurant operates, changed the way sitio and market place ... they do apply some of the changes but they pick which ones to apply.

R8: but the ones which don't hurt because I know that it would be a huge loss for this school if they would filter the people more but it would improve the quality and the reputation of the school.

R6: most probably it is the only way to compete in the long term with the arrivals in the industry and in the sector in the segment like EHL, very few want to go do postgraduate study ... you have to have minimum 2 years professional experience already whereas, you can come here, pay the same amount or more and you can do a PGD with people who either don't speak the language or have never seen a single bottle of wine and I don't think that this is possible to sustain in the long term.

R5: I'll be very honest, I also think it is a big manufacturing scheme because at IHS, if you were able to fit the bill you were accepted, your admissions test was a little pathetic test and even when I did my application for this school it was, fill out nationality ... this, this, this and this, and what my father does and I had to write a motivational letter. All my friends that went to university of Cape Town they had exams and had all these other entrance exams they had to do and they were tough and I could say ... nah, I've already been accepted ... they were like ... didn't you have any entrance exam to do and I said no ... my dad was then wondering if I was going somewhere that was credible ...

ME: but after all that, the only thing you would change is to come in first year and not in the final year?

R5: yes.

ME: guys, you are opening up an area that goes a little beyond what I am looking for but your comments are very, very useful in terms of things I could put forward as suggestions in relation to change.

Thank you very much.

So, you do think the school could do things prior to your arrival ... I will send an email with 3 or 4 more follow up questions. Please be open.

R5: I think also, maybe do some sort of language course, I would suggest that. For me, at IHS, I did a French course but it wasn't nearly enough to come and have a proper conversation ... for me since I moved from Portugal to South Africa, I've adopted South African culture and there are 11 national cultures you can pick up everything so for me it was easier to adapt further. But I think, having an extra language is very beneficial here.

Do you think you have adapted?

R9: yes.

ME: how long did it take you to adapt?

R5: not very long

R9: About 3 months because of the language ... the English and getting used to ...

ME: when you say you have adapted, what does that mean to you ... what are you measuring with ...

R9: I'm comfortable with the people with making friends and also with the programme itself.

Appendix 5 - Transcript from Focus Group 3

TRANSCRIPT FROM FOCUS GROUP 3 Tuesday 21st May 2013

Approximately 5 minutes is spent explaining the purpose, the ethics etc to make sure everyone is OK with the

Participants:

R10:

- Origin: Germany
- Length of time in Switzerland: here 3rd year and then direct entry to BA.
- Age: 25
- Other places: Peru for 1 year ... gap year, back to Germany for apprenticeship – got a lot of hospitality experience. Didn't feel ready yet to study, I wanted to go abroad to study but didn't feel very comfortable in English so I went to Thailand for a management training for 9 months ... another year abroad experience.
- Why Switzerland: reputation, and career opportunities.
- A different entry route ... did industry training and then applied to direct entry to 3rd year. Didn't do a diploma previously. Couldn't do this in Germany ... it would have taken 3 years (as opposed to 2 terms in this school).

R11:

- Origin: half Greek, half Italian
- Length of time in Switzerland: arrived in 1st year in this school but a different campus in first year
- Age: 22
- Other places: Italy and Greece
- Why Switzerland: history of Switzerland. People that worked with my father came here also ... two different campuses of the group. I was 19 when I came.

R12:

- Origin: Singapore
- Length of time in Switzerland: came in first year (age a secret)
- Age: age a secret
- Other places: UK and Canada
- Why Switzerland: known for hospitality.

R13:

- Origin: German (lets say)
- Length of time in Switzerland: started in Foundation 2009 – 5th semester in this school. Wanted to go to a different campus after Foundation but decided to come back to this school.
- Age: 23
- Other places: 6 years in Kazakhstan (born there), Germany for 7 years and Russia for 6 years. Longest time in Germany ... that's why I say its country of origin.
- Why Switzerland: Didn't research much regarding the schools ... it was the first school I found ... English. Didn't want to do it in Germany. Came at 19. Couldn't speak English before ... hence the Foundation programme.

R14:

- Origin: Peru
- Length of time in Switzerland: currently in 3rd year (wanted to be part of the research) and I have been here since 1st year.
- Age: 20
- Other places: Argentina for 4 years, back to Peru for 9 years, then South Africa for 1 year and then to Switzerland.
- Why Switzerland: studying hospitality in South Africa but I wasn't very happy with it. Did my first year and I was 17

R15:

- Origin: Canada
- Length of time in Switzerland: 9 months. 3rd year and direct to BA. I wanted to come directly to BA but had to do 2 terms that's why I ended up in 3rd year.
- Age: 21
- Other places: has only lived in Canada
- Why Switzerland: came here because of the name of the school and the reputation of Switzerland

ME: a great mix of people in this group ... entries are different. Some started in the other campus

1. Prior to coming to Switzerland:

ME: so in relation to coming to Switzerland who was the key decision maker with regards to way you chose to study ... was it you, was it your parents ... word-of-mouth from other people ...

R10: when in my case it was me personally. It was in discussion with my family and prior to moving to Thailand I was visiting all the schools in Switzerland and Germany with a friend of mine. Finally it was my decision and my parents were supportive. They left the decision up to me.

R11: for me it was my dad because I really didn't know what to do. I wanted to do art and my dad said no there is no future there if you are not talented so just go there (this school).

ME: you know the age of 16 and 17 years when you are making these choices then you need help.

R15: for me if it's mostly my decision but I had my parent's support, without their consent I wouldn't have been able to come here. We had a decision between coming to Switzerland or Hawaii. In the end we realised Switzerland had a good reputation and that's why we chose here.

R12: for me it was also mainly my decision and like R15 I was looking at Australia and Hawaii and I got accepted to Australia. But for the first time Swiss schools came to Singapore all the schools were there. It was at that point in time that I kind of made up my mind that Switzerland was the place. And my parents were very excited saying ... yea, this is the place because of the reputation ... and in Singapore all about the name of the place. That's what matters. For hospitality this is important.

R14: for me I always wanted to go abroad from Peru and I had the chance when I finished high school and I went to South Africa with my parents but still I didn't know what to study. I wanted to go into business and I ended up in hospitality there. I was not very happy with the school and the environment was not very international which is what I was looking for so then my dad stated researching and he found the school and we went to presentations and we both liked it. They were in South Africa as they have agents there. Also there were some students there that went to the school from South Africa and talked about their experiences. My dad basically loved it and said I would prefer to go there than here in South Africa, where the environment is not very nice.

R13: I applied to the school without the knowledge of my parents. They were on vacation and I just applied. I was in London friend 2005 and then I added her on Facebook after 2 years and saw her education was another school in the group and I googled it and they had an office in Germany so I called them and they said they would send me some brochures and they sent me the brochures and I had to do an English text which I didn't pass. I forgot about it and then later I told my parents and they said if you want you can go back to Russia because I finished my school in Russia then I came to Germany and I finished the school in Germany last year so I had two higher diplomas. I then wanted to go back to Russia for one more year to learn English and then come here. But then they called me back about the foundation English programme and my parents said yea just do it. Its better than going back to Russia and you could be with teachers that know English (English speakers).

ME: so when you decided that Switzerland was the place that you wanted to be what kind of specific research did you do prior to coming here? What kind of things were you looking for when you were trying to find out about the school?

R13: I didn't do much about the research my dad did it and he did in the Russian language. And he found information on this school, really bad information, using really bad language ... someone from 2007 semester and my dad was scared ... is it really a nice school also, it is not cheap ... in Germany it would be free. So, I was trying to find comments but I didn't find a lot but still I came here.

ME: that's interesting so what was the deciding factors that need to come here? If you had seen all this negativity ... what was it that made you come?

R13: I think my mum ... she said I just go and check it and they will bring me there and if I don't like it then we can just go back home.

R11: I saw the presentation in Greece with my dad and then some other Greek kids were already in another school from the group had said ... just come, it is amazing ...

ME: what kind of questions did you ask them?

R11: about the atmosphere, the people, is it a nice place ... she was at a different school in the group but but I went to this school in the group because they said it was better for events there and then I ended up in Hospitality ... I don't know why. So, word of mouth and presentations they did in Greece.

R15: in high school an agent came to our high school and the made presentations and at the time and I was really interested in it but my family didn't really have the finances for me to go so I went to university and I study health science for the year. After that I realised that wasn't my kind of studies so I revisited hospitality and then after my higher diploma I went to another presentation by this school and they are quite persistent ... they kept sending me emails ... about 3 years after high school they were still sending me emails. So I went to another presentation, got in contact with the agents and main focus was to find out the programmes that they offered. That's what I was focusing on.

ME: so were you really finding out from the agents who were sending you emails. You got your information from them.

R15: and they were not very updated I wanted to go into tourism and hospitality and they told me that I could do this but when I got here there was no tourism and hospitality.

EVERYONE AT THIS STAGE SAYS IN UNISON ALMOST ... YEA ... THEY ARE NOT UPDATED.

R11: they wanted money to do an English exam when I had been in American high school all my life So I don't think there was a need to do the English exam ... and I had to pay for that and I had to pay for the lady to do paper work for my B-permit, to give her picture and when I arrived at the school I was asked to bring pictures for my B-permit ... I don't know where all this money ended up which was a lot for what she was supposed to do.

ME: which are all interesting points because these things affect how prepared you are when you come ... if you were not getting the updated information that you needed at that time it's going to affect the first impressions of when you arrive.

R14: for me I had contact with the student that was here. She was in second year or third-year when she did the presentation ... so I was just talking to her about the student life in general. And about Switzerland and the environment my parents were talking with a couple that was Peruvian but had already been in South Africa and they were living here in Switzerland when they were studying at university ... both of them. There were another couple that were working at Nestlé so, they also told my parents about the security and in general what it's like to live in Switzerland so they were very secure in sending me here.

ME: so you had a little bit of information about the Swiss environment as opposed to the school environment ... you got that from the presentation girl.

R14: the couple did a presentation for me, showing me everything ... how is Switzerland about the transportation, the places that I can see and in general the whole Switzerland ... so I was really excited to come. And then for this school I just talked with this girl and we were also having meetings with all the students that were coming here ... we actually had 3 dinners when we all got together and there were some other students who were on their internships in South Africa from this school and they were all there too.

ME: so, there was quite a lot of word-of mouth in your case ... students who had been here, students on internships, students who are currently here.

R12: for me what I was looking for is the modules that were taught, the number of years and of course the pricing does matter. Actually the ranking we had a look at the ranking and we even took a look at YouTube as some students had uploaded stuff about this school and so, my parents thought ... its not too bad a school and its in English so ... off you go.

2. Arrival in Switzerland:

ME: so thinking about when you arrived do you think the research that you have done was enough for when you arrived for example, when you got to Switzerland, forget about this school for a moment ... what words would you use to describe your entry into Switzerland?

R11: I was very comfortable when I came because I have been coming here for many years at New Year and Christmas. Not my first time in Switzerland. Plus I come from Italy so I'm 3 hours drive from home. I never found it difficult.

R10: for me it was the same ... it's not my first time here.

R13: the only thing I had the problem with is the agents in Germany told me, this agency is from the group ... the group's office in Germany ... they told me I had to go to this school but that's it ... I didn't have any documents to say which campus so they put in the system a different campus and I arrived at the wrong school first. So, I'm knocking on the door and I remember there was a blank duty officer who opened the door and he examined me like ... what did I smoke ... I was saying ... I'm student, I'm student ... I had no English at the time. Probably he called the other campus and they told him that they were waiting for me ... so he told me to go to the other location. When I got to the village, I didn't know where as there is no street and I had to ask and I was told to go 'up' ... it was

heavy rain, I came to Belvedere, I see the door but couldn't get in, there is reception but no one working ... I was wondering what kind of school is this? I see others inside and then I was told to come on Monday and this was Saturday. Strange school. I found the phone and got a duty officer who guided me to Mont Blanc ... we found it. Then they also put me in the Villa ... giggles by all.

ME: so, what was your first feeling when you got here R13?

R13: to be honest, I felt like crying, it was going down, they put me in the Villa, my roommate was not there. In the Villa there is no toilet or bathroom in the room, so in the next room there was a big party, when I found the toilet and bathroom, the doors didn't close, there is no key so everything is open. I wanted to charge my computer but couldn't because of the plug, I wanted Internet and had no password and because of the party I couldn't sleep and outside it was raining. It was quite hard. The next day when my parent came I told them I don't like it ... they said if you want we can go back home and you can study in Germany. I decided to try a couple of days, I didn't know that the sky train belonged to the school and I was always walking up ... giggles from all.

R15: I found it is very similar to Canada ... the climate, the landscape etc. The only thing that really shocked me was the cost of living. Everything is really expensive. Other than that it wasn't too bad. I thought this is OK.

R12: for me it's OK because I actually did a tour to Luzern with my mum so, I quite liked Switzerland and I have travelled quite a bit in life so yea ... The only thing that surprised me is the shops are closed on Sunday. That wasn't expected.

ME: so, some things you thought are not so nice ... did you think about ... how am I going to get used to this?

R12: actually, in Singapore we have the Groups main office where we had a pre-departure meeting and I got to meet 2 guys who were going to the same school as me. So, I when I arrived, one of their parents were here and they helped us settle in.

ME: so when you arrived, you had 2 other people from Singapore that arrived the same time as you?

R12: one was Malaysian but for some reason he ended up with us ... David came here first. I actually took the bus but that was a bit of a pain in the ass because if first came to one campus and then to another and then lastly to this campus. Familiar people were here when I got here.

R15: there was no one that I knew. I was by myself.

R11: When I came to the village it was September ... I came on a Sunday evening and there was no one at reception ...

ME: but what about to the other campus when you arrived first? Did you arrive with others you knew?

R11: I first did a visit with my mum and someone showed us two different school campuses in the group. Then I went to presentations with my cousin and then both my cousin and I arrived in first year together.

ME: so when you arrived, you had someone you could talk to?

R14: I came with a whole group of South Africans ... we were four students. 2 were going to one campus and me and another girl were coming to this campus. We arrived (I think she is talking about the airport here) there were stations where students were welcoming us and we were waiting there with a lot of students and then we were split up in groups of who was going to this campus and who was going to the other. We took buses and then we arrived here. When we arrived it was the people ... the students that I met in South Africa that were current students ... were there so they welcomed me to this school. That was very good and I didn't feel uncomfortable at all. It was my first time in Europe so I was really amazed with everything. Coming from South America ... for me everything was really, really nice. It was very different.

R13: my parents brought me and I knew nobody.

R10: for me it was helpful that I visited the school before and I knew the area and the surrounding. Everyone had support from agents but I didn't have support from the German office. I never had any contact with them. They sent me brochures ... I was a bit scared coming here because I was a direct entry into third year. I was emailing them asking ... what can I do in order to prepare myself because I didn't know what was expected of me ... did I have the level to really ...

ME: so when you say you wanted to prepare yourself ... what kind of questions were you asking?

R10: subjects for third year, first year was all the F&B etc. and I didn't have the theoretical knowledge ... I did have it but not in English. I was asking what can I prepare for myself and they just sent me back the normal listing of the all the classes that we will attend. There was no support ... I wanted a book list or something that I could work with.

ME: so, you wanted specifics in terms of the academics and the programme ...

R10: I wanted to see what was covered in the first and second year so I could at least look at it and say I covered this or otherwise I start and focus myself on this but none of that came.

ME: so when you arrived here what were your feelings about being here? You came on your own, you felt as if you didn't get much information from the office, so when you arrived here what were your impressions of being in the village and in this school?

R10: well the impression was not too bad. I arrived on the welcome weekend and it was full of people, I had the guidance and I really got close to people from the very beginning. So this was very supportive and I found many people who were direct entries as well. So I started to form a group. I found out as well that it wasn't always like this but there are more and more direct entries ...

ME: see you formed a clique of people that were in the same boat as you?

R10: yea.

ME: that's interesting if we look at the rest of you, when you came in first year who were the people that you became friends with first?

R11: for me the Greeks. At the beginning they were my group but then it started spreading. The first day we arrived, we came up by car and my mum (she is Italian) said ... that person looks very Greek and then he came and she was right. It started like that.

ME: what about you R12 ... did you look for other Singaporeans?

R12: not really, I knew the number of Singaporeans that were coming here and going to the other campus because of the pre-departure meetings that we had. I took Qatar airways when I came and in that plan ... it was full of students from this school and when got on the bus I was like ... didn't I see you on the flight. It was during the BBQ that I started to get to know people and it was a mix actually.

ME: you had indicated R14 that you arrived with South Africans; did you find that you stayed friendly with them right through?

R14: actually I knew that there were Latin people here but they were not my first connection ... I got to know them later on. The girl that I came with was from Angola but was living in South Africa and she knew another girl from Angola that was here that was studying with R13. She had some Latin friends so I was all the time with them ... they were second year and I was first year. Then I knew people from my class ... international. After a while, I got to know the Latin's but they were not my direct friends. Friends-of-friends.

R13: I didn't come at the beginning of a semester ... for Foundation I came in about week 3 or the term. I came and I found 2 Russian girls that were doing Foundation as well and they were my first contact. I then started to meet other Russians. I was always with Russians in Foundation. First year Russians, second year Russians, third year Russians and then I got together with my girlfriend and it started to get more international. This semester there are no Russians in this school so I am very international.

ME: so lets look at the experiences that you had with the academics back in first year (or for you guys in third year) ... what would be the words you would use to describe the academics ... similar to home, different to what you expected?

R13: I didn't expect anything ... but I just came ... ask my PL ... I was just sitting with an open mouth and looking at her ... I understood nothing.

ME: what about after you had spent time in Foundation and then you moved into first year ... did you know other first years?

R13: yes most of my friends were first years and second years. The third year and BA's were always in one building and I was always in the other building. I knew some of the Foundation people stayed with me in first year here in this school so we were quite a big group coming from Foundation. When I started first year I felt like I was at home already and that the new students were here visiting us as I had already done Foundation for five months and it was like my home already.

ME: so you weren't particularly worried about going into first year after having talked to other students who were in first year and may have told you what first year was like?

R13: no, I knew the teachers already ... they knew me and I wasn't really scared.

R10: coming here I had very high expectations of the school and the academics ... because I was a direct entry student and I was scared and questioning myself to see if I could do this. It started very slow with the induction week and nothing really picking up so yea ... third year and BA ... started slowly ... not many things going on but then I figured out that many things are very repetitive for me ... when I did my apprenticeship ...

ME: the expectation didn't happen?

R10: no ... it didn't match with the actual. I felt disappointment my expectation wasn't met. The professionalism wasn't what I expected for a leading hospitality school ... they are classifying themselves as a leading hospitality school and they are still until now missing the professionalism in many ways and not just related to the subjects ... from the academic and the structure ... I couldn't identify with and I could never really connect myself to the school.

ME: you are nodding R14 ... what are your thoughts?

R14: yea, for me it's the same. In Peru the universities are very strict and of course I know Peru is not very developed and I thought I was going to one of the best universities in Switzerland its going to be hard, very hard for me. And then again the English barriers ... I knew English because of the year in South Africa but still I was kind of worried and scared. But then as the days were passing and I realised that it was not that hard it felt a bit disappointing for me because I really wanted to make an effort and I knew it was just three years and I knew I had to

work hard for those three years and then I realised its not that hard ... its kind of easy and then I kind of give up and thought it is going to be like that every year.

ME: I'll come back to some of those issues, but interesting thoughts. R13 ... what about you?

R13: I said that in Foundation it was difficult for me in the beginning but during the Foundation I heard how first year was and I was scared but now I can say the most difficulty for me was first year because of English in that I didn't understand how to study, I didn't understand the books ... to read I had to read 25 times the same sentence to understand and my only fails that I had in exams in first year ... I had 3 retakes but I thought ... how come I passed everything without the knowledge of English.

ME: so, you went into first year not really frightened because you had been here for five months and you'd spoken to people about what it was but you found it difficult because of the English in terms of the amount of reading that you had to do and writing assignments?

44:20

R13: I never had an exam before and what you have in school is really ... I thought it was going to be bigger. I came to my first exam, I remember it was F&B management ... I failed it with 45% because I didn't know what to write. I'm reading the questions, I don't understand them. That was my problem. Maybe I know the answer but I don't understand the question.

ME: so, you came through your exams wondering how did I manage to pass those. Interesting ☺

R11: I was very happy for the first year ... I was always the black sheep of the family, having problems at school and I was passing everything all the time so I was happy. Everyone was happy at home and I was happy.

ME: so, was the academics what you expected or was it ... ?

R11: no, I think it was fine. The high school that I did was really helpful for university because I did the IB diploma and many things I'd seen and I'd seen them again because of that. The accounting in first and second year I'd done in the IB and I thought am I in high school again or what ... we've done all this.

ME: in one way you could look at that ... that makes life easy for me to settle in ... I have a grounding in some of the material and then you could also think ... is that enough. But you were comfortable R11?

R15: for me, all the courses were very similar to what I'd done in the diploma programme. There was the possibility to get exemptions but then I could have exempted all of them and gone to BA but then I thought, I've paid to be here to learn something new and it was actually lower than what I'd expected. Everything that I'd done back in Canada was more complicated. Everything here is more ... dumbed down, the language is dumbed down ... made simple ... it just wasn't the level that I was expecting.

ME: so, how did that make you feel?

R15: it felt like I was wasting my time doing third year ... I should have gone straight to BA. That was my feeling about it.

R12: I'm like R11, I'm the black sheep of the family. All my siblings are brilliant and I'm not so academic inclined ... but when I first came here it was pretty strict but as time goes on, from what I see, I think the strictness is going away. For example in first year, it was really strict, when we did service, you were not supposed to speak in our own language and now when you go to the French restaurant in school you are wondering ... what the heck is happening ... all student speaking in their own language.

ME: so, how did that strictness make you feel ... were you happy about that, is that what you'd expected to come into?

R12: it kind of frightened me but at the same time, you are studying hospitality and there are certain expectations ... as if you are going to a boarding school to be honest. I kept telling my parents I wanted to go to a university, I wanted to experience university life.

R11: My first two years in the other campus, we were pampered all the time. Its like, if you were doing something at night, they were all looking at you the next day saying what were you doing, we saw you on the cameras ... every floor had a camera, they knew everything.

ME: That's another element of being in this school, you are not just studying here, you are living here, and this is your home for three years if you choose to be here for three years. It's another element you have to get used to in order for you to say ... this is my situation and I need to be able to work within the environment and sometimes the walls start to close in on you if you are living and studying here. It is something that you have to work through ... how can I deal with this in order to get to the end of my programme. That is what I am trying to find out ... what are the mechanisms that you used to deal with frustrations that you would have from seeing the same people all the time ...

R11: I would leave every weekend after a while. When second year started I was never in school. After I passed first year my parents gave me a car and after that I was gone. Even here now since third year ... we are all gone at the weekend ... not so much in third year as there was more group work.

ME: and what does that allow you to do ... going away for the weekend?

R11: the mind for me relaxes completely, you are not seeing the same people, even the smell frustrates me at school, the food and everything.

ME: so, you come in after having a great weekend away and you are frustrated with the smell you get ... what do you say to yourself?

R11: I swallow it and go on ... I swallow my frustration.

ME: so now that you are 16 weeks into the BA, what are your feeling towards the academics, is it what you expected, is it very different from what you had done up until now ...

R10: its completely different ...

ME: so, how did that make you feel?

R11: more university, less high school.

ME: were you ready for that?

Most people mumbled no.

R10: well, it was a process that I personally could adapt to. Like to the learning style, which is different to way we develop our own creativity, our thinking, and the approach to the topics ... something that I liked and widened my horizons.

R11: I did more in BA than I did in all of my other years.

R13: when I was in first, second and third year, I was talking to the BA people and they told me that it was the biggest mistake of their life to do BA. I was so scared and two of my friends went directly to BA from third year and I did an internship in between so I was always chatting with them ... how is this, how is this and they said ... its OK, its not that its so hard, its also not that easy ... its kind of the same as third year. And now I see, if you are doing everything on time, there is not a lot of stuff to do. In third year we have maybe 10 reports that we have to submit ... now, we have 3 reports and 2 presentations. For example, for the presentations you can do in two evenings and then two more evenings to prepare yourself (**giggles from the others**) and we are getting high marks ... B+. I also think that there is a difference if someone is starting here from first year or if someone is coming in directly to third year ... we have the advantage that we know what the school wants from us and we know the teachers and what they expect from us ... like Mr X... me and my friend are the only ones in the whole class that had him before ... I had him in first, second and third ... the same with Ms X ... I know what they want I don't need to ask again. I mean it is not very difficult. With Mr Y and sustainability its something that you have been studying since the seventh grade at school ... its just going with the innovation and with each year it is improving, improving the sustainability. Now what I'm learning is the last tendencies and what is sustainability in this world.

ME: so you think that something that prepared you coming from third year into BA was that you knew the lecturers and you didn't see that much of a change in some things.

R11: I just had Ms Barnes because I'm BAH ...

R10: Well it was difficult because every lecturer has a different style and expectations and that's also a thing that I don't understand in this school that there is no one direction, which this school takes. I mean every lecturer has his own preferences ... even for a report; there is no overall setting for a school. Everyone can do whatever he wants ... it's just a small thing e.g. font type ... whatever but just there is no consistency which the school shows ... this is what we are ... there is no professionalism for me and that's what makes me so sad and angry about here.

ME: this is going way off topic right now however, us as academics have that as a discussion because there used to be ... here's what a report is and here is what you have to do, however that limits creativity. So there was that whole discussion a number of years back ... should we be that dictative in terms of what we tell students what a report should be. But I can see your point in terms of from getting used to the academic environment, it can cause frustrations when you throw it out to the student ... you are in control.

R10: it also, I have some experience from the industry, in this industry you have a company and they are giving you the guidelines so maybe this is what we should be looking at ... e.g. when we go out it is different. It sometimes takes a lecturer five days to respond to an email and when you go into a company you are told you have to respond in 24 hours and this is a standard that the school as a hospitality school is not copying and not living what they are actually trying to transmit to the students.

ME: so, in terms of the way in ... not so much just what you are being taught in class ... but other aspects of the academic and the administration of it were areas of frustration for you?

R10: yes, definitely and more so than for the classes themselves.

ME: I want to really look at ... with some of the frustrations that you have felt in the past, whether it is coming to this village at the top of a mountain or coming to this school, which maybe didn't meet your expectations in some ways like you have described ... what kind of things did you do to help you release those frustrations? What kind of coping mechanisms did you use to say ... what's going to get me through these times of frustrations.

R14: for me what helped me a lot was my social life. My first and second year, I did have a lot of friends and I tried to spend a lot of time with them and of course I started dating ... I always had someone to spend my time with. I never had that moment where I was alone or sad and feeling all these things. I was trying all the time to enjoy the time that I had e.g. breaks between classes ... always trying to enjoy my time with my friends.

ME: so having a social network for you was important?

R14: yes.

R10: especially entering third year, there was a lot of work to do and high expectation. We stuck as a group right from the beginning until now and we tried to put as much effort in to the group work as we could even some people say they can do work in 2 nights and we worked for 2 weeks ...

ME: but everyone works in different ways.

R10: I know but for us, we did everything together, we work together, we eat together ...

ME: how many is in your group and are they all direct entries?

R10: Five and yes all direct entries.

R12: I think out class is pretty close together to be honest. For me, I think I'm a bit of a social butterfly and I socialise a lot, I mean I used to social even more. I even knew BA students from before, even when I was in first year. I can be alone, on my own too ...

ME: and that doesn't frighten you?

R12: because to grow up and be able to handle yourself, being alone, that is the best. That's what I feel.

ME: there is no right or wrong answer. You have people who need people and you have people who want people around but want alone time as well. So social was important for you as well as some alone time.

What about the gym ... or skiing ...

So, the escapes that you use to help you ...

What about frustrations you have with the academics? How do you find support in that way to get you where you want to be?

R10: send a lot of emails ... giggles

ME: do you still say ... close the book and go out?

R10: yes; now I do. I mean last semester I was really trying to bring up some of the issues. Even the first week I arrived in BA I had a meeting with the Academic Director and I wanted to give them some idea and share my perspectives on how I viewed things but I gave up.

R11: after you four years here, you give up from the first year, you see how things are ...

R10: yea, after third year ... one semester, I gave up. There is no response.

R13: I can see as my position as president, I'm trying to do something but the people don't hear me. There are 1000 reasons why they don't want to do it. That's sad because I was really motivated to be in this position and I thought I will change stuff that other presidents didn't do. Doesn't matter how I try it, in this school its as if it is nothing big. If you are saying something to a student, the student is going to academic, and academic says it fine. When someone has uniform that doesn't fit ... academic says its fine and then the student comes back to me. He even sent an email to the Academic Director with me in copy to say what kind of person I am. The Academic Director didn't tell me anything. I went to him with this problem and he told me that I did everything fine but he never replied to the student. He just left it.

ME: so you get to the stage where you say ... what's the point?

R13: yea, what the point of the student ambassador forum. Is it just for the green days where we go out and clean, it is we make a party in Club Max

R10: there is no transparency ... we talk in HR about how important it is to listen to your staff and basically we are the staff and when we bring up issues and trying to make ourself heard

R11: things go round and round and round ...

ME: so, frustration is on the Table ... what do you do ... this is affecting the way in which I sit down to study or this is affecting how I'm getting with people. What do you do to try and get beyond that frustration?

R10: challenge myself

ME: so you take it back to something personal and see what can I get out of this?

R10: I mean, personally I'm done with this school, I'm doing my assignments and I'm trying to challenge myself through the assignments and do the best I can ... this is personal for me. I don't need to give them any recommendations on how I see the situation, its useless. So I'm just looking at the academics for myself.

R13: I'm sad ... I wanted the school to improve not just while I'm here but also when I leave here because this school is now on my CV and some students are saying bad things about this school outside and I think it is wrong even the school has some mistakes ... if I say something bad about the school on my internship, what are they going to think about me ... I'm the same as the school. If you are saying bad things about your school and then after your internship you are going to say bad things about your company ... so I'm just ... the school has problems I know but I hope it will go better, I hope it will get bigger ... maybe the group might buy somewhere else so they are going to

be the only school for hospitality and then I think it would be really nice to have the school on the CV but until now I think we can still get some profit but if it goes the same way in 2 or 3 or 4 semesters, the school won't be very popular.

ME: that saddens you because this is now what is on your CV.

It is ... people look at where you have been educated. So part of why you wanted to change things through the SAF was to build up the reputation ... that is part of why you came here ... Switzerland a good place to study, this school has these rankings etc. but reality isn't really what you expected.

R13: the ranking, the group did it itself ... everyone was looking at the ranking of what they want and they can say we are the biggest school in Switzerland ... yea you are the biggest but do you have the brain to be the biggest school.

ME: so, some of these issues are causing frustrations and you think there's no point ... I'm just going to continue and see what I can get out of it for now and hope that the reputation stays positive as opposed to going to the negative.

R11: for example, I think the biggest frustration for the group that came to this campus... when they told us we had to go ...

ME: so this is when we changed and all third year had to come to this campus ... and you were ready to do third year in the other campus?

R11: yea ... they said if you want to do third year in the other campus you need to do it now because in February it will be in other campus ... for me it was OK, I was happy ... I thought it was a good change. But for others they were not happy ... quite frustrating and they felt they wouldn't fit here.

ME: so, how did you get over that frustration? Regardless if it was right or wrong you had to come and you had to do something with it.

R11: I wasn't upset because I would come to LAS in summers to do summer camp and I would hid around here to smoke cigarettes etc. so I was OK ... so I was happy when I came. But I had a roommate who was upset and wanted to go back. I told her to focus her good energy to make a life here. Now she doesn't want to leave.

ME: it takes time, these things don't happen over night but it is getting yourself to the stage where you get into the frame of mind that ... I'm here, I have to do something with this ... motivate yourself to perform.

How many of you tried to integrate with locals of the village.

R11: there is an Italian guy who in in town who buys in my favourite cigarette at coop and I like to talk to him ... he likes to talk. All in Italian ... I know his family now.

R13: just Chris from Davinda probably ... the lady from the laundry ... and that's it. A few ex staff.

ME: so not much in relation to the host community in the village Most of the relationships have been within this school. What about contact back home ... do you contact much back home as a way of alleviating frustrations or?

R11: no that doesn't help I don't think.

R15: I will talk to my best friend over Facebook because sometimes there are people here who frustrate you and you have no one that you want to talk to and my friends back home are not biased because they don't know who they are so they can give me good advice. That helps me to think about my situation and everything and it's nice.

ME: it is and this is why I wanted to know did you go off and try to know some of the locals as opposed to always having people in here. So you do this with people back home.

R12: just with people here.

ME: with where you are now ... do you think you have adapted to where you are ... the village, the school?

Many grumbles of yes

R13: I think I adapted too much, I really like this village and last internship I was here in Switzerland and I enjoyed coming here and seeing the school again and seeing familiar faces and places. Probably when I leave I will want to come back and visit the village just to go say hello in local restaurants, if academic is still the same, just to say hello.

ME: that's natural, its been your life for a while ... it's a long time and you do like to take trips down memory lane. The further along you go, you start to only remember the really good times and the not so good become a distant memory. A lot of people do like to come back to revisit.

How do you feel about the intensity of the programme you are on? 18 weeks.

R11: I think September semester is better as I have done both now. February is too short, it is empty, it's sad, the weather is getting bad ... in September you can still enjoy good weather. Then there's Christmas ...

R10: this break is very important, especially in third year. I mean looking at the third years now who don't have the 3 weeks break over Christmas, they are struggling ... the Christmas break gives you a break too.

R13: I did an internship just to avoid doing a September semester. I don't like September. I started in mid September and then I moved to February semester and I realised that the people in Sept and Feb were different. I just enjoy Feb. I don't know why but the people in Sept ... we don't have the same interests ...

ME: you could attract for example, the students in September are looking forward to the winter and want to use the facilities. Some people choose the location because of the facilities, not necessarily in the school but the activities that can be used outside, which is not necessarily the same people that would want to come in Feb. Yea there are differences.

So the intensity of doing the 18 weeks ... is that a plus for you.

R14: for me it was good, I have friends that are studying hospitality in Peru and they have to do five years and I feel good that I can do the same thing in three years and be done.

R13: many people are coming here ... OK, I also came because of the 18 weeks ... I'm not a person who is studying. I saw that you are here for 18 weeks and you are done with it for the whole year and then you are working on internship, which is different from study and I really enjoyed that. The only thing that I don't like is that we are here to study for 18 weeks and we only really study 12 weeks ... induction week, week 8 and 9 we didn't do anything, then week 10, week 18 ... 5 weeks there are no classes.

R11: but that's good ... we are young ...

R13: its not just that we are young ... its only 18 weeks and I want to study. The rest I want to enjoy my life. Even the teachers are saying you should read ... but we are not reading. So, if moodle lectures are done in that number of weeks, then go beyond that and do the rest of the weeks. But why are some teachers already saying we don't need to come next week ... week 17. I don't understand when they are always saying that we have just 30 hours of class ... we need to push and then 3 weeks are just gone

R14: it is the same for third years, last week we stopped classes and we only have about five reports to do, next week no class and the week after no class. There is one teacher who is a specialist in taxation and said that anyone who wanted to come to a lecture on taxation could come ... not everyone is not going but it is nice to know if you go you can have some knowledge ... its not that you just don't have classes. It is not that we have so many things. Only one exam, 3 reports submitted last week and five reports to submit this week. H and HE is different.

R10: if you look at the dissertation, we have 24 weeks but the first weeks are for the proposal which takes two weeks to assign a tutor and then two more weeks to evaluate it ... all where we can't do any work on the dissertation ... there are just some many deductions from the 24 weeks.

R13: then you have to submit your final draft by week 18 and people who failed the first proposal only got the feedback this Monday and they have two more weeks to write the whole dissertation. But then on the other side the teachers are saying ... guys you have to take a lot of time to do it and don't think you can do it in the last six weeks but now you only have two weeks to write the whole thing.

ME: yes, I think there are issues with the dissertation but it is both sides ... but the point that I take from this is the element of frustration that you get from this and you have to deal with it in terms of how do I deal with this in order to meet the goal that I have set ... get the degree. Yea, everything you have said is very interesting and I am hoping that I can collate this so that I can put forward suggestions ... the programme is intense and is something that is attractive to people and part of the reason that people choose it in the first place and you can do your degree quicker. However, part of what I want to do is look at these frustrations and see how can we make this better in terms of the adaptation of the student so they don't feel as frustrated with these issues. So knowing the issues is good for me.

Thank you for sharing that.

So, prior to your arrival, do you think you could have done anything better to prepare yourself?

R11: no.

R10: I did ask but got nothing.

ME: so something that would be better for this school or those representing this school could have been more responsive to requests.

R10: well, that was the idea, they were asking for my email address and put this on a list and share it with all the students in Germany who were coming the same semester as me ... I agreed but it never happened.

ME: so, follow through would have been good. What about others.

R11: I didn't make any effort, I just came ... it was a question mark, I had to come here and understand what was going on so I came with an empty mind.

R14: for me it was the same. I think it was really good that I met people that were studying here and they were very happy with everything and I think I did enough ... they knew everything about the school, they were living here and studying here so for me it was the best information from them and enough to come.

ME: so having someone having first hand experience and being here with you rather than just having talked to them previously and then coming on your own?

R14: yes, exactly.

R12: no I don't think so.

R15: I would be more persistent in asking the agents more questions. The kept reassuring me saying ... its fine, its fine and I just accepted it. If I'd asked more questions, I would have felt more comfortable being here.

ME: what kind of questions would you have asked them R15?

R15: more about transportation, the cost of living, the courses ... the just kept showing me the brochure ... I should have asked more questions about it ... if I had then maybe I could have gone to BA. When I came I saw that there are a lot of people who come directly to BA and don't do third year so why is it exceptional in my case ... so I should have been more persistent on that.

ME: so you would have been more specific about some of the academic things.

R13: not really, probably come during the day and not at night ☺

ME: do you think you would have done anything different after you arrived to help you adjust quicker or do you think you adjusted quite quickly.

Most said quite quickly all together.

How quickly is quite quickly?

R11: I think the fact that we are in these two buildings and we are all together all the time helps in terms of communicating quickly and we are together so fast as a group. I think if we were living elsewhere and had different buildings for our classes it would be different.

ME: so you are kind of forced into the situation of trying to ...

R14: the first week they are all in the same situation, if you are first year, maybe it is the first time you are leaving home, everyone is trying to attach to someone.

ME: do you find it helpful to seek out someone that is in the same situation?

R14: yes.

R13: the welcome party helps

ME: suggest keeping the welcome party ☺

Everyone agrees ☺

You need that break from induction week, information overload ... so getting people together ... not just you own class but others in the school ...

Finished off and asked if I could send follow up email for the remainder of the questions.

Appendix 6 - Transcript from the Interview

TRANSCRIPT FROM INTERVIEW 29th May 2013

Interviewee: R16

**Started off by explaining my research and what I want to do with them.
I explained the structure of the interview and gave an approximate time.**

- Origin: Zimbabwe
- Length of time in Switzerland: 4 month
- Age: 22
- Other places: first experience of living in Europe. Lived in South Africa doing her higher diploma, which led to the qualification leading into BA now.
- Why Switzerland: when still in high school I wanted to study hospitality and that was about 2008 and the most recommended school on the internet was this school and through interactions with people. Also an agency in Zimbabwe promoting the school. They were pretty helpful with providing information about the school. The reason I didn't come at that time was because of the expense ... I took the cheaper option, when I got back from my higher diploma, my dad suggested I go to do the BA and fortunately enough I could do the direct entry and not having to do 2 terms.
- **ME: so your dad was involved in making the decision?**

ME: So you found out you are coming to Switzerland what were your initial feelings for coming here?

Initial feelings I was really excited because it sounds like it's the best option and within Zimbabwean culture you really haven't done anything until you've got a degree in your life ... that's just what we we're like as people so, I was excited to be ... well both my parents have degrees as well and out of their kids I was the first one to get a degree so I was kind of excited.

ME: and looking at this your dad was also involved in making the decision ... what kind of research did you do on coming to Switzerland and on coming to this school?

I basically just spoke to students that have been here before because Zimbabwe is quite small as well. A couple of friends of mine have been here before and in the last semester my friend was already here, so he was letting me know what the workload was like, what it's like living here and everything. That was basically what the foundation of my research was I wasn't really looking for anything else I just knew I was going to Switzerland.

ME: so your friend was in the same situation as you he came just for the BA What did you do the higher diploma as well?

No he did exactly the same as me he just came for the BA.

ME: OK so what kind of questions did you ask him?

Am ... I asked him firstly the workload because for me that was quite important I was very hesitant about it if I was actually able to do it. I wouldn't want to waste my dad's money and everything. My questions were related to that and he told me it really was hectic and that you would have to put your head down. He was quite encouraging and also about language which to me was very odd because I thought well at least most countries that I had been to English is spoken by everyone and here is quite different in the sense that there's a lot of French and if you don't know French you really have a problem communicating ... even basically from the airport everything is in French and you don't really know what to do, what to say and things like that ... so those two aspects were quite ... well ... you know. It ended up being OK once I got here.

ME: OK so a little bit apprehensive about the language issue in terms of internal to the school or external to the school?

Well in terms of external actually because my friend was saying that students here are able to communicate in English as best they can. I mean it is a diverse environment and you cannot expect everybody to be at the same level but in terms of externally it really is that distinct. I mean I studied French funnily enough at A-level when I was still in high school but that was years ago so, my friend suggested maybe taking some French lessons before I got here ... it could help.

ME: did you?

No, I was working so ... I couldn't.

ME: So you made the decision and word-of-mouth was your main research efforts to find out about here and living here, how did you prepare yourself to come?

I really don't think there was much in terms of preparation I mean I was focused on my mental strength; I mean I know that is a soft aspect I was focusing on my ability to get my head down, what do I need to get in order to get through a course that was my main objective. I didn't really want to focus on anything else I was here to get the degree and then go home.

ME: Soft but really important element. Did you know much about the national culture of Switzerland before you came here?

No, not really I was very surprised when I got here. The language was something that I noticed, I mean I thought it was really a global village I thought people would be able to communicate at some level of English which was very surprising to me when I got here. That was one of the main surprises that I had.

ME: What other things when you arrived in Switzerland surprised you in either a positive or negative way.

Space I remember coming here and I examined my room and I said oh my goodness they must've made a mistake I mean in Africa you really have enough space you have a huge space. If I was to look at my bedroom at home and it's definitely much bigger than the one I have here and that to me ... wow ... it wasn't like that in the pictures ... so what happened?

ME: Do you have a single room?

I have a double room but I share with somebody. So I remember the first night I felt like I was sleeping right next to her the space was very confined and for me it was very uncomfortable.

ME: Exactly and if you're not used to it it's different. Were there other things that surprised you about Swissness?

Not a lot of Swiss people walking around though in terms of in the school, I was very surprised that the number of Asian students that are here, which I never knew before. That was quite surprising but it was positive in the sense.

ME: So surprising coming into the Swiss culture is not quite what you expected ... so what about the academic culture you had already spoken to your friend ... do you think you've got enough information about what the academics was like or were there other things that surprised when you got here?

I think that the academic aspect was quite confusing for me in the first few weeks because I think ... unfortunately there is an assumption that you know ... maybe because there's quite a few students that have come from third year and gone straight into BA so you have comments made ... so you've done this in third year ... but I wasn't in third year. So for me it took me a while to adjust to that and also to the way in which things are worded in terms of for example if I'm going to look at the module content I find myself having to read it about 10 times just to understand what's going on. So for me that was a bit of a shock. For me I thought maybe the simpler the better if you put it in simple terms I will understand more. But if it is then worded in some different way then I get lost.

ME: OK see you said it took you a little while to adjust to some of the modules ... how did you make that adjustment?

I asked questions

ME: Who did you ask questions off?

The lecturers because most of them are reports, if you to look at the marks I got the highest marks I got what in the subjects that I asked the most questions ... so to some extent it was my responsibility really to get the standard. So that was the key to me and then I did a whole load of research on Emerald and research like that just to get the academic

ME: so looking at your arrival in Switzerland a little bit shocked looking at your arrival at this school a few things that you noticed as differences that you experienced. Is there anything specific that from either living in the village or from the academic side that you would've highlighted as being particularly challenging over the last four months that you have been?

Living in the village I think is my ideal, to be quite honest, it's quite a small community and I love that. I don't like when it's too cramped so for me it's ideal. Living on campus as well has been good for me Food not so much, not great. It's been good I appreciate it more now at this stage when I almost leaving and I've made so many friends and everything like that, you're going to miss them when you go ... I appreciate what it is now but it just took me a little time to adjust to what it is because communities develop around the cultures and the people that are there so for me I'm at the point where I can respect what it is and adjust.

ME: do you think of the way in which the academics is done here is similar to what you did in your higher diploma or is it different or vastly different?

I think it is significantly different and I think that, that from me provides the value in the degree. The fact that no it's not wishy-washy any more it's really about putting it down in academic terms putting it down in such a way that you sound as if you have some substance. I really appreciate that part of the degree and for me I found the value in the courses.

ME: and that wasn't the same in higher diploma?

In higher diploma no, it was quite wishy-washy and like ... oh, just read from a book and regurgitate it and now it's about really understanding and principles that you discover you will take with you for the rest of your career and I

think that is the important part. I mean like subjects like, strategic management and HRM and for me I know when I go back home there is definitely content that I will be able to use in my professional career.

ME: so looking at the system that you have gone through for you read a book and you regurgitate in comparison to now been forced to think critically ... how did you adapt to making that job because it's a very different way or different mindset in terms of the way you have to train yourself Because you realise it is different and also realise that you've got 18 weeks to perform. How did you make that adaptation in such a short space of time?

I think for me it's gone way back to the person that I am. I think it's about just listening to what the teacher has to say, putting it into practice and you'll be fine. It's as simple as that for me. All the lecturers say you have to have academic articles academic sources, which I totally understand because it's accredited work and then there's some substance to that we don't want to hear your opinion anymore because it is not so valid at this point. So for me it was quite easy to get into it maybe it's something to do with the Zimbabwean culture if your teacher says it do it like this then there must be some reason why they say so you may as well just do it. So that's what I did

ME: So basically you listened to instruction. In terms of four months that you have been here what did you think was the easiest thing to get used to the Swiss side of things and living in the village or maybe the challenges you associated with the academics.

I think it was easy to get used to the village way of doing things. Very on time very accurate and I can appreciate things like that It was helpful as well that I had some friends who have lived in Switzerland for a while, so they were very helpful in pointing out a few things that I didn't understand because I wasn't used to at all. But I think particularly in the village I don't think you get a true feeling of Swiss culture because we are so diverse, you know, someone from South Africa, someone from China ... we are all friends you know you don't really get that Swiss feel, we're all living on a mountain. It's just like a kind of global village that were are all in now. You don't really get that much influence from the Swiss culture I think living here in this village made it much more easier to adapt. Its just so diverse.

ME: and the smallness of the community. I want to come back to something that you just said ... you said you had friends that have lived in Switzerland ... are they are friends that are currently in Switzerland?

Yes

Are they part of this school? They are currently in school?

Yes

So, when you arrive here did you know they were here or are they friends when you arrived.

My friend was the only one that I knew, the friends that I have now from back home I didn't know them before so I actually just made friends with them since I arrived. So it's been kind of starting new relationships with them as well. But as what happens when you come from the same country you have some kind of commonality so I guess that helped on the way.

ME: so would they have been, when you arrived, knowing that there were groups from home, were they ones that you sought out to help you adjust quickly?

Not really actually I think that's just the kind of person I am I take people as they are so just because were from the same country I wouldn't seek you out as my friend just because of that. I have made a lot of South African friends and other cultures friends before I really made friends with people from my own country. To me it was helpful that we all shared the same fears in a way with the friends that I still have now. We all share the same fears, we are here for the first time, we've never experienced this and you kind of grow in that together.

ME: So that is the likes of Hugo and Kara people in the same situation as you come to the BA directly just 4 months ago. I heard that before also that regardless of nationality you intend to meet with those that are in the same boat as you, everybody else has been here since first year.

So in times of difficulties and it doesn't have to be extreme frustration or things that niggle you, who are the people that you would turn to, to off load things on or to help relieve the tensions that you have.

I would definitely see Hugo and Kara and my Zimbabwean friends ... both groups because I think the main thing that I have learned here, when you come from African culture which, is so different from European culture, there is very distinct power distance if I can put it in that way. So if it relating to your lecturers there is that high degree of respect because they are your lecturers, related to your parents. That we share in common, sometimes we would have talks about how other students relate to lecturers and we would be like ... that is so disrespectful, how can you speak to them like that ... so that commonality made our issues the same in that respect and we were able to speak to each other about that and try and understand it.

ME: which is very interesting to a point because you came to realise in order to get the degree that you came here to get you had to speaking asked questions, so how do you overcome that challenge of power distance that culturally is something that is ingrained in you as it is something you have come through for 22 years of your life. How do you overcome that ... at the end of the day you have to perform and get the degree you've come for and that is a challenge?

24:39

For me I found it easier to ask questions and private than air in my views in class so I would arrange meetings and things like that with lecturers, put all my questions together and then get what I needed to get. So that was my strategy to winning but for me and I think you can get the most out of a person if you speak to them in a way that is appropriate and if you show a genuine interest in what they are saying and listen ... at the end of the day. So for me that's how I did what I needed to do.

ME: So you are a weighing it up in your mind what's the best approach that I can take that suits me to get that I need.

OK so let's look at anything you say you started off here and excited did you maintain that excitement?

No I was definitely very sad for a couple of weeks because a lot of people had made friends already over the weekend and I came a little bit late. I came the day before we actually started lectures but I was very fortunate that my friend was still around. He then introduced me to different people and then you start to make friends and integrating. It was definitely, for me I think the first 3 weeks ... didn't go out and socialise with anybody, kind of stayed in ... it was quite sad really. But I think that's more of a personal issue more than anything else ... in terms of social interaction I'm a little bit funny on that one. It takes me awhile to integrate. Eventually it came over.

ME: so do you like force yourself thinking that ... I can't stay like this for 18 weeks or ...

Yes definitely and I think the friends that you make give you a sense of security in a way ... for example Kara, Kara is a very open personality and she is friends with everybody and she will make you feel very comfortable. Meal times for the worst for me because I thought who am I going to sit with? People would say ... come sit with us and I that's how it started to happen for me basically.

ME: so other people started to bring you out of your room?

Yes.

ME: so do you think you're the kind of person that tries to recognise positives from situations ... for example you think OK this is what it's like for me and I have to recognise opportunities and deal with that and strive for your goal or do you let the negativities overwhelm you a little bit?

I think a little bit of both. Definitely if it had not been for the people that are here it would've taken me probably more time to integrate myself into social circles really. But I do appreciate the positives of the situation. I like to think of myself as a person that takes people as they are So if you are this way ... then I will accept you as you are. But if it is not reciprocated I kind of take a step back and think OK you be who you are. So, negative in the sense that it takes me too long to integrate, positive in the sense that I do appreciate the people are and what the situation is and just adapt to it.

ME: so is the social part important to you?

Very important

ME: why?

Because you need somebody to help you get through it at the end of the day ... we are not alone in the world. You can't go through it all by yourself. I think it's absolutely impossible to do that in this school. It's just too much to do and there are experiences that are created through socialising with people. For example there are plenty of times that I have gone to Lausanne and sat with Cecilia and just examined the lake and for me and just cherish those experiences because they are few and far between, I think when are you going to get the chance to experience this again so you might as well make the most out of it when you're still here. I've been travelling around just going to see different places here and it has been amazing.

ME: OK so just getting away from the four walls and the little bubble that this village exists in is something that was valuable to you?

Yes.

ME: so I think you try to take control of the situation that you see yourself in and work towards the achievement of the BA?

OK, so you've talked about the internal importance of the social elements here ... what about externally did you try to integrate and all with the locals ... did you try external groups

Not really. For going out it was pretty much Club Max on Friday I haven't met local people actually ... I don't know any Swiss people.

ME: that's a common response I think sometimes for students, and I even think sometimes for myself, my life is in this building ... I think sometimes you can think this school is the village, this school is the academics and you are in these four walls all the time ... what about the environment of living here, studying here, eating here, sleeping here etc ... how did that make you feel.

Confined definitely ... because it is on the mountain and it is far away from everything else even if you did have the desire to meet other people it is such effort to go out. It felt very restricting. Many a weekend we just said lets

go to other cities, lets just go away from here. It is very difficult here to separate your social life or your personal life and then academics. Its pretty much all in one at the end of the day. It felt very constricting.

ME: so going off to other cities or whatever with your friends or group of people, how did that make you feel like when you came back?

Refreshed. It's good to just get away sometimes ... kind of relaxing, you get more of an idea of what Swiss people are like Or what life is like when you get to the other cities. So, relaxing when you come back with bags of shopping etc. You do realise though when you get back that ... oh I'm back again and I have to put my notes on the books and everything

ME: did you find that you took little trips like that often?

Yes definitely. More than I would have if I was in a different place ... like if I was in the other campus maybe, probably wouldn't really travel too much ... everything is accessible, you can do what you want, you don't really have to take time to get away ... so think that's why those trips away with very frequent.

ME: the other campus is a little bit closer to the city and that made you feel as if you were closer to a larger town, giving you more options and things to do.

Prior to your arrival here did you try to find out things ... like what is there to do apart from studying in this location?

I'll be honest no. I just thought ... let's just go ... I didn't really do a lot of research ... no.

ME: And has it disappointed you in any way when you came here and you saw I'm so far away from everything

Yes definitely. The trip up the mountain and the bank is down there, and the trip up ... its such a mission. But that's the way it is but I don't question very much the whatness of it ... its just the way it is. I just adapt to it and accept it.

ME: what about the intensity of the program that you were on how do you feel about that?

I think it's perfect, for me yes it's perfect. I don't think I would have wanted to drag it on for a year. I think you're given enough time to do what you need to do. Definitely I will agree on that sense. Yes it is intense but at the end of the day if you've got three years to do it or six months ... I will take the 6 months option, and really just put my head down, get what I can get, do what I can with what I have. For me it is intense but I appreciate the time, for me it's not too short.

ME: so if we look at while you were here who would you say are the support groups you created for yourself?

Definitely, my Zimbabwean friends and also my South African friends. They have been amazing and then my Danish friend ... we have really developed a relationship with her last month and a bit, she's been amazing ... those groups of people have been amazing and also ... my parents back home, they have been very very supportive of me and that's been good.

ME: so you feel you could off load pressures you were feeling to those groups and relieve tensions.

OK I just want to now come to ... how maybe you could do things differently how things could be done differently from this schools perspective from a personal perspective ...

Do you think you could have done anything better prior to your arrival to prepare yourself?

I definitely should have researched more and asked more questions. Really got the feeling of what its like living here. I did ask questions of my friend but now I realise I wasn't really asking questions to fully understand. So I think I should have done a little more.

ME: what kind of questions would you ask him now?

How much is a loaf of bread ... that was one of the most shocking things for me it was so expensive here ... very, very expensive in comparison to Zimbabwe. So for me that was quite shocking so ... things like that. Maybe how do you interact with people there? What level of understanding do you share between people ... and all of that because for my friend I think he's that kind of person who can socialise with anyone ... so it made of been good for me to ask questions like that.

ME: I've heard the expense comment once or twice.

Yes that one was quite significant for me because my dad had an allocation made and my friend had told me its quite expensive ... and I thought yea, yea ... its expensive everywhere ... but no.

ME: in addition to that and I think also that the social side of living in Switzerland can be quite expensive and you indicated the social side is important to you ... so eating out drinking out etc. is very expensive. So it creates the challenge well that you think ... I need to get out here ... but you also balancing that with ... can I afford to get out of here. That can cause frustrations as well. So, prior to coming you would have asked more specific questions. So would those questions been purely related to living here would you have asked more in relation to the academic side.

I think more on living because I think I really underestimated the importance of that. I think I was too focused on the fact that I wanted to get the degree and then get out of here. But forgot to realised that I'm actually going to create a life there ... there are situations where you have to still socialise with people these are the things that

actually need to get through it ... so definitely those questions would have been more important then, than coming here I'm just saying I want to get a degree and get out of here.

ME: but like you've indicated already the social is mixed with the academics ... and how you make those networks to help you. OK ... do you think you could have done anything better to prepare yourself to get along when you arrived?

I definitely should've gone out more on Friday nights and everything because a lot of the relationships that developed were based on when you went out in the induction week. The induction week was very important for developing relationships and I feel like I missed out on that I was kind of behind everyone. That made it a little bit harder to formulate relationships with people and I think that with the social aspect I should've include myself more to do more.

ME: and what about the school? You did speak to an agent in Zimbabwe and you said they were informative but do you think the school could do more in terms of preparing you prior to your arrival.

Definitely yes, for me I think what was lacking was communication of what it is like to live in this school in this village. So what are the rooms like in terms of dimensions from me that wasn't what the picture says and I felt that was a form of dishonesty to some extent. How do you move about, transport systems, trains and things like that. Emphasis on the fact that your French needs to be a little bit good. Things like the fact that you are living on a mountain. I didn't realise that I was going to be on a mountain and that to me was very shocking and expenses as well I think that they really do need to communicate ... for example, find something that someone can come here with in the country because when you get here and your parents assume that this amount is going to be enough and then you get here and you have to say ... listen dad this is what it really costs ... if he's listening to that for me then maybe he thinks ... oh no it's just these young people and they want to spend money and go out ... whereas taking it from the school it has more oomph ... you know. So for me I think they could have communicated that better.

ME: what about the academic viewpoint do you think the agent that represents us could have focused a little bit more on the academics and the expectations that are off you at this level.

Yes definitely I think more information could have been given on that because I think they just say it is BA honours degree ... full stop. Nothing about the content, nothing about the modules, nothing about what it entails and what is expected of you. I mean when you get here I think induction week was quite helpful for me because ... then you calculate if you do it like this then you will be able to get a degree, if you dedicate about two hours worth of time to a module per week then you will be able to get through it. Things like that would have been very important for me ... knowing about it before I got here. Then through induction it is re-emphasised but if the agent had a little bit more information on how exactly the course is administered and how much time you need to really break it down.

ME: do you think it would be useful to have an academic talk to you at that stage as opposed to the agent?

Very useful for me that would've been very, very useful. Because then you know what is expected of you and at the end of the day you have no excuse to say all I didn't know ... at that stage you then mentally prepare yourself that you are going to have to actually put your head down. You're going to have to do it like this and then the certain way. For me that would have been very, very helpful.

ME: Because you have such a short time, you arrive here and you almost have to hit the ground running.

When I compare this to the British system for you have eight months to do a year and and you have that one or two months to get to grips with things but after one or two months here the programme is nearly finished. Someone looking at is what are the things that students might appreciate more prior to coming so that they don't have to come and sprint when they get, they can just come and walk fast.

So, when you came, do you think this school could have done more once you arrived? I know we have induction week and we try to fill it with useful things but do you think there is more?

For me I think the induction week was very useful ... something that I would recommend is looking at the proposal. There is this assumption that we did it in third-year and I've never done a proposal in my life and I had a week to get my title and I thought well ... where am I going to get this all from? For me, more explanation ... focus on the proposal have someone explain to you ... this is what a proposal entails for those of you who don't know. When you're formulating your title you can do it in this way ... because that information was only given to us after we had already submitted the titles. So at that point how are you going to change the whole topic? For me, it would have been better ... is the main concern for most BA students is the dissertation ... it really is the main concern and I think more information could be given on that one.

ME: so more sort of information ... because we have a few students were direct entry like you ... on how to integrate into the system ... maybe have some extra workshops dedicated to just proposal to give you a catch up and maybe refresher workshops for those that have already done a proposal.

Yes.

ME: But you liked the idea of ... even though you missed some of it ... the social aspect been in integrated into the induction week to get people together.

That worked really well ... I made a few friends there.

ME: so if you are in the position this time next year and some potential student comes to ask you for advice how do you think you would advise them in relation to come to Switzerland and in coming to this school?

I would advise them to definitely prepare yourself for arrival in Switzerland in terms of the French aspect I would technically recommend a few lessons. Its not crucial but it would help. After arriving I would advise them to make friends quickly but realise that you have to put your head down at some point ... I remember my first half of the term I was doing everything well and then 2 weeks before reports were due and I decided to put my head down and I had many a sleepless night and that was not conducive at all. Definitely in terms of budgeting your time, so that you can see the end at the beginning and you can work in such a way that you don't have to put so much pressure on yourself. Then also remember that everyone is an individual ... I think that's one of the biggest lessons I've learned here ... you kind of have ideas of what Swiss people are like, what German people are like but you really don't know until you've met them ... so accept people for who they are, work hard and work hard early and have as much fun as you can.

ME: OK I think I'm done with what I want to cover but is there anything else you would like to add in relation to the whole experience of moving form an academic culture that was different to what you've experienced here and moving to a different national culture in order to study.

My comments about this school would be that they are doing it well ... there are certain modules that have for me giving me a lot of growth ... so I think for the academic side of it for me it's worth the money. But they could improve on maybe the food I absolutely do not like the food. I remember going home for Easter and my had as much meat as I could and I stuffed myself before I came back. There is value in the degree that there are a few aspects that could be improved on ... I'm enjoying my time here ... its been good.
The whole thing was worth.

Finished off by thanking the student.

Appendix 7 - Follow-up Questionnaire for Focus Group Members

Focus Group Follow-up Questions

RECAP POINTS

This page is to recap on a few issues that I felt were not developed to the full in the focus group. I would appreciate your time on recapping on a few points for me.

1. Please state your name (this is so I can combine it with comments that you have already made in the focus group)

2. What things did you consider as important in making the decision to come to Switzerland to study? List as many things as you like.

3. What words would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived in Switzerland?

4. What words would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived in [REDACTED]?

Focus Group Follow-up Questions

Coping Strategies

In this section, please be as specific as you can in relation to how you dealt with difficult situations.

5. When times were difficult for you, what would you say were the techniques you used to help you through?

6. Who did you seek out as support groups within [redacted] (if any)?

7. Why did you choose these groups for support?

8. Who did you seek out as support groups outside [redacted] (if any)?

9. Why did you choose these external groups for support?

10. What feelings do you have regarding the intensity of the programme that you are part of?

Focus Group Follow-up Questions

Concluding Questions

In this section, I would like you to think about how you could recommend change.

11. Do you think you could have done anything better to prepare yourself PRIOR to your arrival? Please explain.

12. Do you think [REDACTED] could have done anything better to prepare you PRIOR to your arrival? Please explain.

13. Do you think [REDACTED] could have done anything better to prepare you UPON your arrival? Please explain.

14. Do you think you could have done anything better to prepare yourself UPON your arrival? Please explain.

15. What are some of the key things that you would advise other students who are thinking about coming to [REDACTED] or other similar institutions to study?

Appendix 8 - Questionnaire

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

Experience in Culture Shock

Dear students,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire for me. I would like to reiterate that your contribution to this research will be kept confidential. My findings will be shown to many different groups e.g. management, agents, lecturers and to name but a few, however I guarantee that you will remain anonymous.

I am hoping that the questionnaire will take no longer than 30 minutes of your time. The questions are mainly qualitative in nature as I am really trying to find out your feelings at different stages of your studies and how you coped with any challenging times that you might have faced. Please feel free to use the spaces provided to give me as much information as you can. Your contributions will hopefully help me to identify ways in which we can try to prepare students better for their studies here.

Thank you again for your time and for contributing to any possible changes that I might be able to make for future students who wish to attend.

Kind regards,

Irene

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

General Information

1. Please indicate your country of origin.

2. What is your age?

- 18 22 26
 19 23 27 or older
 20 24
 21 25

3. Please choose from the following options:

- Attended [redacted] from 1st year to BA.
 Direct entry into [redacted] at 2nd year to BA
 Direct entry into [redacted] at 3rd year to BA
 Direct entry into [redacted] at BA

Other (please specify)

4. Please indicate and name how many countries you have lived in for longer than 6 months.

***5. Why did you choose to study in Switzerland?**

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

PRIOR to your arrival in Switzerland

6. What were your feelings once you knew you were coming to Switzerland?

7. What information did you want to find out about Switzerland prior to your arrival?

More than one choice possible.

Location

Facilities

Currency

Climate

Language

Cost of living

Other (please specify)

8. What specific information did you want to find out about [redacted] prior to your arrival?

9. What sources did you use to research the information you required prior to your arrival?

General internet search (e.g. google / youtube)

Spoke to current students

Searched for [redacted] forums

Spoke to an [redacted] representative / agent

Spoke to previous students

Visited [redacted] for an Open Day

Other (please specify)

10. Were these sources useful in preparing your for your arrival in Switzerland / [redacted]?

Yes

No

Please explain

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

ARRIVAL in Switzerland

11. What words or phrases would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived in Switzerland / Leysin for the first time. Be as specific as possible.

12. From your arrival until today (or when you left), what would you describe as challenging with the Swiss culture?

13. What words or phrases would you use to describe how you felt when you first arrived in the academic environment in [REDACTED]? Please be as specific as possible.

14. How do you feel about the intensity of the programme offered at [REDACTED]?

15. What would you describe as being challenging within the academic culture at [REDACTED] particularly in your final term. Please be as specific as possible.

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

Coping Strategies

16. If any of the feelings you identified earlier were negative in nature, what did you do to try overcome these feelings. Please be as specific as possible.

17. What support networks did you try to build while at [REDACTED]?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other students of the same nationality in [REDACTED] | <input type="checkbox"/> Locals in the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other students of different nationalities in [REDACTED] | <input type="checkbox"/> Family in Switzerland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturers within [REDACTED] | <input type="checkbox"/> Family back home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends back home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other staff members | |

Other (please specify)

18. Do you feel you have managed to adjust well to both Swiss culture and the academic culture?

- Yes No

Please explain ... what words are you using to measure your level of adjustment?

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

Concluding Questions

19. Do you think you could have done anything better PRIOR to your arrival?

Yes

No

Please explain

20. Do you think [redacted] could have done anything better PRIOR to your arrival

Yes

No

Please explain

21. Do you think you could have done anything better UPON your arrival to help you adapt quicker?

Yes

No

Please explain

22. Do you think [redacted] could have done anything better UPON your arrival?

Yes

No

Please explain

23. What advice would you give to a student who has decided to come to [redacted] to study in order to prepare them as best you can?

132 & 141 Experiences in Culture Shock

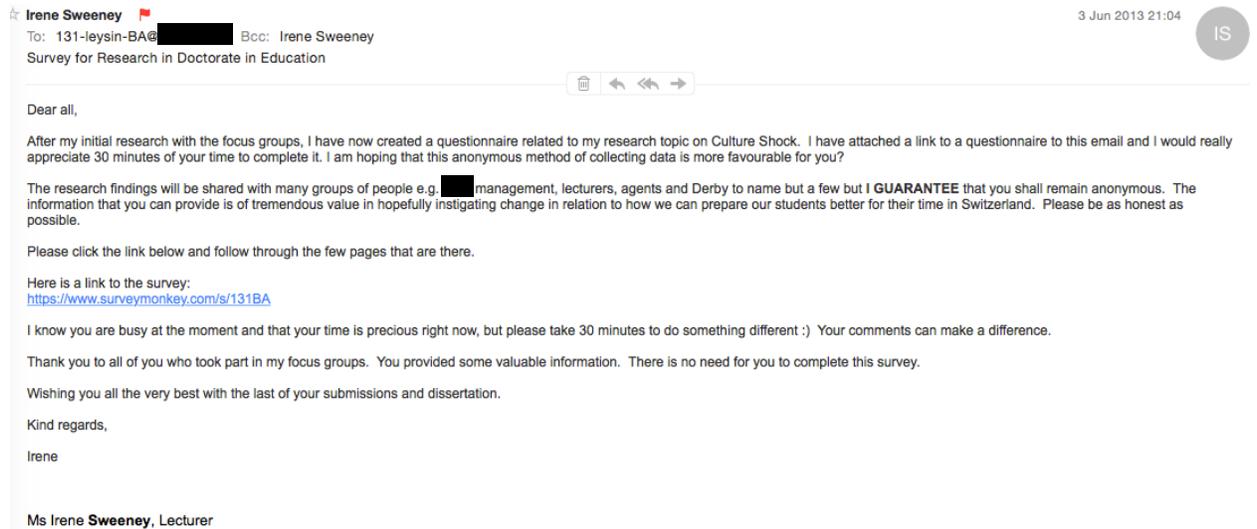
THANK YOU

Thank you so much for all the thought you have put in to answering my questions. I wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Kind regards

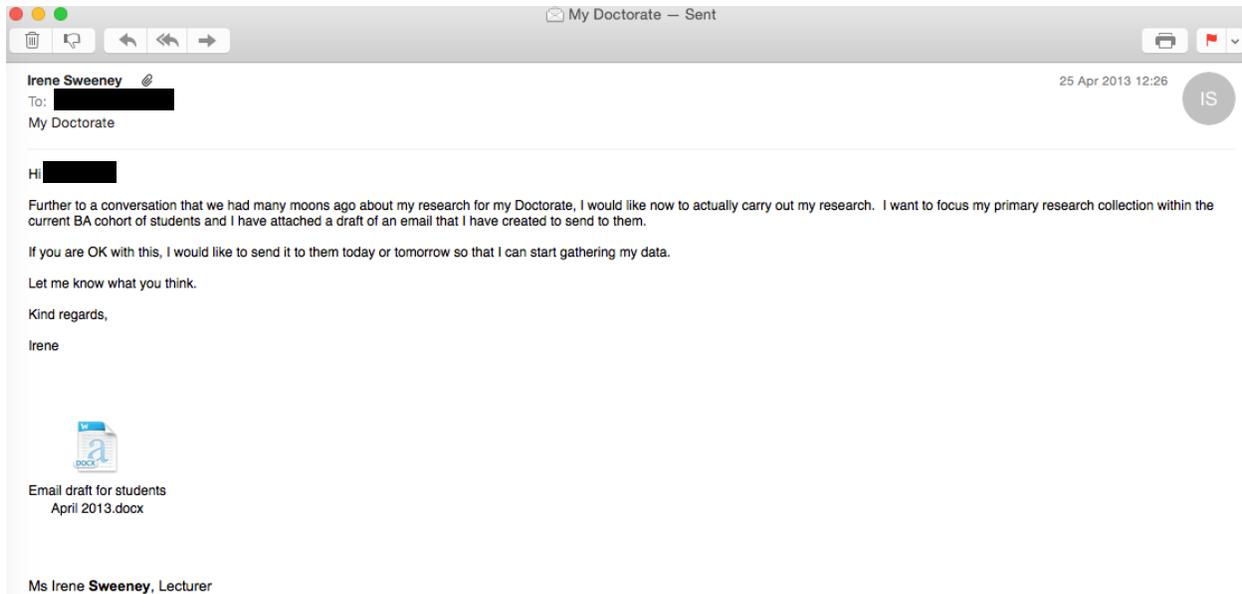
Irene

Appendix 9 - Email seeking Questionnaire Participants

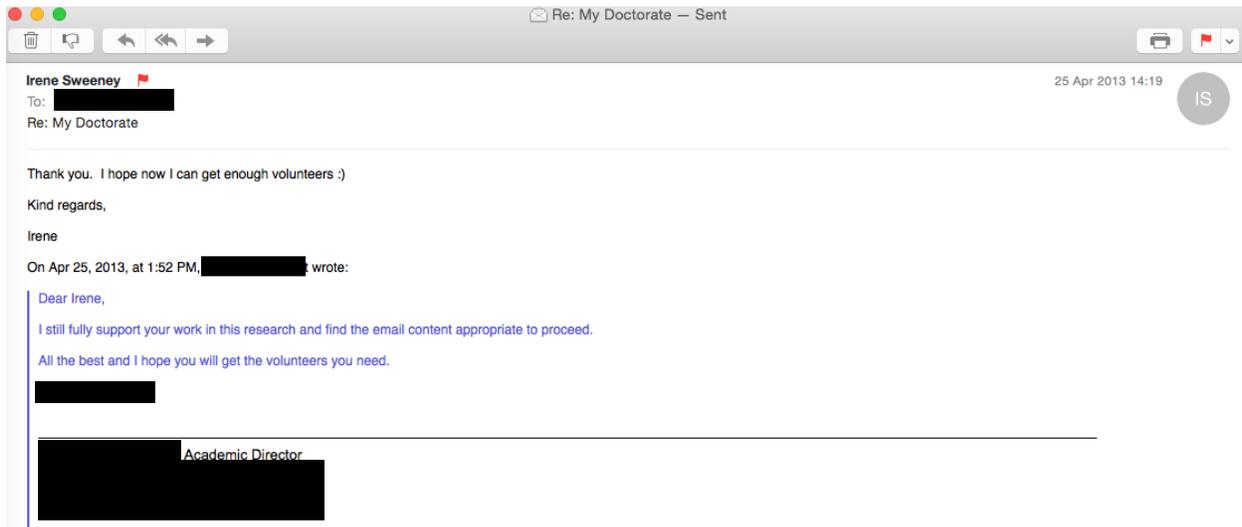


Appendix 10 - Email to Management seeking Permission

Initial email sent



Response to the email



Appendix 11 - Why choose Switzerland?

Question 5: Why did you choose to study in Switzerland?

Student Number	Reason given by students
1	Because Switzerland is known as the best country to study hospitality.
2	Best place to study hospitality. To learn about that special hospitality touch and because it is a renowned university which definitely makes you stand out from others. When you tell a person you studied hospitality in Switzerland they all say wow.
3	Because Switzerland is well-known for hospitality and tourism.
4	Famous for well-trained hospitality teaching programme.
5	Best education.
6	Because Switzerland located in the middle of Western Europe that is my main point to come here because I like to travel.
7	As I know that Switzerland is the best place to study hospitality management I decided to study in Switzerland.
8	Due to the reputation the country possesses on delivering quality education in the field of hospitality.
9	Fame and excellence.
10	Switzerland is renowned for its hospitality and most of the best universities for hotel management are here.
11	My parents forced me to do so.
12	Because Switzerland is a good place to study hospitality industry.
13	Because Switzerland is famous for hospitality.
14	I was studying in Australia during high school, however I want to travel around and see the world. Switzerland is a very good choice as the environment is safe and it is located in the middle of Europe.
15	Curriculum.
16	Recognised for being the best place to study hospitality.
17	Best place known for hospitality.
18	The opportunity to study in Switzerland has always been a something I've wanted to do. The institution offers you as a student a competitive advantage in the international market and allows for the best education in the hospitality industry.
19	For the good hospitality management education.
20	For the European experience.
21	Famous for hospitality and intense courses.
22	Best reputation and programme.

23	Because of its name of excellence and professionalism.
24	It is a fast track to complete BA within 3 years (more or less)
25	Friend of the family proposed and good education and very international.
26	Mainly looking for a higher quality education in Europe. I had no country specific preference except for language requirements at universities.
27	It is internationally known renowned for its degree in hospitality management.
28	Because I love cow and cheese.
29	Three year hospitality programmes and internship opportunity to practice theories.
30	To study hospitality.
31	Because of the reputation of the hospitality education.
32	For its well known reputation for studying hospitality.
33	I was interested specifically in events management and was aware of the reputation Switzerland had within this field. Switzerland also had an aspect of familiarity as I visited family there on an annual basis and therefore believed that this would benefit me with a soft transition from leaving home for the first time.
34	Atmosphere of study, famous in hotel management.
35	Because it is known for its great education in hotel management.
36	Because of the nature of the subject – hospitality.
37	The degree is wide-recognised in the industry and Swiss has share an outstanding reputation in the sector.
38	I wanted to study hospitality since my mid-school. I considered either way; study BA in Korea then master in foreign country, or start from the other country. At that time, I was considering to come to Switzerland, and my mother's close friend who has been living for over 25 years, suggested me to come to Switzerland.
39	Research.
40	The choice of Switzerland was due to the fact that Switzerland is well known around the world for the high quality of the hospitality schools.
41	Fast to graduate.
42	It's the best place to study hospitality.
43	I love the country and its diversity in languages. Here is not that much crime as in Russia, not a lot of traffic jams.
44	I believed that Switzerland is the best place to study hospitality.
45	Because it's the only place that I know which offers Events Management as a major.
46	Parents made the decision for me upon the major of hospitality.
47	Best place for studying hospitality.
48	My mom wanted it and besides, its known for the hospitality schools here.

49	I was told that it is the best place to get well recognised hospitality degrees.
50	The reputation of hospitality industry here.
51	Famous in hospitality industry.
52	In Switzerland a higher level of education and a diploma more appreciated.
53	Switzerland is known for hospitality management and my mom encourages me to go for this course in this country.
54	I chose to study in Switzerland from 1 st year due to the interest I had towards hospitality, and there is a great reputation of hospitality education in the country.
55	Famous for hospitality.
56	Renown hotel management school.
57	It's the best place to study about hospitality.
58	Far from home, more challenges, experiencing new culture, well-known Swiss education standard.
59	Good schools with an excellent reputation, not too far from home.
60	Because there are many top hotel management school in Switzerland.
61	Adventure.
62	Reputation of the hospitality education.
63	The school.
64	Wonderful place, advance education programme, hotel industry is well-known around the world.
65	It has a high recognition on hospitality.
66	Because of its reputation in hospitality management.
67	No hospitality schools in Sweden, and because the Swiss hospitality schools have a good reputation.
68	Best hospitality programme in the world.
69	Renown for Swiss hospitality.
70	Nice reputation in hospitality industry.

Appendix 12 - Comments on Feelings once Decision was made

Question 6: What were your feelings once you knew you were coming to Switzerland?

Student Number	Reason given by students
1	Nervous and excited.
2	A bit scared as everything was new. Even though I knew Switzerland very good I've never been away from home like this and had never experienced what the live of a boarding school would be like. I was scared on one side but very open minded to find new friends as this seemed to be the best way to cope with the situation. After all I found a lot of friends, which made me feel like we are a big family and definitely prepared myself to visit other countries and to do my internship far away from home!
3	I was a bit afraid because there was not enough information than USA. My parents said that it's a really beautiful and safe country to live.
4	Very excited, feel like I'm coming to heaven.
5	Excitement.
6	I am super happy because I have never been in Europe before.
7	Excited, scared, nervous, happy.
8	Excitement, joy, 'I can't believe this is happening'.
9	Excited because I knew Switzerland from before and always loved it especially for its tranquillity and safety.
10	I honestly never saw myself in Switzerland so I really didn't know what to expect. I was excited because I enjoy travelling to new countries. I had heard there was a lot of racism however through my four years I have never experienced it.
11	Mixed feelings, sad to leave my friends and family behind, excited to meet new people, and eager to finish school and start to work.
12	Scared.
13	Nice environment.
14	Normal.
15	Excited, thanked my parents for their decision, everything looked lovely. I thought I can meet Heidi like a movie ...
16	Excited, anxious, scared, worried, happy.
17	Excited.
18	Excitement and nervous. It was unknown to me and not having lived in a foreign country alone before, it was rather unnerving.
19	Excited, interested.
20	Excitement and scared to come by myself.
21	Excited.
22	Excitement.

23	I felt safe, at ease, and great! I knew Switzerland from before and I always enjoyed it.
24	Excited.
25	Curious, happiness.
26	Very excited but unsure about the new environment and people.
27	Excitement for getting know a group of new friends, but nothing special apart from that since I have been studying in the UK for 5 years before.
28	Excited.
29	Normal, not special.
30	Scared and excited at the same time.
31	Security.
32	It was very strange at first but I personally did not feel too worried because I had people that I knew from the agency along with me. I believe this eased the home sick.
33	Inevitably nervous but excited, secure and enthusiastic at the same time.
34	Will have completed different from my past experience.
35	I was excited but also sad.
36	Getting excited but also worried about it.
37	Great enthusiasm! Very exciting! I have been a 'big fan' of Alps for years.
38	Empty (not emotionally)
39	Excited.
40	At the beginning was excitement and happiness followed by apprehension.
41	Exciting.
42	I was excited and scared at the same time. I was very anxious.
43	I was excited and was looking forward to it.
44	Excited.
45	Excited, nervous basically it was bittersweet.
46	Oh ... Europeans are gentle, rigid, punctual ... etc. Europe should be more developed.
47	Over excited.
48	Relatively excited but worried about the new environment at the same time.
49	I was very excited and ready to learn about different cultures.
50	Excited.
51	Village life.
52	Excited, in anticipation of something new.
53	Excited and anxious at the same time. Not sure what's ahead, its either good or bad.
54	I was extremely excited and couldn't wait to explore this well-known beautiful country.

55	Exciting.
56	Not much of surprises, but feel fresh.
57	Excited.
58	Excited to see for myself.
59	Excitement.
60	That there are so many differences between Switzerland and my home country.
61	Excitement.
62	Excited, worried, nervous.
63	Excitement, anticipation, hope.
64	Exciting, expectation.
65	Excited.
66	Excitement, nervousness.
67	Excitement.
68	Beautiful.
69	Hopeful.
70	Nice weather.

Appendix 13 - Information Sought on Switzerland Prior to Arrival

Question 7: What information did you want to find out about Switzerland prior to your arrival – other comments beyond the choices given?

Student Number	Reason given by students
9	School life.
11	Crime rate and safety.
15	Electric adapter.
18	Sights to see.
22	I knew pretty much everything.
23	All of the above are very similar to my hometown and to my culture. Therefore, I didn't need to know anything.
25	Standard of living and how safe is it?
28	Culture.
33	As I had been travelling to Switzerland on an annual basis from when I was born, I was largely familiar with the lifestyle I would be moving towards.
39	Food, reviews.
44	Culture of Swiss people, in order not to face the shock.
50	Attraction.
53	Friendliness of people.
56	Accommodation, food.
62	Safety, security, travel.
70	Everything above.

Appendix 14 - Comments on Information Sought about Institution

Question 8: What specific information did you want to find out about the institution prior to your arrival?

Student Number	Reason given by students
2	What the subjects were and how the grading system worked. However, I didn't had to do much research as my brother told me a lot about the school, which made me wanting to come study to the school.
3	Courses and tuition fee.
4	Where it is, transportation and facilities around, students, study environment, uniform, programme, etc.
5	How campus is, how the people are.
6	Mostly about the school and the social life not about the location nor the subject.
7	School environment.
8	Where exactly is the campus, and how long does it take to get to major cities within Europe.
9	Nationalities of other students, more about the courses and about the different schools in the group.
10	I wanted to know about the programme and its structure, the job opportunities after you graduate, the on campus accommodation and the meal.
11	Rules and regulations (i.e. uniform, meals), nearest cities, and transportation.
12	Wi-Fi.
13	What is the school life would be? How many students from my country?
14	I didn't do any research as it is arranged by the agent from Taiwan.
15	The was to go from the airport. Life at the school (study, rooms, classrooms and so on) I already got basic information given from agency.
16	How long the programme would take.
17	Language.
18	The structure of BA course, accommodation facilities, the location of the school and activities to partake in in the area.
19	Details of the educational programme, facilities, accommodation options.
20	Transportation and dorm rooms.
21	Location, reputation, structure of the courses.
23	My arrival at campus was excellent. It was very welcoming, everything was well-explained even if I arrived pretty late in the afternoon. One thing that wasn't clear or mentioned, is that the school has 2 campuses. I thought these two were different schools, instead if I knew they had the same programme I would have gone to the other campus from first year.

24	Rooms, meals, courses, time schedule classes, how does the procedure of the school in terms of any admin procedures.
25	How good of an education it provides, including variety of lessons. How international a school is? Personal feelings about establishment from graduates.
26	Length of studies, independent student reviews, rules and regulations, course programme, costs and deadlines, insurance.
27	Local food.
28	N/A
29	Regulations, classmates, teachers, interesting facts of the school.
30	Classes and facilities.
31	Reputation, curriculum, place.
32	I mostly searched for the schools facilities, such as the rooms.
33	Location, reputation, size, modules.
34	Pick up and the lessons schedule.
35	The academic programme, possibilities for different activities, culture at the school, how the rooms and other facilities look like.
36	Previous graduated students' opinions.
37	Supermarket and restaurants.
38	Only considered the benefit of studying at the school.
39	Living conditions, teaching style, subjects taught.
40	I looked for all the information available in the website and also looked on videos and old students' opinions and internet reviews.
42	Is it good as they say?
43	Internship procedure. I had already the knowledge of the school as I have attended the Language Club two times.
44	About people, nationalities of students and lecturers.
45	Where I am going to be living, its facilities and my classes / subjects.
46	How big is it? How many students they have? Why they start the semester in February? What kind of facilities they have, they have basketball court? Volleyball court? What is the WiFi code?
47	I was more focusing on what degree will we receive, and if the degree is approved by government, industry or not.
48	The modules and programme taught.
49	The weather.
50	Qualifying standards.
51	Career path of the graduated.
52	Students' opinions about the school.

53	The people in the school, their way of doing things. The facilities here. The location (peaceful and relaxing).
54	The student life style in the school, if people and lecturer around here are nice and friendly.
55	Living conditions, courses and activities provided.
56	Pick-up arrangement, accommodation conditions and food catering.
57	N/A
58	How does the education system works, for example what would you do in 1 st year and so on.
59	Nationalities of other students, school property (i.e. facilities, rooms), classes taught and how difficult the degree would be.
60	The nationality of the students.
61	What the student demographic looked like.
62	Nationalities of students, number of students, possible career path after graduation.
63	Studies, rules, student life.
64	School location, environment and studying atmosphere. Qualified teachers? How many Chinese students here?
65	The benefits of being a student from this school.
66	Teaching styles and appropriate technology for use in class.
67	Location, facilities, recognition reviews and results (both from students and leaders within the industry).
68	Study programme.
69	First year I was misinformed about the external housing and had to stay outside the school.
70	How long it takes.

Appendix 15 - Sources that Students used to Research

Question 10: Were these sources useful in preparing you for your arrival in Switzerland / the institution?

YES responses

Student Number	Reason given by students
2	The spokesperson was very nice but most of the information I got about the school prior to arrival was again from my brother! And this was obviously more useful than anything else.
4	These sources gave me a faith that I had chosen a good school to study in Switzerland. They also inform me some inconvenient truth however that can be accepted.
5	I was able to find out the basics as well as someone showed me around the campus, which helped to get started fast.
6	It gives me a little insight about Switzerland.
8	The internet is an extremely useful tool and was able to direct me to a myriad of websites that informed me about the location as well as any other information I needed to know (train times, fares etc.).
10	They were, speaking to other students helped me choose one campus over another.
11	It helped me realise how expensive it would be to live in Switzerland. Also, I was already interested in figuring out where I should do my first internship and speaking to previous students helped.
16	The university agent explained as much as possible what I should expect on arrival and so did previous students.
18	Well to an extent, the sources were able to give me a general overview of what the village was like but in terms of the course work I didn't feel that I had enough information.
20	I had a picture of what it would be like.
21	Helped me get some basic concept of the school.
23	Yes they were useful because I had a better idea of what I was going to face. Surprises come when the year starts! :-)
25	But the information could have been more specific and accurate concerning lifestyle in Swiss.
26	To an extent. It was my first visit to Europe after living my whole life in Central Asia and I have experienced a culture shock.
28	My friends are trustworthy their words are more realistic than the school website / agents.
29	We live and study in school, there's nothing else to worry about, so get used to this school is the priority.
30	2 weeks before the departure, me and my friends gathered with the agent / representatives to have a briefing about the school.
31	Very informative.

32	I was able to have a vague idea of what to expect but I think the agency said many over exaggerating things, which really worried me and my family.
33	It would have been beneficial to receive information regarding the exact modules to be taken in 1 st year (at least).
35	The agent helped to know the basic information, the student then explained me how is the life of student at the school, how is the culture, what is possible to do there or if the studies are hard or not.
36	I can know what is expected while I arrived.
37	It definitely useful. You can collect all kind of information on the internet, and ... more real life examples or specific information from students and representatives.
39	Got a clearer understanding of what is awaiting for me.
40	The internet website and forum is very helpful providing us with the information necessary in order to increase our understanding of the university and also how life would be.
44	It was useful, as my friends influenced my choice to choose this school.
45	Most of the things that I wanted to know about way 70% accurate.
48	I came to the school with my mom personally since we're here on a holiday before school started and we had a small tour around the campus and had our questions answered.
53	Well, the information online and through the agency helped me in answering questions like what facilities they have here, the names of lecturers and the group in general. However, it's the experience here that changes the feeling, friendly people makes everything seems less scary, in contrast, people that look on me with a strong-weird look seems really disturbing.
58	Because I get to know what to expect once I arrived.
59	I met some students who started their first year with me.
62	Talking with previous students was the most helpful. School catalogues, agents talked only positive things while the student told me even the risks of going to the school. All those were useful though.

NO responses

Student Number	Reason given by students
3	I thought the agent was very helpful. However, according to my experience, the information from the agent, and the image of the school are VERY exaggerated.
24	I figure out that, based on self experience are more reliable.
27	Information from the site / visit agent can NEVER reflect the downsides / hidden of staying in Switzerland.
42	To an extent they were helpful.
46	The sources agent gave to me? Not at all.

49	There wasn't enough information about items like uniforms and the school term durations. Also were informed that the school ensures that you get your internship but you actually do it yourself mainly.
54	General information maybe yes ... but the real lifestyle and how it works here doesn't really match with what I've told. And the information provided is very limited.
55	Totally different from what the agent mentioned. Specially about the bank account. While I was doing my first year the agent told me that I will be able to open an account with La Post at the age of 17 however it turn out to be wrong. I was broke for months till my birthday.
56	Whatever information given were too general, no specific instruction or recommendation were given. As information were taken from people whom have not really been through living in Swiss. As for online information, it was vague, stating brings more clothes, not stating expected salty food or even where and how to do laundry, as well as getting necessities.
69	The agent in my home town did not provide realistic expectations. She just wanted a commission. She changed my application to one campus without my consent as I had originally expressed my preference for a different campus.
70	Some of them.

Appendix 16 - Comment by Students on Feelings Upon Arrival

Question 11: What words or phrases would you use to describe how you felt when you arrived in Switzerland / the village for the first time. Be as specific as possible.

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	Excited.
2	I was amazed by the design I felt like in a hotel!! And everybody was so nice, the reception staff and I got special attention as my brother did the same path ... and it made it so much more easy for me because I was quite shy at the beginning.
3	Switzerland: very punctual. Everything is very punctual such as transportation. Village: isolate. It takes long to get to city centre, shops close so early.
4	Quiet but beautiful place, nice, cold.
5	Happy, excited, curious, ready to start.
6	Quiet, beautiful, calm and friendly.
7	Happy and excited.
8	This is amazing. I love the snow. This sky-train is an interesting invention. The staff seems so nice. Why is my toilet so small? Why are there so many Chinese here? (Note – this is my general reaction and is not to be taken as derogatory).
9	When I first arrived I felt very happy and comfortable only because all of my friends were already here.
10	I would say when I first arrived I was extremely excited because it was a new chapter in my life and I didn't know what to expect. The welcoming from the school made me feel more comfortable because they provided a bus service because the trains can be complicated if it's your first time. I travelled with a lot of other students (first, second and third years) so I wasn't alone.
11	Anxious, excited, nervous, overwhelmed, enthusiastic and prepared.
12	Wonderful.
13	The weather is nice but the shops close too early.
14	The trip was too long. 14 hours flight then another 3 hours for the school bus. Plus the road to the mountain were making me feeling stomach.
15	When I arrived in Geneva airport, it was 11pm and I am tired because of the flight. So I just tried to find the school booth to go to school safely. I felt I am in Switzerland when I sleep in my new room because of the interior.
16	One campus was very welcoming though the weather was cold. The other campus was different not as welcoming as the first.
17	Lobby creates a comfortable environment, if felt great the first time.
18	Excitement and confusion. Excitement because I was in a new country but confusion because the school was so unknown to me.
19	Excited, interested, looking forward to the experience.

20	It wasn't that different from where I came from, because it snows there and it is a small city, but the view was better. However, it is such a beautiful country.
21	The airport pickup employees let me wait for 3 hours at the airport instead of the car. I felt quite disappointed and unwelcome.
23	I felt at ease, happy and serene. I always loved Switzerland since I was young, always wanted to live here and I want to live here!
24	Lucky.
25	Lost, cold and unfriendly atmosphere around Swiss people. Expected more sophisticated looking streets and people.
26	Lost, happy, urge to look confident, urge to settle in new apartment / dormitory, need to find people who share interests.
27	Disoriented, shocked, nostalgic (about UK but not Hong Kong).
29	Cold and natural.
30	Cold and quiet.
31	Found myself within a beautiful environment, mountain, sunshine.
32	I started in one campus and was lucky enough to have a quick tour in the other campus before moving there and honestly I didn't like the second campus in comparison to the first, because it did not feel comfortable but rather intimidating, especially the students and some teachers walking around.
33	Absolutely amazed when I first arrived in the first campus for first year. Settled in in the first day. The second campus didn't seem to feel as welcoming when I moved for third year.
34	Very far from the city centre, high up on a mountain.
35	Sad and scared.
36	Excited.
37	Breath-taking.
38	Beautiful.
39	Nervous.
40	Excitement, apprehension, happiness, doubt, everything was new.
41	I felt happy.
42	I was excited and nervous. Everything seemed very new for me. Saw a lot of new diverse faces making it a new experience for me.
43	I was excited before. A bit disappointed while discovering various difficulties and problems of the school. I was sad about the village life. I got used to it.
44	I had a bit of homesick, I was lost but after a while I adapted to the new environment and it was fun. People are very quiet and helpful.
45	Surprised, amazed, nervous.
46	So different than where I have been stayed.
47	Amazing country, beautiful, peaceful and quiet.

48	Lost, alone, worried.
49	It was bittersweet, exciting, nerve wrecking and was anxious.
50	Countryside, cold, boring.
52	Excited.
53	Scared and 'its really loud'. The first time when I was here for my first year, I sat on the bus bringing me to the campus, the people attending to us was okay, they are smiling and looked a little stress maybe because of the huge crowd, well in the bus, the huge crowd seems to be from a specific country and I'm in a different one, I felt scared, don't know if I'll fit in or not.
54	The environment and surroundings are upon satisfaction. However, there is a certain extent of culture shock among colleagues, but I was really impressed of how kind and nice the staff and lecturers are around here.
55	Amazed by the view and also people. But also feel shocked with the shops are closing earlier and not opening on Sunday.
56	Unfamiliar, but able to adapt fast due to experiencing this in younger age, when moving to Singapore for English education for 8 years. Was actually insecure, don't know where to get food and who to ask.
57	Disappointed. This is not what I've been expected.
58	Quaint, there was a sense of belonging in the community. Everything was in order, specific set of rules even on the yellow bag specifically for the trash. Everybody way very orderly.
59	Lonely – I didn't know anyone, I was afraid I wouldn't fit in. Amazed – about the beautiful place.
60	Cold.
61	Nervous, excited, disbelief.
62	Independent environment that makes me to be individualistic.
63	I was thrilled to be in Europe for the first time, looking forward to the new independence.
64	It was amazing. I can't use words to describe even, I fell in love with her since I came here.
65	The environment is really comfortable, however I was not know about the transportation clearly, which made me a bit of stress and also the supermarkets location.
66	Unsure, excitement, anxiousness.
67	Confused, surprised, tired and irritated.
68	So beautiful, everything is perfect.
69	I was overwhelmed.
70	Very far.

Appendix 17 - Comments from Students on Challenges with Swiss Culture

Question 12: From your arrival until today (or when you left), what would you describe as challenging with the Swiss culture?

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	The working behaviour, language.
2	Actually I didn't had any problems with the Swiss culture as I knew Switzerland very good already and the rules and life style are very similar to my country of origin. The only part I must say was strange was to deal with the Asian cultures as I found they didn't adapt, the eating habits and stuff, the Russians with their strong image was strange to adapt to.
3	As I'm an Asian, I felt racism a bit from French.
4	No so friendly, can't feel like a local indeed always feel like stupid foreigner who can't speak their languages.
5	Language, speaking French.
6	The language in some part of Switzerland.
7	Local people did not speak English.
8	The sad part is, being in this school, one never did have any chances to understand the Swiss culture as anticipated. However whenever it happened, the Swiss tend to be divided into two broadly generic groups. One that is extremely friendly who would like to get to know you and makes an effort to connect. While on the other hand a group of individuals, who do not seem to like outsiders and can not seem to stand the idea that people do not speak French / German in their country (depending on what Canton you are in).
9	No challenges were encountered since I come to Switzerland since I was born here.
10	When I arrived the major shock was the language barrier when you go out in Switzerland however because this school is an international school you don't feel this when you are in school. The food was also difficult to adjust to and it still is because its very processed and different from where I come from.
11	I think that no matter how well-prepared one might be, it is still difficult to interact with the locals especially the french part (if you do not speak french). They either ignore you, or start to get rude.
12	Language barrier.
13	The shops close too early.
14	Most people in french speaking area does not speak english and their attitude are sometimes annoying.
15	Eating cheese which was too strong taste.
16	Time efficiency, the Swiss are always on time.
17	Cost of living.
18	The language barrier is definitely a factor as well as the abruptness of the Swiss
19	Nothing really.

20	Cheese, french, being on time.
21	N/A I feel life here is good and all challenges are about study instead of culture.
22	I grew up in a similar way so am used to it.
23	Even though my culture is very similar because I was raised in the North of Italy, just a 4 hour drive away, the only thing that challenges me here in Switzerland is that on a Sunday everything EVERYTHING is closed.
24	Language
25	Cold people, discriminative and uncomfortable to be around. They are not willing to understand differences and think they are the top of the world. You have to adjust instead to their culture.
26	Obsession with rules, time, habits.
27	Proximity with timings; 'rigid-minded' (sticking to rule, non-flexible); laid-back work attitude (e.g. shops tend to close after 1800).
29	French speaking ppl are not friendly, they ask ppl who stand on their land to speak their language. German speaking ppl are friendly and willing to communicate with foreigners in english.
30	Language, because the citizens only speak french and very little knowledge of english.
31	No challenges.
32	I suppose it is the persistent working hours, such as the malls and even sometimes teachers.
33	Nothing that really stood out. I am half Swiss so I would say I am relatively accustomed to their culture.
34	Language.
35	That they don't have open in the supermarkets during the lunch time.
36	Relaxation.
37	I don't actually think there is many challenge with the Swiss culture, but instead I would say it cause inconvenience to me ... nearly all of my friends were shocked when they first heard that shops would close during weekends.
38	There was not very challenge for me, only the language was a problem.
39	Nothing since we hardly interact with true Swiss culture.
40	As I am from Brazil what I could say was more challenging was the fact that the Swiss culture is more of a closed culture and people are 'colder' than in Brazil.
41	The people in reception of the local hotel is not really nice to Asian !! Language is a problem !! They are not speck in english.
42	The thing I found challenging the most was the opening and closing hours of shops and outlets.
43	Opening hours of shops!!! Working days (Sunday - everything is closed)! The trash has to be separated.
44	Time, the shops are closing very early, too much public holidays, which I did not even know about.

45	The shops close after 6pm and everything closes on Sunday. Also, I found everything expensive.
46	Well, I adapted it well. I don't feel anything. Except the first year, I didn't know any french, and some of Swiss french were not willing to help, but some do.
47	Language issue, and life style (is totally different compare with other countries, less entertainment).
48	The language and the hours of operation of the shops / stores here.
49	Language barrier.
50	Language.
52	Swiss culture is not particularly evident in school.
53	Opening hours would be one of the Swiss culture that I would no miss too much. However, the people here changed my first impression as times goes, these 4 years had been an amazing journey.
54	Swiss culture is more strict and formal I'll say. People will have least negotiation space. People in the village are generally nice but due to language barriers I couldn't explore more about the people, but when I worked in Geneva I realised that Swiss people are more cold and stiff comparing with American culture or my country. it would take a period of time to be involved.
55	Swiss culture tends to be slower pace therefore everything in Swiss seems slower. At first it seems challenging but now is part of my life. In short I adapt and I love it now.
56	Not much, other than food culture, cheese and dessert.
57	Swiss culture is not as open-minded as US culture, which is extremely strange. I feel like even the school I've attended in Asia is more open-minded than in Swiss.
58	I can blend in easily, so there was no major issue except for maybe my little knowledge in the language (french).
59	I do not believe that we students are in contact with the Swiss culture to a large degree - the challenges lie in dealing with the cultures of the other students (Asian, African for example). Otherwise the Swiss culture is very similar to my own (German) so I did not find this particularly challenging.
60	The language, people don't always speak English in Switzerland.
61	Not really a challenge with the culture.
62	Language barriers.
63	Language, the Swiss will expect you to know their language.
64	Language.
65	Language issue.
66	Language and addressing elders by name.
67	I didn't like the lack of accessibility of services that I'm used to at home (stores and restaurants seemed to be closed all the time). I was surprised to discover that Swiss people in general speak fairly good english I do speak some french, but I believe people were friendly enough to try to communicate with me in a understanding sense.
68	Can't understand the language.

69	No complaints.
70	Languages.

Appendix 18 - Comments from Students on Feelings Upon Arrival at Institution

Question 13: What words or phrases would you use to describe how you felt when you first arrived in the academic environment of this school? Please be as specific as possible.

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	Nervous
2	I was feeling welcomed by the teachers especially because I speak french and I enjoyed to see the teachers happy to use their native language to talk to me! Also was it to a great advantage when practicing in french restaurant and much more fun as I understood all the french terms! The other subjects were also great and I felt very integrated and comfortable within the environment.
3	Diverse.
5	Curious, bit surprised by the looks (positively), I am at a place of higher education.
6	Its not as hard as I think it would be studying with english as the main language.
7	Excited.
8	The teachers are so friendly; they seem really passionate about their jobs; I need to vacuum the entire cafeteria once every week? You gotta be kidding me?! Why can't a great majority of my classmates comprehend english, how did they get in?!
9	Very comfortable and everything was very well explained.
10	Hectic, many modules cramped into a short space of time, the teachers are helpful, first to third year was a lot easier when you get into BA the change in learning is a bit of a shock and hard to adjust to.
11	I felt that the teachers were very friendly and helpful, however I expected more of a challenge within the class setting. I felt that it was too easy and not worth the money.
12	Scared.
13	So many Asian then I expected.
14	Not as expected.
15	Every lecture was nice and kind.
16	In the first campus, not what I expected for university level. a lot of spoon feeding to be exact which made me lay back and once I reached BA it was really difficult to adjust.
17	It was challenging because there are many subjects that needed to be cover within just 4 months time.
18	Overwhelmed, the BA course was nothing like I had done before and the workload and having to do a dissertation at the same time was and still is very daunting.
19	Excited, interested, surprised by the strictness of certain rules and regulations.
20	Hogwarts, excited to meet people, nervous to meet my roommate, scared to start school again.
21	Nervous since I had to handle 13 different subjects I didn't know how to manage my time.

22	A little bit nervous and confused but I got used to it quite fast and enjoy it here.
23	I felt confused and things were unclear. Subjects should be more explained in depth prior to our arrival. Some students like to see what they will study in advance.
24	Difficult.
25	Was nice to see variety of cultures around. I felt comfortable and excited about new environment and meeting new people.
26	Neat, relaxed, not as challenging as it used to be in previous experiences, excess group work.
27	Frustrated, cold welcome.
29	Too many Chinese speaking people, I wish to study in an international environment not a school with 70% Chinese students.
30	Welcoming.
31	Time management.
32	It was very stressful because of the grade boundaries, knowing that it was not easy to pass.
33	It differed across the 4 academic semesters. The pressure inevitably increased.
34	Very tight schedule, like boarding high school, do not have much self studying time in the first year, with too many duty work to do.
35	Excited and scared.
36	Friendly.
37	Kind of disappointed.
38	Be honest, it was much lower than my expectation for the first and second year.
39	Excited and happy.
40	The environment was very professional and I was kind of surprised with all the people from different places.
41	Beautiful and wonderful view is totally different between my home town.
42	Excited and curious.
43	A little bit stressed, but got used to it very fast. First year seemed to be the most difficult as everything was new and unknown yet.
44	Different from my high school, but it was interesting, new, because all lectures was in english, a lot of fun. A lot of new academic words. Excitement.
45	I felt like it was different than I have ever experienced all my life, but in a good way.
46	Are all Swiss education like this? Doing so many things in 18 weeks (or I should say 17 weeks)? I came with a mess and leave like a mess. That's how I describe myself in first year.
47	I was very curious when I arrived at the school in the village, the campus is different compared to normal university.
48	Lost, alone, wonder if I will fit in well.
49	Excited, ready to explore and succeed.

50	Serious.
52	Feel lost, lonely.
53	Well, theres a mix feeling towards this question, people seems nice when I meet them, but on the other hand also seems really hard to be approached. Feels like theres a hierarchy in the school.
54	When first I arrived, I was really glad and delighted by the kindness and friendliness of lecturers, which is different from my country. However, academic wise, I think that some of my colleagues are not that capable of speaking english. It makes me feel like the standards and level might not be like as expected, which limits my study area at the same time due to concerns for these students.
55	Scared. Because during my second day of classes I am already doing service for one whole day. But at the same time feel excited as well because is my first time.
56	Fresh yet strange.
57	Everything is so rigid, not flexible enough.
58	No words to describe.
59	Similar to school in Germany. Confirmed my expectations about an interesting programme.
60	People are very nice.
61	Surprised and excited in the first year.
62	Well ...
63	Confused, it was more advanced than education in my country.
64	Strange, want to escape, can not adapt well.
65	In high expectations.
66	Uncertain, afraid, confusion of new teaching styles.
67	Excited, challenged, intimidated and eager to start.
68	So strict.
69	1st year can be overwhelming and a lot of my classmates did not return.
70	Very old and tradition school.

Appendix 19 - Comments about the Intensity of the Programme

Question 14: What do you feel about the intensity of the programme offered at this institution?

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	Challenging
2	I find it absolutely amazing!! It wasn't boring and it kept me focused for all that time and I was finished earlier!
3	Course works of some programme are a bit over-weighted.
4	Really too much ... can't remember all of them at once time. Imagine this ... 11 subjects in 5 months and we always busy every week. I can't tell how much knowledge I can remember until now but I can tell most of the time I run for deadline. However, I end up with safe grade every time hence I tend to do it again every year. However BA is a really tough time. Only BA programme is something I feel really value for me thought the whole 4 years.
5	Good.
6	It feel just right.
8	In all honesty, it felt almost like a walk in the park. The subjects thought were really easy to comprehend, and the exams were at times too easy. However, the teachers made sure that we knew everything important there is to know within the industry, and it was a remarkable experience never the less. They were able to transfer the enthusiasm they had onto us, and to that I am thankful.
9	Pretty intense but manageable, it is very challenging to manage stress.
10	I think it can be quite intense but at the same time we choose to come here and you generally have to mentally prepare yourself because it can be overwhelming at times.
11	It is tough in BA, however from 1st -3rd year not so much per say, just the load of work is crammed up. Not challenging enough and then all of a sudden in BA we receive so much independence to manage our time ourselves that we have to change our old habits and adapt to this new one if we wanna be successful.
12	Excited.
14	The programmes are not challenging until BA level. From 1st to 3rd year, the works are relatively easy especially when there are some classmate who does not understand english in class. The lecturers had to make it easier.
15	I felt the programme is tightly suitable for 18 weeks.
16	On the good side it is a great way for someone who wants to be done with school as soon as possible however on the other side it is quite intense which I feel marks down the learning process especially in 1st to 3rd year one is forced to cram and not actually study because there is a lot to learn.
17	Good.
18	It is extremely intense. I feel it would be better if we were given a bit more time to do the dissertation.

19	Quite intense, but balanced.
20	Third year is very different with BA, I feel that in 3rd year it was very hectic and a huge load of work, but BA is much more time management, therefore it was hard to get used to.
21	At the beginning I felt nervous and pressured, but then I got used of it. I think it is good experience and practice.
22	It is very possible to do.
23	The intensity is stressful but it is very good because it gave me the opportunity to test / challenge and know myself and my capabilities. Where now seems to be very useful in my life and at work.
24	Too compact and time is the main problem.
25	Not intense enough in 1, 2 and 3 years. There is a huge difference between 3 and BA. Does not make any sense, since previous 3 years are supposed to keep us steady and ready for the hard work in BA, and they don't. I was disappointed. Do not know what I paid for?
26	Not intense - I have not been challenged enough to start working far in advance to get higher grades.
27	The atmosphere and workload is too slack in first year, hence allowing students to engage into non-academic activities. Consequently this snowballs into a laid-back attitude in studying.
29	Satisfied.
30	1st and 2nd year - not too intense / 3rd year - intense / BA - extremely intense.
31	It is very intense and time management is challenging.
32	I wish the semesters were not as short, not only because everything is so packed but the time spent there was not proportional to the price my parents pay. Also, the intensity of the programme really makes it hard for me to actually believe that I have learnt something, because everything is so forced, even now, people ask what I have learnt, I don't even know what to tell them because it feels like I am just studying for the exams rather than really learning.
33	Rather than the difficulty of work, I found the time pressure much more challenging.
34	Was mostly the same with other country, but with lots of local culture and international culture integrations, however there are always one or two subject rather are disappointed every semester, due to the lecturer.
35	It is pretty intensive, because everything is done only with 4 months, so it is stressful in terms of the time management.
36	Easy.
37	Not intensive at all, compare with those in my on country.
38	Similar to Question 13, it was very bad in 1 and 2 year, but good and well organised in 3 and BA. However, this school needs to maintain their standard in each different year.
39	Too easy.
40	For me was pretty nice and not so intense.
41	Actively with the programmer.
42	Very short period of time to cover a large complicated subjects.

43	I feel that the school provides too general information, without deepening the knowledge in any particular sphere.
44	Very intense, especially in first 3 years, but it paid off. I still believe in other universities its also not easier, but because of the nature of the programme in this school, it is very intense.
45	It was good, I learned a lot.
46	I didn't get any course until I submitted the report. Everything is clear after I clicked the 'submit' button. Since english is my second language, I have to put a lot of attentions to classes. And it is easier to get tired and distracted. Thus, a lot of time, I just gave up staying in the class and do self study. Is more like, just give me the metrical, and teachers just told me what they want to see in reports, I don't really need to go to the classes ...
47	First was the most stressful year for me.
48	It was a big step joining the school only in the 3rd year where it has an intense schedule, but overall, it was manageable.
49	Its quite hectic.
50	More motivated.
52	Good intensive programme.
53	Too fast! I hope it would be longer so that what I've learned here will stay in my memory forever and not just brushed through. in relation to friendship, I hoped the school term were longer so that I will be able to still see them face-to-face and not through skype due to the huge distance.
54	Maybe now it has changed, but I think that my first year and second year programme content are not that rich and applicable. It was pretty easy and shallow. However, I felt the third year and BA had improved a lot especially BA, which I think is due to the qualifications of my lecturers had improved. I felt that there is need to put effort and hard work to achieve what is needed, and thats when I really learned something from experienced lecturers.
55	It is good for the intensity because it helps us on time management. Without good time management most of us will be suffering and will not be graduating. If the term is longer per semester it will be better I believe as the school is a university, it should be longer and includes longer Easter breaks unlike others. I believe with longer period of time the students can learn more as well. More topics will be covered by the lecturers as well.
56	Less intensive as compared to Singapore education. Was able to cope easy with lots of free time.
57	Moderate.
58	At first it was pretty demanding, but as time goes by I started to understand how it goes and what is expected from me.
59	Not too intense, the programme is very condensed (a lot of classes) but the work load is more than manageable.
60	That it is quite good, but more practical training may be needed.
61	I don't feel that the courses are intense and sometimes feel the standard of quality and challenge level are far too low.
62	It was okay overall, although some students seem to have difficult time to follow programme.
63	Manageable.

64	Independent thinking capacity.
65	It will benefit for our future.
66	It is challenging but with the library facility available at the school it was easy to adapt.
67	Good.
68	Very busy schedule.
69	Challenging but it was worth it.
70	Its too hard for students.

Appendix 20 - Comments on Challenges in the Academic Culture

Question 15: What would you describe as being challenging within the academic culture at this institution, particularly in your final term. Please be as specific as possible.

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	The teaching method.
2	In the beginning I found that the classes took long as there was a big language barrier between the different countries which made it really boring for those who understood perfectly english. I found it unfair in the beginning that I had to do an english test and they seemed have not done one but supposed to do one. When I came to BA I realised that those who were in my class really wanted the degree and were not only there because of their parents and I could actually more build some relationship with them in particular with the Asians.
3	I was stressed by the pressure of course works. There are some programme such as F&B development which require only one CW and has 100% grading. I heard that we were in the 1st semester having a written exam in BA. Studying for written exam without any information and know that it will determine you pass/fail the course, you can't imagine how much students are pressured.
4	Strict lecturers however it made us to work on our assignment and be serious with every coursework.
5	Dissertation.
6	The free time. More free time, less subject to learn is just make me lazy.
8	The most challenging, was when I had to get the primary data for dissertation. This was extremely excruciating as many hotels were not interested or scared to help.
9	The most challenging thing of my school career is BA due to the big gap between 3rd year and BA.
10	I would say its the change from Diploma to BA standards with very little guidance on what to expect and how to manage it and adapt.
11	I think that the dissertation aspect with the combination of balancing out the class work (for instance weekly tutorial preparation, reports, presentation, extra reading) and on top of that the stress of starting a new chapter in our lives, finding a job straight after finishing up the final term. It is all a challenge messing with our stress-levels and multitasking skills.
12	Different culture had different working style.
13	The gap between each year is quite big.
14	Self-study is the hardest time, especially when we are all used to the easy lifestyle in first to third ear. Lecturers are willing to give helps but they prefer us to find the answer by ourselves.
16	Time management and deadline expectations.
17	It was better than what I have expected, however there is not enough time dedicating to independent study.

18	For a direct entry student the previous knowledge that the 3rd year students have is not there and when lecturers refer to theories or knowledge learnt in the previous semesters, it is a little unfair. Many lecturers say 'remember from 3rd year' and unfortunately that does not apply to a direct entry BA student.
19	Developing the academic writing skills was challenging, group works were always challenging. In the final term the higher requirements to critical thinking were challenging.
20	Time management and group work.
21	Time management.
22	If you have good time management then it is not very challenging.
23	With the academic culture at this school, the challenging thing was to get things done on time. This wasn't very easy since we had a lot of free time which wasn't free time but our own time that we had to study. Needs a lot of willpower.
24	Group works. It has seems that, some of the people in group work become 'silent' member. They did not contribute but r receiving the same grade.
25	This culture does not encourage you enough to study on your own and to motivate yourself. The courses most of the time are boring and teachers do not want students to participate. Final term was a disappointment. Too much free time and too little things to do, no matter how much you read yourself. You loose a track of time and go off the study paths.
26	There is requirement to participate in class. Often I felt like the discussion was overtaken by a very limited amount of people even though some of the class members had something more substantial to say. When I had a chance to participate or had an idea, I would often either try to let other classmates to participate or not get a chance to say a word because the conversation was dominated by someone else or it was going off topic while the class had to continue. I believe the lecturers should put more effort in letting more students to participate in class discussions.
27	The huge difference in requiring to work individually. In 3rd year most assignments are group projects, whereas most assignments in BA are individual work. The huge shift of workload could be hard to deal with, especially in some auxiliary subjects, where there can be little / lace of guidance from some lecturers.
29	Self-study programmes.
30	The amount of expectations of all the reports, and the deadline between reports.
31	Time management.
32	I think was to meet my own expectations with the final results because of the major differences in systems and grading systems.
33	Threat seems to be the main strategy for motivation.
34	A big jump from third year to final year. And lack of information about the importance of choosing the right internship.
35	It was suddenly much more reading than in previous terms. However, the time we had for our homework and assignments was sufficient enough.
36	Its not different from the previous work that I had in secondary school, especially for the critical thinking side. But the format (e.g. the way of submission) of the coursework somehow make me difficult to follow.
37	Some of students from country A always late to school and meeting! This is disrespectful to those whom take them seriously.

38	BA term was absolutely good for me. But my personal opinion, this school should have less group work, especially at the last term. It is not fair that not everyone has the same expectation, and I could not push too much my group-mates. Also, standard between lecturers should be the same. If some lecturers give too many the first class honour grade, its value will be decreased. I hope the lecturers will consider it, not only being kind in terms of grading. Even though I cannot get the high grade, I think it is more fair, and will give more value to the school in long-term.
39	No consistency in terms of weekly assignments.
40	For me what was challenging is that most of the exams were like a memory test, most of the questions were questions that were previously mentioned and I thought that the lack of questions on which a situation would need to be analysed with the knowledge learned would be much better, I can't forget the nights memorising things.
41	More easy to finish my report.
42	Working in groups was very challenging as everyone comes from a different background and has different opinions and personality.
43	That the BA term was very unusual. I believe that the gap between the third year and BA is too big, in BA almost everything changes (how the subjects are held, system of marking, amount of reading and information) and in my opinion, it is not a very good idea to give the freedom of self-studies.
44	Higher requirements. Sometimes problems accrued within a group, as everyone came from different culture. But in general in final term less problem happened.
45	Honestly, I had no challenges at all.
46	Every subject is more like doing self study and find sources by myself. But in my country my professors would tell us what to read.
48	Its the self discipline, managing coursework, tutorial, proposal for dissertation, and the entire dissertation in general.
49	The amount of reports and having to do your dissertation at the same time so that you can submit a draft to supervisor.
50	Food, students, time management.
52	A lot of students from Asia.
53	time, comparing to 3rd year, I have a lot of time on my hands, but its never easy to manage them. So fast, its almost the end of my final BA term, even when time seems a lot and ample at the beginning, its never enough at the end.
54	I do not find much challenges for my final term. Information and knowledge are accessible easily, lecturers are helpful and nice. What we need to do is just work hard on your own.
55	During the final term is very challenging because the requirement is few stage higher. By mean using the 'critical thinking' is something that was not taught during the 3rd term of study in the school. All the requirements are different as well in terms of grading and also data.
56	Perhaps not using books in class. As books were seen as guide for individuals to read at free time. Hence might sometime be lost in class when lecturers starting with new chapter or complicated contents.
57	Nothing special.

58	The fact that curriculum changes every single time. For example the different subjects taught when I was second and third year and the current subjects the school offer for those years now. Its not a one time change but almost every single semester, which show lack of quality standards. Students in BA are expected to catch up with something they have no clue about since it wasn't taught at them during the 3rd year.
59	The final term was focussed on independent studying, which gave me the impression of being in a university more than at school (as in the previous years). I like the last year most since the focus was on critical thinking and creativity.
60	Lots of reports and presentations.
61	Having to sit through lesson plans that appear to have been dulled down or simplified to accommodate non-english speakers. Some classes really feel like a joke academically for a university level course.
63	You have a short period of time to execute a lot of research for your final independent research among other reports.
64	Too much work came together, pressure was so heavy at that time, but anyway, I did it!
65	Not enough time for rest, ends up health issue.
66	Using multiple sources of reading for reports and the dissertaiton.
67	The amount of importance placed in group work at your final degree classification. I believe that the individual effort should be graded by supervision from the lecturer. its not in the end the success of the team work that is graded, but the result of the assignment. Which for me can seem as unfair in some groupings where some individuals are stronger than others.
68	Struggle to be critical.
70	Stress out.

Appendix 21 - Comments on how Negativity was Overcome

Question 16: If any of the feelings you identified earlier were negative in nature, what did you do to try overcome these feelings. Please be as specific as possible.

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	Try to be confident and be positive.
2	The feeling of unfairness I overcame by understanding the Asians situation a bit more, that some of them don't want to be in this school but it was their parents choice but not theres and thats why they behaved in a kind of rebellion by not participating in class making the class very boring and poor in regards to new material learned!
3	I tried to enjoy this moment. It is not that common to come and live in Switzerland from Korea. As my life as a student was to the end and I don't know when I can come back to Switzerland, I released stress by just enjoying the moments.
4	Make the programme longer and maybe the school should recruit right student from the beginning, not too much of Chinese student who I can tell they don't know how to study or they just done want to study. Hence creating an 'international' environment got gradually become 'Chinese' environment.
6	Just have to think that my parents pay lots of money so I can study here so there will be no excuse to fail in this school.
8	I formed a close group of friends who shared my woes, and we managed to motivate each other to make it through school together. These friendships blossomed into lifelong friendships throughout the years, and in a sense can be seen as the basis of life long networks in the future.
9	Fortunately my home is only a 4 hour drive from school and I got the chance to go back whenever things were getting hard. But since I am an easy going person and very open I never had negative feelings.
10	Some teachers helped to ease us into the difference in learn gin and this helped quite a lot.
11	Overall, I learned how to manage my time more wisely spending most of my time in an environment where I can concentrate and get my work completed (the library).
12	Try to overcome it.
14	None.
15	I didn't feel negative things due to culture. When I was under stress, I went to the closest city and walked lakeside alone.
16	Adjust.
17	Cut down on spending and try to keep my focus on studies all the time.
18	In terms of the knowledge gap, I researched what I did not know or asked lecturers when I next saw them.
20	Made new friends.
21	Talk to my friends back home.

23	Willpower comes with positivity. Therefore I was always trying to be positive. Which is great challenge because it made me stronger and stronger.
24	Learn to tolerate people and become a strict leader. Sometimes strict could move the lazy 'ass' off.
25	Some people may go off and drink, I go for a walk or read a book. Being with a person close to you helps a lot too. Speaking to family and trying to think more positively also a way out of negativity.
27	Watching TV series; writing online blogs; online games.
29	By myself and get used to it, you may not change the entire school so we have to think positive and survive.
30	Try to make the report as soon as possible if given the guideline, this could reduce my anxiety for the deadline.
31	Making contact to all the different nationalities trying to find out more about them.
32	Nothing specific was done because I had to accept the challenges.
33	Tried to brush them off by focusing on work!
34	Did not build up good relationship with the hotel before graduation, which leads the employment as a big problem now, especially with some countries like Australia.
35	I tried to talk with my family and my boyfriend a lot through Skype and also tried to ask my friend from same country for help and talk with him as much as I could.
36	I think about the purpose of studying in Switzerland, then try to ignore the negative feeling.
37	I told myself 'you can never change a person. You can't change anyone without his or her permission and tis rude to try. What you can do is either accept people for who they are or do not associate with them. Trying to mould people into the way you wish they were is inherently disastrous. This is their culture!'
38	As I mentioned early stage, I thought the standard of this school was not as high as I expected. After one two years, I realised that I did not aim to be the best and just keep saying it is very dissatisfied. I ate myself at that time then I started to 'study' in my 3rd year.
40	They were not negative.
41	Don't care and accept all of the culture shock.
42	I stayed optimistic, endured by being patient with the difficulties I faced as a group offering the other group mates the help required and supporting them as a leader.
44	I usually talked to my friends who stayed in the school or my parents. But usually I tried to solve them by myself either talking, asking for help from lecturers or friends.
45	N/A
46	Nothing special, just accepted it, and do it. Do a good time management.
47	Think about something positive.
48	Blending in, mixing with classmates. Getting the first step to try to make new friends.
49	just keep focus on the reports that were due and pushed myself to work hard.
52	I don't understand the question.

53	Optimistic. Talking to my friends that I trust even when they're from a different culture than I am, definitely helped me in all situations that I face which are negative.
55	I do have some negative feelings but we all overcome it by adapting. For example like shops closing on Sunday we can always go to the sports centre for badminton or ice skating or else we will be scheduling meeting instead. There are always reports to complete in the school therefore it was always been full.
56	Down to the Maslow, physiological needs. Creating self private space in room, getting inform of where to get food and meeting some friends.
57	Dealing everything alone. Contacting my family and friends back home.
58	Study harder. Believe that there is nothing the school an do except for the students to just study harder, which is good for the students to understand that things do not go as well as it should.
59	Negative feelings were mainly the level of english of many students and their willingness to contribute to group work. This improved strongly especially during BA since the motivation increased in the final term.
62	Talked with friends although nothing could be done.
63	Made friends, it helps a little.
64	Thinking by myself first. Then discuss with my close friends or my family to find the solution.
65	Felt being isolated as no one who I know is from the same country as I am, however I tried to not be too shy to talk with my colleagues, in order to build up a good friendship.
66	With the help and support of the students who attended the school since first year.
67	Discovered the great in people in school, the nature in the village, got insight in study topics of interest and found a healthy routine to feel good.
68	For me, its fine.
69	The friendships I made here helped me through.
70	Just move on.

Appendix 22 - Comments on Support Networks Developed

**Question 17: What support networks did you try to build while at the institution?
Additional response beyond the choices given in the questionnaire.**

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
11	Since when I first arrived I was the only student from my country (or could even say continent) it was difficult to interact with others due to language barriers. However as time passed they broke out of their shells and started interacting with me more.
17	Students that share almost the same culture and language.
19	Not sure what a support network is.
23	Maintenance, dish washers, locals, chefs, other schools staff.
39	Colleagues at work during the internship.
46	Operations staff.

Appendix 23 - Comments on Students Feelings on Adjustment

Question 18: Do you feel you have managed to adjust well to both Swiss culture and the academic culture? Please explain ... what words are you using to measure your level of adjustment?

YES responses and reasons

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
1	Adaptation
2	Yes I definitely have! It matured me, I found a lot of friends which I can actually call friends, made me feel part of a family, which was very hard to leave after BA!
3	I think I managed very well. It might be just a ... my class mates are all nice.
5	Knowing and staying in touch with students and staff.
6	With never failing any year here in Switzerland and the experiences of the internship.
8	I feel that I adjusted well, as I never felt like I was away from home. In fact oddly enough I felt more at home at school thanks to the freedom and support networks that I had.
9	I have completely adapted into the Swiss culture, I have a job now in Switzerland and I am willing to live and work here for a long time.
10	In terms of Swiss culture I can't say I had to adjust very much because I didn't interact with many Swiss people. As for the academic culture I did adjust for the Diploma however, I can only hope that I've been able to adjust for BA.
11	Different food, language barriers.
14	I graduate.
16	Because I have completed all internships within Switzerland and I have been with the school since first year so I know what I to expect.
18	I feel I have managed to adjust to both the cultures to a certain degree, more so the academic culture than the Swiss culture.
19	Totally adjusted, never had problems.
20	I think the first week is difficult, but with new friends, being comfortable, and getting used to being back at school helps to adjust well.
21	Average level.
23	Yes, fully, because it is similar to my culture and academically also because I always attended international or American schools.
24	From 1 to 10, which 1 is the least, the rate on me being able to adapt the Swiss culture would be 7. Moderate adapt. I think I had managed to keep my culture as well adapt to Swiss. I really love Swiss people, they are friendly by nature and helpful. The safe environment as well had made me more relax compare to my country which we have to pay more attention on our safety issue especially.
25	I adapt easily and understand fast the way I should speak, look. I am very open to new things, and lived in more than 3 countries, so it was easier.

26	I have shifted to the neutral state in terms of cultures: got used to many traditions and norms of other nationalities and even have accepted them for myself. On the other hand, some details of my own culture, which were more apparent to me have become odd.
27	Yes, although uncomfortable in the beginning, I can now understand and appreciate the Swiss culture. Academically, I have willingly adapted into the school atmosphere, which is relaxing in its own way.
30	Satisfied.
31	Fairly well, yes.
32	Academically, based on the results I have achieved, I believe I have adjusted to such academic cultured also to the Swiss culture because Switzerland felt like my second home. When I went back, I could answer majority of the questions that my family asked about Switzerland which may show my understanding to the local culture.
35	I adapted very well, especially in my 3rd year and BA term.
36	Medium.
37	To compromise. To respect. To cooperate.
38	Korea is a very competitive society, and I also did until my high school. Parents' expectation is very high, and everyone aim to be the same person. I only looked forward in Korea, but I learned how to look back in Switzerland. I learned how to manage my time.
39	Highly adjusted.
41	It was pretty well adjusted.
42	Yes, I feel I have managed to adjust well to both cultures as I'm a very dynamic person.
44	I think I was very well adapted to both nature. As I did not gave up while I was scared at first. I accepted it and just moved on. I did not have any big problems in both environments.
48	It's just like, when in Rome, do what the Romans do. So I just had to blend in to what is already there and live with what I have now.
49	Increase in maturity, more responsible, independent and success oriented.
53	What I've learned is Hospitality is all about people. Therefore people is one of the key factor that built me up, in situations, no matter if it's about people or academic work, friendship is important as I am always assured that they are always there when I need them. I don't need to hide my feelings, I can share with them and they can help me even only by listening and vice versa towards my friends.
54	I think I managed well because of the diversity in school that pushes us to adapt, and there are also a lot of Malaysian or Asian students that made me feel easier to adapt to the whole environment.
55	High. the Swiss culture is slow pace but the academic culture is very high pace. So we always need to find the balance in between.
56	Stable and steadily, fast adapt.
61	I have improved my french to a working level, and made an effort to meet and befriend people from all over the world.
65	I believe so as I would change myself that I usually do as to match the culture, in return have a good result.

69	Language social expectations
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No responses and reasons

Student Number	Word or phrases used by students
4	I don't really have culture shock with Swiss maybe because most of the time I spent it for studying. Besides, I'm in an international environment, see like everybody is open with other culture as well. Hence I would say there are nothing much for me to adjust. For academic culture, yes there are a lot to adjust: the way of study, first time to learn to work in group and present in front of other students, and also overload of assignments.
15	My local language is poor level. I felt difficulties when I tray to talk with Swiss.
46	I have done 3 internships in Switzerland, but I found people in hospitality are rarely having Swiss. I felt I faced multiculture more than Swiss culture. Don't really had a chance to experience Swiss culture.

Appendix 24 - Would you do Anything Differently Prior to Arrival?

Question 19: Do you think you could have done anything better PRIOR to your arrival? Please explain.

YES responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
19	Could have learned more about the actual subjects and disciplines taught in the institution. I am not sure that I would have gone to BA here, if I had known exactly what I was going to study
21	I should do more research and know more information from previous students.
27	To get to talk with current / past students to get to know deeply about the situation in school and Switzerland.
35	I could visit the school personally
37	To learn French ... for at least 1 year.
38	Prepare more in terms of language skills.
42	Prepared more by studying other languages such as French or German etc.
47	Studying French or German.
48	I didn't do much research about Switzerland before I came, so I could have found out what is it like living here, the cost of living etc.
49	Compared all of the schools in the group
50	Prepare more winter clothes and left some part / day out clothes at home since we have to wear uniform 5 days a week.
53	Smile more, it actually changes one's perception.
56	Perhaps finding some links to students currently studying.
59	The information provided by the school could be better – there is hardly any possibility to connect to other new students before arriving.
60	Do more research on culture here.
61	Budgeted.
62	More knowledge and language skills could have been improved.
63	More research.
64	Communication skills, English level is improved. Make friends from all over the world especially self-cultivated improvement.
66	Try to learn the language before arriving in Switzerland.
68	Practice French.

NO responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
2	I think I was open minded enough to get on the right path.
6	It does not matter how much I prepare there will be something that I will miss out.
15	I felt doing experience is better than preparation.
18	There is only so much planning you can do and if you do not know the environment into which you are going there is not much you can do until you arrive and take it one day at a time.
20	I didn't know what to expect, so I don't think anything else would help.
23	No because I knew what I was going to face.
25	No matter how much you prepare, your experience always depends on people you meet. You can never prepare enough prior.
26	It had to come with the experience. I don't see how more research could have helped me.
30	Because everything has been told by my representative.
44	I think I was well prepared in prior.
46	Is a tiresome of moving to other countries.
55	Being filled with information is not enough when we face the real deal. I believe adaptation and flexibility is the crucial factors for surviving outside your country.
65	I would not know anything in details until I experienced it.

Appendix 25 - Could the Institution do Anything Differently Prior to Arrival?

Question 20: Do you think the school could have done anything better PRIOR to your arrival? Please explain.

YES responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
3	Offering some kind of real testimonials from current students to be familiar with the surroundings of the institute and Switzerland.
4	Recruit better students please. I had worked with some idiots that pissed me off and ruined my final grade.
6	Need to be more specific about the rules and regulations at least to the agents.
15	Language skill.
16	From my understanding a degree would be obtained in 3 terms so proper and further explanations is needed about this.
18	In terms of being a direct entry, I feel it would have been beneficial to us that we received an outline or at least a list of subjects which the 3 rd year students had done or maybe just the theories discussed. I feel this because when I arrived and began the academic semester I felt like I was just thrown in at the deep end because of the knowledge gap.
19	Provide more details about the academic programme.
21	Provide more information about the structure and duration of the programme.
23	Warning about the internationality of the institute. Because sometimes I felt like living in Asia. Therefore the Swiss culture would disappear and I was feeling in a University of Hotel Management in Asia.
25	Could provide a better understanding of the courses and specific grading system.
26	There are too many variables (cultures) to try and adjust to all of them
27	Arranging current / past students at similar age to meet with the new entrants prior to departing from home countries.
34	Send the schedule for the student, so the late arrival can be prepared, for first year.
35	The brochures I read before had misleading information inside, which made me feel excited about the school, but after I felt sometimes disappointed.
38	Give more correct data, not only in terms of their marketing perspective.
48	What can the students expect from the school, living in the village etc.
49	Especially first year they should inform students that you are entitled to one set of uniform and if you need more you have to pay a large sum of money.
53	Crucial to know the cultures of the group arriving.
55	Communication between the institution and the agents from the home country should be well communicated. I can feel that the agents are not well informed about things that has changed.

59	Build online communities to foster communication between students, arrange meetings in some countries to help people get to know each other earlier.
61	It didn't bother me at all but some people would have benefitted from getting a course list before first year, some people were surprised by it and some people even left the school because it wasn't what they were expecting.
62	Noticing students of the expected academic level ... realistic
63	Should have sent a list of requirements especially for uniforms.
65	Informing the near by facilities such as supermarket.
67	Explained the academic structure more in depth for us direct entries from other schools

NO responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
2	They were all very nice and welcoming.
20	The representative in Vancouver helped a lot with the process
37	Everything is perfect.
44	I think I was well prepared in prior.
46	Time passed and actually they are improving year by year.
56	There is a limit the institution can do. As this is a multinational school, each nation had different expectations, and each individual has their own behaviours and adaptability, hence it's tough, time consuming and resource wasting to specifically create or change the orientation programme to cater for each individuals.

Appendix 26 - Could you do Anything Differently Upon Arrival?

Question 21: Do you think you could have done anything better UPON your arrival to help you adapt quicker? Please explain

YES responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
11	I wish I interacted with everyone from the beginning before they built their groups of friends, instead of staying in my room always.
15	Positive mind
18	Take french lessons.
24	I have to learn on how to work with culture diversity and preparing more on social skills.
25	I should have asked more questions about the modules and what is required to be done right in the beginning.
26	By being more outgoing. It is likely that people who go to parties more often adapt more quickly. For me and other people who prefer small companies of trusted people to large gatherings it might be more difficult.
27	To take the initiative in building social networks.
31	Be more open minded.
37	Maybe ... to improve my english skills.
38	Do more effort.
42	Staying open minded.
47	Warm welcome is necessary, and maybe some tours in Switzerland before starting the class as I started in the school as foundation english class.
50	Talk to more people to find the right group to work with.
53	Learn about the timings. Never be afraid to approach and ask a person when I'm in need.
56	ASK!
61	Connected with past students.
66	Could have tried to open up faster and allow lecturers and students to help me a lot sooner than I did.
68	Making friends before you come to school

NO responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
6	I adapt easily with Swiss environment.
20	I had fun with my roommate, and it helped me meet a lot of people and she arrived before me, so she gave me a little tour of the school
21	I think I got adapted to the school quickly.
23	I was very organised on my arrival.
44	I was well prepared and informed before my arrival.
46	I am a quick adapter.
49	I think I handled it all well.
55	I will say no. I am the person that goes with the flow.
65	I do my best already to prepare for my BA.

Appendix 27 - Could the Institution do Anything Differently Upon Arrival?

**Question 22: Do you think the school could have done anything better UPON your arrival?
Please explain**

YES responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
15	Positive mind
22	Give better food.
21	Maybe the school should show more warm welcome.
25	Explaining main rules that many get caught upon arrival. Understand different cultures, because many refuse to do so. Some employees at the school do not want to except or understand the way students want to be talked to or that personal space still exists. Some cultures are very formal and closed. They cannot expect everyone to be as open.
26	Perhaps a week of casual dressing and adaptation. I felt I did not have enough time to settle down before the classes started.
27	Providing more talks / workshops / field trips about the culture in Switzerland and delivering the culture of the school itself.
31	The campus I started at could have had the same induction week as the campus I finished off in ... that would be helpful.
35	Upon my very first arrival, there are too many information and procedures, especially the first weekend. I felt scared, confused and overloaded by the information which really didn't help me to adapt better.
38	Operation team could be more friendly. If students can satisfy their staying, they can more focus on their study.
44	Maybe give more information about the school, people, Switzerland. Or maybe they could have had a student from the student ambassador forum who would help the new students with answering questions.
48	Instead of just mentioning what room I will be staying in, lead me to the room since I am new.
49	Try to find out if students are comfortable.
53	Inform the students about the timings.
55	I believe the school will not be able to do anything as everything upon arrival still be in charge by the agency in the home country.
62	Better team building or icebreaker.
63	The school accommodates the needs for most other nationalities, they could offer some variety for African students too.

NO responses and reasons

Student Number	Comment from student
2	Everything was great very friendly made me feel like I could go to them anytime.
3	Systemically arranged transportation system is needed. When I arrived in Geneva, I found the help desk from the school. They just gave me the luggage tag to tie on my luggage, and no more explanation about where to go and how long I should wait. What could I do there? I was so nervous because I didn't know what to do. Before we ask, why don't they give us useful information.
6	Upon my arrival, the school already really helpful.
8	This of course is an extremely sensitive topic; however I firmly believe in the need for classes to be set up along the lines of a students proficiency in english. Many students were sadly lacking, and as such pulled back the potential of a class progressing further.
11	I believe that they already made me feel very welcoming and safe (for instance picking me up at the airport, showing me to my room, providing me pamphlet with all the details such as opening hours of certain facilities).
18	I feel the school was really organised when I arrived.
23	No, school people were very nice at my arrival, but also one thing that made it easy was that my cousin was there since day 1 and that my home is only a couple of hours away.
37	Everything is perfect.
46	Is good enough compare to other colleges that I have studied in Taiwan and Guam.
56	They are fine.
65	By offering shuttle bus from airport to school is a great offer.

Appendix 28 - Advice Students would give to Potential Students

Question 23: What advice would you give to a student who has decided to come to this school to study in order to prepare them as best you can.

Student Number	Comment from student
1	To be prepared with the other culture and be positive in every way.
2	I would tell them to be open minded and just trust that everything will be alright! I would also tell them not to judge other nationalities as best as you can or at least to understand their point of view.
4	Learn english well and try to understand english in different accents.
5	Just be open minded and friendly and that is how you get a good and comfortable start.
6	Just live their life here in Switzerland, do not get so stress with all the academics stuff because it will not help at all.
8	Get set for the best roller coaster ride in your life! I loved it, I am sure you will too.
9	Have a positive attitude and positive energy!
10	I would tell them to come in with an open mind and ready to face any challenges that are bound to emerge along the way.
11	I would ask them to consider other options.
12	Be confident.
15	Positive mind and hard working.
16	Time management is very essential and should be ready for the intensity of the programme.
17	Be prepared to focus on studies as it goes at a very fast pace.
18	That they should definitely know how to manage their time but they should also allow themselves to travel and see Switzerland while they are still here.
19	Learn english better, many students from Asian countries can barely speak the language that is necessary to study in here. Learning some french would also help.
20	I would let them know about the food, to try and reserve a room with a bathroom, and the weather.
21	They should know themselves and discipline themselves, and life here is hard, if they are spoiled children at home, I will not suggest them to come.
22	Get an apartment outside school.
23	First of all, go to campus X. The energy and vibe in the other campus is terrible. There is negativity and frustration. Campus X has open minded people, family atmosphere and peaceful. Then regarding the academic part, I don't think it is possible to study prior the arrival because Hotel Management is not like Maths that you have a programme and it will always be that programme. Hotel Management is a topic that changes daily because of trends, of new theories, innovations etc. Therefore I suggest that someone just goes there fresh and relaxed and challenges himself at his/her best.
24	Read more, get information from others.

25	Patience! Understanding, knowledge of different cultures. “Fight” (protect yourself with proof) if you are right.
26	To not make expectations of other people and their habits. To be accepting and not judging.
27	Talk to current students to get to know more about the pros and cons of living in the school / Switzerland. Picking up french prior to going to the school (it really helps not only in daily conversations, but also allowing a quicker bridging to the course in school).
29	Study hard and play hard.
30	Be prepared mentally because it is not as easy as you think.
31	Research as much as you can about the local culture, but also other major cultures around the world.
32	Do not have expectations and just enjoy the changes.
33	Be sure that you’re comfortable with living and working in the same environment.
34	Learn french in advance, knowing what hotel or direction when come to choosing internship.
35	They should talk with the students of the school before arrival, only student can help to them to really understand the nature of this university and the processes. Agency is also good, but only to gather the information, which is basic.
36	Be ready for the busy work and dominated by the time table.
37	Learn french, improve your english and presentation skills. Be prepared for culture shock! (Don’t be shocked if you see anything weird).
38	If you want to have an internship in Switzerland, study french before complain that you cannot get the offer. When you write the report, ask to your lector, not your friends. Check the module handbook, and try to know what your lectors are expecting. They your best before complain about your grade.
39	Open up, observe, absorb and interact.
40	I think the school provides us with the necessary information prior and upon our arrival, for a new comer specially if is a shy or timid person I would suggest them to be prepared to talk.
41	English level should be good.
42	Be prepared for a new challenging and a dynamic environment. Make a habit of being well organised.
44	Read more about Switzerland. Ask school directly for any concerns.
45	Just make sure you try to attend all of the classes because they are very important, regardless you’re allowed to miss a certain number of classes.
46	Know what you want, and tell them about the courses in the school. If they don’t like it/don’t other to waste the time on complaining.
47	Make sure the language level.
48	Adaptability is the key, you can’t expect to live your usual life back home when you’re here.
49	The best way they can get information is by trying to contact the students from the past. Most agencies do not tell the truth since they are profit oriented so it doesn’t give students enough room to know what to expect.
50	Try to travel as much as possible when you have chance.

53	Learn about the timings in Switzerland. Be courageous, never be afraid to ask.
54	English skills, be prepared to embrace diversity, be confident and open to talk to everyone.
55	Leaving from the home country is a huge challenge for many students, however it is a great way to train for independence which will bring us to another stage of life.
56	Always ask, only if you ask, then you can have your helps.
57	Do not expect much.
58	Finish 1st year to BA as quick as possible before the curriculum changes.
59	Be open minded, learn english and don't only make friends from the same nationality.
60	Try to meet more new friends here, they will be able to help you a lot.
61	Keep a very open mind and make an effort to make friends outside of your own nationality.
62	To consider whether hospitality is their real passion and the language level ... english.
63	They should know the cost of living, they should know the winter and be ready for an international community which may not readily understand them.
64	Confident and be positive to face what you will meet. You are the best!
65	No need to bring much clothing as most of the time we stay in school, especially for BA students, there is no time to go out at all as need to write reports.
66	Talk to previous students and speak with the academic office to understand the kind of learning style provided.
67	Make sure you manage to have time to walk around the village to see the nature. It's always breathtaking and brings harmony to life. Also, it's nice to get out of school some during the weekdays so that the school doesn't seem so isolated. It can easily get depressing to stay in the same building all the time, and see the same people every day.
68	Try to make more friends and be a good student.
69	Do not rely on the agents in your county, if you can contact a student from the school.
70	Think twice.

Appendix 29 - First Draft of Abstract created for Publication

International Students and Culture Shock: The Case of Intensive Programmes

Abstract

Across the globe, universities are becoming more internationally active (Craft *et al.* (1998, in Ayoubi and Al-Habaibeh, 2006: 381). Competition for attracting international students is severe among countries like UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Ward *et al.*, 2001). Research carried out on UK universities show that their strategies mostly include internationalisation in some form (Ayoubi and Al-Habaibeh 2006).

Such internationalisation involves students studying in a cultural environment different to their own, with implications for culture shock. Indeed international students, along with international businessmen, are one of the groups in which substantial research relating to culture shock has been conducted (Ward *et al.*, 2001). Oberg (1960, in Marx 2001: 5) discusses the many symptoms associated with culture shock, namely: ‘confusion about what to do, anxiety, frustration, exhilaration, inappropriate social behaviour’. However, there are other problems that are more specific to the international student situation namely; ‘... academic challenges, and the stressors associated with transition to a new school or university’ (Ward *et al.* 2001: 153).

This two-pronged challenge is amplified when the students opt for intensive programmes. This is the case where one of the author’s research is being conducted: a hotel management school in Switzerland, where students of, on average, 40 nationalities, many from Eastern Asia, undertake UK degrees where one semester is condensed into 18 weeks. Little research has been conducted with regard to the factor of time spent by the student in that environment and the consequences that this has on culture shock and thus on the students’ performance. Similarly, there is a dearth of research pertaining to how culture shock in this context can be better managed. Given the trend in internationalisation in higher education, this paper is relevant and timely; it presents a literature review of culture shock as it relates to international students and highlights a gap with regard to intensive programs

Key words: *internationalisation, international students, culture shock, intensive programmes.*