

The Experience of International Students:
Exploration through Drawings and Interviews

by

ERIKO ISHII

B.A., University of Sacred Heart, 1989

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Counselling Psychology)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA 1997

September 1997

© Eriko Ishii, 1997

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Counselling Psychology

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct 9/97

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of the international students' adjustment processes through drawings and in-depth interviews. A qualitative approach was used to guide the data collection and analysis. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with a volunteer sample of five graduate international students. The interviews aimed to obtain accounts and drawings that describe their experiences of the initial period in Canada and present lives as well as their wishes for the future.

Audio taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed based on the Empirical Phenomenological Psychological (EPP) method proposed by Karlsson (1993). The analysis was validated first by a fellow researcher, and secondly through validation interviews with the participants. The results revealed a number of common and unique themes that were grouped under the following three dynamics: emotional, external, and behavioural.

The results suggest that international students experienced various challenges during the initial period of being in Canada, and these challenges resulted in feelings such as nervousness, fear, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of invisibility, and excitement. Description of their present lives indicated that they had adjusted to and were comfortable with their new lives in Canada. These themes and each participant's story were visually depicted in their drawings.

The implication of these results is that international students are likely to benefit from counselling interventions particularly in the beginning of their time in Canada. Counsellors may utilize drawings for advantages revealed in this study; drawings may enable counsellors to understand these students' experiences from the perspectives of these students and to transcend cultural barriers. Furthermore, the results highlight the importance of considering international students as individuals with strengths, and treating each individual's experience as unique while being aware of the common struggles many of these students face. Finally, this study encourages further research in order to broaden our understanding of international students' experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction.....	1
Definition of Terms.....	4
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Theoretical Perspectives on Adjustment.....	6
Experience of International Students.....	14
Use of Art as a Communication Tool.....	18
Summary.....	22
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Research Design.....	25
Personal Assumptions.....	26
Selection of Participants.....	27
Data Collection.....	29
Structure of the Data Collection Interview.....	30
Pilot Interviews.....	33
Drawing Material.....	34
Researcher's Impressions of the Interviews.....	34
Data Analysis.....	36
Summary.....	39
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Stories of Each Participant.....	40
Miguel.....	40

Lucy.....	47
Victoria.....	55
Jamie.....	63
Katherine.....	70
Summary of Common Themes.....	75
Table 1. Summary of Themes.....	76
Moving In - Anticipation Period	
(A) Emotional Dynamics.....	78
(B) External Dynamics.....	78
(C) Behavioural Dynamics.....	79
Moving Through - The Initial Period	
(A) Emotional Dynamics.....	80
(B) External Dynamics.....	86
(C) Behavioural Dynamics.....	89
Moving Out - Present Life	
(A) Emotional Dynamics.....	91
(B) External Dynamics.....	94
(C) Behavioural Dynamics.....	96
Ideal Future Life.....	97
Results of Sentence Completion Questionnaire.....	99
Summary.....	101
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Introduction.....	103
Integrating Current and Previous Research	
Implications for Adjustment Theory.....	104
Concerns and Feelings of International Students.....	108

Coping Strategies of International Students.....	112
Use of Drawings with International Students.....	113
Practical Implications for Helping International Students...	114
Limitations and Implications for Future Research.....	117
Conclusion.....	120
References.....	122
Appendix A. Participant Consent Form.....	129
Appendix B. Guided Imagery Scripts.....	130
Appendix C. Sample Questions of Data Collection Interview...	133
Appendix D. Sentence Completion Questionnaire.....	134
Appendix E. Miguel's Drawings - Initial and Present Life....	136
Appendix F. Miguel's Drawing - Ideal Future Life.....	137
Appendix G. Lucy's Drawings - Initial and Present Life.....	138
Appendix H. Lucy's Drawing - Ideal Future Life.....	139
Appendix I. Victoria's Drawings - Initial and Present Life..	140
Appendix J. Victoria's Drawing - Ideal Future Life.....	141
Appendix K. Jamie's Drawings - Initial and Present Life.....	142
Appendix L. Jamie's Drawing - Ideal Future Life.....	143
Appendix M. Katherine's Drawings - Initial and Present Life.	144
Appendix N. Katherine's Drawing - Ideal Future Life.....	145
Appendix O. Summary of Unique Themes.....	146
Appendix P. Responses on Sentence Completion Questionnaires.	151

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt appreciation goes to the participants of this study who shared their struggles and hopes with me. Drawing and talking about one's life experience with a stranger is not an easy task, yet these participants took time and explained what they went through with a great deal of patience. I truly feel honoured to be the one to receive these stories.

I would like to express my appreciation for my supervisor, Dr. Norman Amundson, for respecting my wishes and needs. His "student-centred" style in supervision helped me build self-confidence as a researcher, and his timely advice and insight enabled me to stay focused. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. John Allan for his warm support and valuable suggestions, and Dr. Carl Leggo for his knowledge and expertise.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who gave me enough space to work through this project. I would particularly like to thank Christopher Gray who not only provided me with support and reassurance but also proofread every single page of my thesis. Thank you, Christopher, and all of my friends and family. Without all of you, this would not have been possible.

Chapter One

Introduction

The need for research on international students is critical given the fact that the number of such students has dramatically increased during the past decade. The number of international students in Canadian universities has jumped from 30,472 in 1985 to 37,478 in 1992 (Statistics Canada, 1992). In 1992, nearly half (49.8%) of these students were from Asia while European students constituted the second largest group of 16.3% (Statistics Canada, 1992). Because of the large distance between their home cultures and Canadian culture, the non-European students face substantial adjustment challenges (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986).

The policies of the Canadian government have affected the lives of these international students. Since the Ontario government increased tuition fees for international students to twice the amount paid by Canadian students in 1977, other provinces have followed this example (Mickle & Chan, 1986). Subsequently, the Canadian immigration decided to forbid the employment of international students (Mickle & Chan, 1986). Although the regulation has become somewhat more lenient since then and currently allows international students to obtain employment on campus, higher tuition fees and a lack of employment opportunities continue to be a source of stress for many international students (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], 1989). Furthermore, this financial constraint

led to a greater pressure for academic success since many international students relied on their family for financial support (Mickle & Chan, 1986). There is an expectation and pressure to perform well because of the financial support they receive from their family.

These government policies may be a reflection of a general misconception that international students bring no benefit for Canadian universities, let alone for a larger society (Mickle & Chan, 1986). However, international students add an important component to a Canadian society (Mickle & Chan, 1986). Benefits to Canadian society from international students include enrichment of the learning environment (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986), contribution in establishing a cultural, economic, and diplomatic bridges to their home countries (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Mickle & Chan, 1986; Sims & Stelcner, 1981), and enhancing understanding and acceptance of people from different cultures (Sims & Stelcner, 1981). Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) further suggest that encouraging international students in Canada can mean reciprocal treatment for Canadian students abroad. Pedersen (1991) indicates that the presence of international students contributes to improved international relations and consequently world peace, because more knowledge leads to more empathy. Thus, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) conclude, it is important to deepen understanding of these students' experiences.

International students are often confronted with adjustment challenges. These challenges concern such areas as academics,

communication, finances, interpersonal relationships, and cultural differences (Pedersen, 1991; Wehrly, 1988). Sometimes these challenges translate into somatic symptoms. Ebbin and Blankenship (1988) reported that international students had a higher frequency of the ten most common concerns such as anxiety, gastritis, headache, and insomnia when compared with local students. Gunn (1988) suggests that international students are prone to stress for reasons including racial discrimination, separation from family and friends, language barriers, and dietary changes.

Despite these challenges, international students rarely utilize helping resources available to them (CBIE, 1989; Ogbudimkpa, Creswell, Lambert, & Kingston, 1988). In a 1988 survey, 66% of international students in Canada reported to have never used the student counselling services during the past academic year (CBIE, 1989). Furthermore, there is a sense of dissatisfaction among international students; 70% of participants in the 1988 survey felt international students centers were not helpful (CBIE, 1989). Ogbudimkpa et al (1988) reported that 65% of international students who used the students' health care were not satisfied with the service.

Through my experience as an international student and by working with international students as a counsellor, I have become increasingly aware of the lack of materials which describe their experiences from their own point of view. According to Pedersen (1991), international students are often stereotyped as

being defenseless and bewildered. In accordance with this notion, the majority of current research adopts a quantitative approach with little attention to individual stories and the process these individuals follow. Furthermore, even fewer studies have utilized visual images to enhance our understanding of these students' experiences.

This study aims to add extensive descriptions and visual images to the current understanding of international students' experiences. The research questions that are addressed in this study are: (a) What is the experience of being an international student in Canada? (b) How does their experience change or not change over time? (c) Can drawings be an aid in capturing their experiences? The results may contribute to a deeper awareness about the lives of international students in Canada. Moreover, the information may become one of the building bricks to establish more effective helping resources for these students.

Definition of Terms

The key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

International Student - A non-Canadian student who does not have permanent resident status, and as such, has had to receive permission from the Canadian government to enter Canada for purposes of study (Statistics Canada, 1992, p. 20).

Acculturation - The process of adapting to and adopting a new culture (Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1984, p. 296).

Cultural Distance - The degree of dissimilarity or similarity between one's home culture and host culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1993b).

Acculturative Stress - A form of stress in which the stressors are identified as having their source in the process of acculturation (Zheng & Berry, 1991, p. 453).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives on Adjustment

While the adjustment process of international students has been commonly described as "U-curve" (Brammer, 1991; Coelho, 1982; Parr, Bradley, & Bingi, 1992; Pedersen, 1991), the construct has been criticized for various reasons. The U-curve hypothesis was first introduced by Lysgaard and consists of phases of initial excitement, depression, and newly acquired optimism (Brammer, 1991; Pedersen, 1991). Hopson (cited in Brammer, 1991) further divided these phases into six stages of initial shock, oscillation of feelings, minimization, depression, letting go, and trying out new options.

The U-curve process was also referred to as a period of culture shock (Pedersen, 1991). Culture shock was first termed by Oberg (1960), and is defined as "some degree of emotional disturbance when an individual enters an unfamiliar cultural environment" (Taft, 1977, p. 139). Oberg (1966) identified six aspects of culture shock: a) stress due to the effort to adjust; b) a sense of loss and deprivation; c) being rejected by or rejecting host nationals; d) role and identity confusion; e) surprise, anxiety, and disgust about cultural differences; f) feelings of impotence. If left unattended, these aspects may lead to more serious consequences including depression, identity confusion, insomnia, impaired self-esteem, and psychosomatic symptoms (Coelho, 1982; Taft, 1977).

While Oberg contributed to the research on sojourners by providing a theoretical basis and by suggesting its serious implications, the construct of culture shock has been criticized for confusing the cause and effects of the adjustment process (Ward & Searle, 1991). Similarly, the U-curve hypothesis has been criticized for overgeneralizing the adjustment process (Ward & Searle, 1991).

Pedersen (1991) points out that the empirical evidence is equivocal for the U-curve hypothesis and that the hypothesis lacks consideration to mediating variables in the adjustment process. The hypothesis was not supported in a study of 165 international students in New Zealand by Ward and Searle (1991). The longitudinal study of Chinese students in Canada (Zheng & Berry, 1991) suggests an inverted U-curve, yet the authors caution not to jump to conclusions considering the short duration of their study (five months). Lu (1990) found that the psychological symptoms tended to decrease over time but homesickness remained stable and lasting among Chinese students in Britain, suggesting the complex nature of the adjustment process. The support of the U-curve hypothesis, therefore, is inconclusive (Zheng & Berry, 1991).

Alternatively, several researchers have proposed models that focus on mediating factors in the adjustment process. Schlossberg (1981) proposes a comprehensive model of adaptation. Schlossberg (1981) suggests that adaptation to transition is a dynamic process during which an individual moves through various

stages while being affected by a variety of factors. Transition is defined as "an event or non-event (which) results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships" (Schlossberg, 1981, p.5). Thus, transition can be both negative and positive.

After an individual enters a transition, various factors affect his/her process of trying to adjust to a new situation (Schlossberg, 1981). Schlossberg recognizes three categories of such variables: characteristics of transition, characteristics of the individual, and characteristics of pre and post transition environments. Characteristics of transition include factors such as the nature of transition, timing, and duration, whereas personality, gender, and previous transition experience exemplify the individual's characteristics. Pre and post transition environments are examined in terms of support systems (personal and institutional) and physical settings (e.g. climate, living arrangement, food).

According to Schlossberg (1981), adaptation occurs when one moves from being preoccupied with the transition to integrating a change as a part of him/herself. The outcome depends on the individual's resources-deficit balance and the degree of difference between the pre and post transition environments (Schlossberg, 1981). This explains why the same person reacts differently to different transitions as his/her resources-deficit balance changes throughout his/her life.

Schlossberg's model takes into account the complex nature of the adjustment process. Not only does the model outline the direction which those in transition generally follow , but it also helps to explain different adjustment experiences for different people and for the same individual.

Berry and Kim (1988) suggest a model in which acculturative stress is moderated by factors such as nature of the host society, type of acculturation (e.g. voluntary versus involuntary), demographic characteristics of an individual, psychological characteristics of an individual, and modes of acculturation. Among these, one's attitude towards acculturation is the most significant predictor of acculturative stress (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) because it determines the individual's mode of acculturation.

Berry and Kim (1988) identify four such modes: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. These modes are determined by one's attitudes towards maintenance of his/her cultural identity and intergroup relations. That is, those who seek intergroup relations but are unconcerned with maintenance of their cultural identity resort to assimilation, while separation occurs when the individual rejects contacts with host nationals and holds on to his/her cultural identity. Individuals who value both intergroup contacts and cultural maintenance are considered to be integrated, whereas those who reject both will become marginalized.

These modes strongly influence the degree of acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Individuals who opt for marginalization and separation experience the greatest stress, while assimilation leads to moderate stress. Integration would be the least stressful option. While this hypothesis has been supported by some cross-cultural comparative research (Berry et al, 1987), Zheng & Berry's study (1991) suggests that the acculturative modes were related to subjective adaptation but not to stress.

Berry and Kim's model helps to explain why the cultural relocation can have different outcomes for different individuals. It also highlights the positive aspect of transition. That is, depending on one's attitude towards acculturation, transition may be considered as an opportunity for self-growth, thus enhancing one's life (Zheng & Berry, 1991).

Ward and Searle (1991) propose a model that consists of two types of adjustment (psychological and sociocultural) which may be best understood from different perspectives; namely, psychological adjustment from stress and coping framework, and sociocultural adaptation from social learning and cognitive perspectives. Psychological adjustment concerns an individual's psychological and emotional well-being while sociocultural adaptation refers to the ability to fit into the larger society (Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b).

Psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation relate to each other but different variables predict each of them.

Studies have demonstrated that psychological adjustment is mediated by such factors as personality, life changes, and social support (Ward & Kennedy, 1993a) whereas sociocultural adaptation is affected by cultural knowledge, cultural identity (Ward & Searle, 1991), language ability, and length of residence in the host culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1991).

This model contributed to distinguish two types of adjustment and to identify different variables that affect them. For example, Ward and Kennedy (1994) found that a strong cultural identity was associated with enhanced psychological well-being while identification with host nationals was linked to sociocultural competence in New Zealand sojourners.

Other researchers have identified other moderating factors. Among them, communication has emerged as one of the key factors in one's adjustment process. Westwood and Barker (1990) reported that contact with host nationals was associated with academic success and lower probability of dropping out of academic programmes for international students in Canada. Similarly, Rohrlich and Martin (1991) found that increased interaction with host nationals was correlated with heightened satisfaction among international students in Western Europe. Kagan and Cohen (1990) demonstrated that international students who scored high on the acculturation scale tended to speak English at home and have American friends, while those who were lower on an acculturation scale showed a tendency to speak their native language at home and spend most of their time with their co-nationals. Berry and

Kim (1988) reported that the greater contact with host nationals was correlated with less stress in Malaysian students in Canada. As such, the link between increased contact with host nationals and psychological well-being has been demonstrated in other studies (e.g. Chataway & Berry, 1989; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Deressa & Beavers, 1988; Mickle & Chan, 1986).

While these studies suggest the positive influence of host-sojourner contact, some studies indicate that in some cases it may be harmful for one's emotional well-being. Ward and Kennedy (1992) found that psychological distress was predicted by frequent contact with host nationals for New Zealanders living in Singapore. A similar result was found in a study of Malaysian students in Singapore (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Thus, the link between host-sojourner contact and psychological well-being may not be as linear as has been suggested, but may be moderated by factors such as receptivity of the host culture and the degree of cultural distance between one's home and host countries (Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993b; Ward & Searle, 1991; Pedersen, 1991).

Padilla, Wagatsuma, and Lindholm (1984) suggest that self-esteem may be the major predictor of acculturative stress. In their study of first, second, and third-generation Japanese-American students, those of first-generation reported the highest stress, and scored significantly lower than the other two groups on the self-esteem measure. The second-generation group, on the other hand, indicated higher stress and scored significantly lower on self-esteem than the third generation group. From this

result, Padilla et al (1984) propose that first-generation immigrants may be most prone to stress because of significant cultural gaps they face in terms of social norms, role expectations, and language, and may be most likely to see themselves in an unfavourable light.

Previous interracial or transitional experience has also been related to enhanced adjustment (Rohrlich & Martin, 1992; Berry, et al, 1987). Rohrlich and Martin (1992) found that international students with prior transitional experience reported a greater ease with adjustment, while those with no previous experience indicated significantly greater difficulty in dealing with transitional tasks such as using unfamiliar currency and travelling. Those without previous transition experience also reported difficulty with making friends. Berry et al (1987) overviewed research on acculturative stress done in Canada between 1969 and 1985, and suggested that prior intercultural experiences play an important role in one's acculturative process.

Adan and Felner (1995), on the other hand, argue that the fit between one's previous experience and the present situation is more important than the amount of previous experience. Adan and Felner found that a greater amount of prior interracial experience was associated with heightened adjustment for African-American students attending a primarily White university, whereas lower levels of such experience was correlated with better adjustment for African-Americans at a primarily Black university.

Thus, Adan and Felner (1995) concluded that familiarity and opportunities may be the critical determinants of adjustment.

Locus of control has been demonstrated to affect the cross-cultural adjustment process. Lu (1990) found that internal locus of control was correlated with less perceived academic and social demands in Chinese students in Britain. External locus of control revealed greater mood disturbance (Ward and Kennedy, 1992, 1993b) and higher level of depression (Ward and Kennedy, 1992) than those with an internal locus of control in New Zealanders residing in Singapore. Similarly, Padilla et al (1988) demonstrated that first-generation Japanese-American students tended to be more stressed out than later generation groups, and to show an external locus of control while later generation groups indicated a tendency for internal locus of control.

Experience of International Students

While international students often share the same obstacles, such as academic pressure and financial stress with local university students, they also face a unique challenge of learning to adapt and function competitively in an unfamiliar cultural context (Kaczmarek, Matlock, Merta, Ames, & Ross, 1994; Lu, 1990; Perdersen, 1991; Westwood & Barker, 1990). Leong (cited in Kaczmarek et al, 1994) identified three categories of challenges that international students face: a) developmental issues common to university students (e.g. autonomy), b) challenges related to being away from home (e.g. homesickness),

and c) challenges unique to being an international student (e.g. immigration).

Parr et al (1992) reported that the areas of the greatest concern for international students were extended family (not having enough contact with them, worry about their well-being), finances, and school. Finances were rated as problematic by 51% of international students in a 1988 survey in Canada (CBIE, 1989). Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) identified language, academic pressure, cultural difference, and racial discrimination as principal concerns for international students in Canada. Deressa and Beavers (1988) found that the two most common issues for international students were finances and language. In Canada, 21% of international students reported to have a language-related problems. (CBIE, 1989). These studies indicate that international students are confronted with the dual task of handling the challenges of university life and of doing so in a foreign culture without a previous support network.

International students often experience homesickness (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986; Ishiyama, 1989; Lu, 1990; Wehrly, 1988). Lu (1990) reported that 94.9% of Chinese students in Britain experienced homesickness in his study. Since there was no difference found between the more homesick and the less homesick in personality and perceived demands or symptoms, Lu (1990) concluded that homesickness stemmed from the environmental demand of being away from home and was different from a mental illness which was affected by personality factors.

Because of separation from family, friends, and a familiar environment, international students often become lonely (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1988; Hsu, Hailey, & Range, 1987; Wehrly, 1988). A survey on international students (CBIE, 1989) reported that 66% of the students indicated loneliness as their major problem while 55% answered making friends as a major challenge for them. Hsu et al (1987) demonstrated that Chinese students in America were more socially lonely and alienated than Chinese students in China, while more Chinese students in China reported emotional loneliness than Chinese students in America. Emotional loneliness results from a lack of close emotional relationships, whereas social loneliness is the effect of absence of a social network (Hsu et al, 1987). This result suggests that loneliness for international students may stem from a loss and lack of interpersonal contacts.

Loss of a previous role and identity poses a challenge for many international students (Alexander, Klein, Workneh, & Miller, 1981; Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986; Ishiyama & Westwood, 1992; Pedersen, 1991). Pedersen (1991) points out that a loss of a support system and identity has a tremendous implication since an individual's self-image and self-esteem are dependent on his/her identity and are validated by significant others.

Common reactions to loss of previous identity and role include anxiety, feelings of disorientation, feelings of being lost (Pedersen, 1991) and feelings of worthlessness (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). Chataway and Berry (1989) reported high anxiety

in Chinese students in an English university. Cadieux and Wehrly (1986) warn that a loss of status and identity may lead to a crisis if these students cannot find a new ongoing support system. Toffoli and Allan (1992) emphasize that dealing with loss, grief, and readjustment is a major task for all ESL students.

The task of dealing with loss and academic challenges in an unfamiliar environment often results in depression for many international students (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). Pedersen (1991) suggests that depression is the most prevalent among international students and has more serious implications than loneliness and homesickness.

Researchers offer explanations for depression among international students. Wehrly (1988) suggests that the pressure to succeed is intense for international students. They try to be competitive while facing other challenges such as isolation, financial pressure, and language limitations (Wehrly, 1988). Some academic tasks such as oral presentations and class discussions may be completely foreign for many international students, and the competitive nature of school may bewilder them if they come from more community-oriented societies (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). Wehrly (1988) concludes that it is understandable for these students to feel depressed, helpless, and angry.

While international students face unique challenges and are prone to experience a great deal of stress (Smith, 1985), several studies reported results that contradict this notion. Leong,

Mallinkrodt, and Kralj (1990) demonstrated that Asian international students experienced fewer stressful life events than did Caucasian students in the U. S. Parr et al (1992) found that international students tended to be more determined, thankful, and happy rather than lonely, sad, and discouraged. Kaczmarek et al (1994) reported that no significant difference was found between international students and U.S. students on scales of academic and personal/emotional adjustment, while international students reported significantly more difficulties on social adjustment and institutional attachment scales.

In this regard, Pedersen (1991) cautions against overemphasizing and overgeneralizing pathology in international students. Because international students are a heterogeneous group, it is essential to be attentive to individual cases while being aware of unique challenges they face. It is also important to recognize strengths many international students possess such as an ability to persevere and a determination to pursue their goals (Wehrly, 1988).

Use of Art as a Communication Tool

Despite various challenges, international students usually do not express their concerns (Toffoli & Allan, 1992; Wehrly, 1986; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990). Westwood and Ishiyama (1990) suggest that sojourners often have deficiencies in language and social competencies, and are not able to express themselves clearly. Toffoli and Allan (1992) suggest that ESL students

often cannot name what is bothering them, or they are reluctant to focus on it.

The cultural barrier may stand between a sojourner and a listener from two different cultures (Toffoli & Allan, 1992; Golub, 1989; Westwood & Borgen, 1988). Vogel (1986) reported that the primary issue for wives of international students was misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication which stem from language limitation and cultural differences. Vogel (1986) indicated that breakdowns in cross-cultural communication often occurred as a result of different values in communication styles and assumptions about interpersonal relationships. Wehrly (1988) suggests that language barriers and cultural constraint against revealing one's emotions are the major challenges in cross-cultural counselling. Westwood and Borgen (1988) argue that assumptions in such factors as roles, goals, and role relationships may differ from culture to culture, and this difference can become "a fertile ground for misunderstanding and conflict" (p. 120). Westwood and Borgen (1988) further asserts that the subjective culture, a filter through which an individual sees the world, is resistant to change and tends to remain unconscious.

Research has indicated the advantages of using visual art as a communication bridge. McNiff (1981) suggests visual art can provide "a focus of sharing" (p. xiii). Having the artwork in front of them, an individual may find it easier to talk about themselves by describing his/her drawings. It also provides a

visual clue for a listener to develop understanding and insights into the person's subjective experience (Hampden-Turner, 1981; Wadeson, 1980). Amundson (1988) proposes the use of drawings for case conceptualization. Pinholster (1983) demonstrated how visual art was used as a sharing point for non-verbal children and a counsellor. Moody (1995) reported that Native Americans found a way to communicate personal and cultural values with the researcher through paintings and drawings. Moody (1995) concludes that visual art "opened the way for understanding, sharing, and transcending cultural barriers" (p. 225). Toffoli and Allan (1992) suggest that their programme for ESL students which includes drawing exercise enables teachers to gain deeper awareness of the students' experiences.

Visual art can become a supplement to verbal communication as it is a symbolic speech through which messages are expressed in images (Dalley, 1984; Røijen, 1991). Rhyne (1978) claims that an individual creates visual messages that reflect his/her personal reality. Dalley (1984) maintains that art can become the most valuable substitute when speech is impaired or underdeveloped.

Henley (1987) documented the use of visual art with hearing-impaired children. Lomeo-Smith (1979) found that using art helped circumvent language barriers between the researcher and Hispanic families. Røijen (1991) reported that drawings enabled the researcher to communicate with a Pakistan family without an interpreter, and this process enhanced their relationship.

Kelly, Kelley, and Moore (1978) demonstrated the use of art as a means of communication and self-expression for autistic children and young adults.

Henley (1987) claims that drawing helps to loosen defenses of denial and repression. This was illustrated by his study of hearing-impaired children who eventually began to express their feelings about family, friends, and themselves by drawing and talking about their drawings. Using a case study method, Pinholster (1983) illustrated the process in which a nonverbal child gradually let go of his defenses and shared his classroom experience. Riley (1978) used art to establish alliance with adolescents who showed resistance in therapy.

Visual art can provide a safe haven where sojourners can express their feelings. McNiff (1980) suggest that art can be a valuable tool for those who find direct verbal expression too threatening. Thrasher, Yee, and Zahnstecher (1989) demonstrated that drawings helped immigrants from West India to express and explore such issues as grief, a sense of loss, and anger.

The process of being engaged in artwork might enable an individual to reach deeper feelings. Dalley (1984) suggests that one's thought and feelings reach expression in images rather than words because they are derived from the unconscious. Similarly, Allan (1988) suggests that emotions and thoughts that were not revealed in words often emerge in the painting exercise. Haegar (1978) demonstrated that visual art facilitated an emotionally

troubled woman to reach her fears and pain about her relationships with family.

While the use of art has several advantages for understanding an individual's subjective experiences, it also has some setbacks. Amundson (1988) indicates that the drawing activity may elicit negative reactions for reasons such as insecurity, lack of drawing ability, and inability to visualize. Allan and Toffoli (1989) suggests that a drawing exercise may be unfamiliar for many ESL students. Thus, to ease the possible discomfort, it is important to remind individuals that their drawings will not be judged for artistic quality and that the purpose of the drawing exercise is not to produce a work of art (Allan & Toffoli, 1989).

Summary

Although the U-curve hypothesis and the concept of culture shock contributed to build a basis for adjustment research, the current research has turned to a focus on mediating factors. Schlossberg (1981) proposed that in the adaptation process, an individual moves towards integrating transitional experience into his/her life. Three categories of moderating variables are identified by Schlossberg: characteristics of transition, characteristics of the individual, and characteristics of pre- and post-transition environment.

Kim and Berry (1989) identified the individual's attitudes toward acculturation as a key factor to determine modes of acculturation (assimilation, separation, marginalization, and

integration). While integration was indicated to be the most effective acculturative mode, further research is needed to verify this notion.

Ward and Searle (1991) identified two types of adjustment: psychological and sociocultural. Psychological adjustment refers to an emotional well-being whereas sociocultural adaptation is an ability to fit into a larger society. These two types of adjustment are affected by different variables, and may be best understood by different theoretical perspectives, that is, psychological adjustment from a stress and coping framework and sociocultural adaptation from a social learning and cognitive perspective.

Current research has identified other mediating factors such as contacts with host nationals, receptivity of the host culture, cultural distance, personality (e.g. self-esteem, locus of control), prior transitional or cross-cultural experience, and a fit between pre and post-transition environment.

The current research indicates that international students are prone to loneliness and depression. They may suffer from a loss of previous role and identity and may be concerned with such issues as their family, finances, language, and cultural differences. Although these challenges may lead them to feel anxious, helpless, and depressed, they rarely talk about their feelings. On the other hand, there is some research that indicates international students are no more stressed than local university students.

The communicative advantages of visual art has been demonstrated with a wide variety of populations. Visual art can provide a focal point of discussion, be used as a communication aid when one's language is limited, help loosen an individual's defence, and provide a safe haven to the individual.

While visual art has been used widely as a communication tool, very few studies incorporated the visual image to depict experiences of international students. Current research on international students has mostly utilized quantitative methods, and as a result, very little first-hand description of experiences is available.

This study aims to expand our understanding of experiences of international students, through a visual representation and by using a qualitative method to encourage them to tell their own stories.

Chapter three

Methodology

Research Design

The primary focus of this study was to explore, through drawing, how international students whose first language is not English experienced the process of adjusting to a new culture. It aimed to shed light on the meaning of experiences those students went through when they left their own country and relocated to a new situation. For this study, an "international student" was defined as someone enrolled in a local university who came from outside of Canada in order to pursue further education. A qualitative design was selected as the most appropriate to understand the experiences of those students from their own frames of reference.

Qualitative research attempts to understand the phenomenon as lived by the participants (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1989; Sandelowski, 1986) and to describe the meaning of such experience (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). It is based on the naturalistic-phenomenological assumption that reality is "multilayered" (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 373) as it is "ultimately subjective" (Sandelowski, Davis, & Harris, 1989, p. 77), and that human experience is meaningful and comprehensible to those who lived it without external theorizing or explanation (Dukes, 1984). It has the focus of attempting to shed light on themes and processes and to gain a deeper understanding of the experience (Marshall & Rossman, 1994).

The research questions of this study were: (a) what is the experience of international students studying in a Canadian university whose native language is not English? (b) How does their experience change or not change over time? and (c) Can drawings help capture the experiences of international students who study at a university in Canada?

Personal Assumptions

In qualitative research, because a researcher's task is to reveal "the lived meaning" of experience for the individual (Giorgi, 1983, p. 18), the researcher becomes immersed in the investigation process by formulating research questions, actively interacting with co-researchers, and making decisions regarding data collection and analysis (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1989; Osbourne, 1990; Sandelowski et al, 1989). Consequently, the researcher's values and preconceptions would have an unavoidable influence on how the study is conducted and its outcome. It is, therefore, important for a qualitative researcher to recognize one's predispositions through a process of "rigorous self-reflection" (Osbourne, 1990, p. 81) and articulate them in the final report (Colaizzi, 1978; Osbourne, 1990). By doing so, the researcher becomes aware of these preconceptions so as to attempt to minimize their influence (Guglietti-Kelly & Westcott, 1990). It also enables those reading the report to consider the framework of the researcher from which the study was conducted and results analyzed (Osbourne, 1990).

I have identified several assumptions that may have relevance to this study considering the fact that I am an international student myself and have worked with ESL students as a counsellor. My background in art may also have had some influence. I have identified the following assumptions:

- (a) People are experts of their own lives.
- (b) There is a need for resources specifically aimed to help international students.
- (c) Most international students go through an adjustment process.
- (d) Drawing may give a counsellor tools to understand international students' experiences in a symbolic fashion.
- (e) Drawing has the potential of serving as a bridge between a counsellor and a client for mutual understanding.
- (f) The experience of moving into a foreign culture where one's previous way of coping and way of viewing the world may not be relevant is stressful for most people.
- (g) Sharing experiences with others helps most people relieve stress and view their own experiences from a new perspective.

Selection of Participants

Purposeful sampling was employed in this study. Purposeful sampling is to use information rich cases in order to maximize the utility of information yielded from a small sample (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1989). Based on this sampling strategy, I conducted interviews and five participants provided a reasonable

amount of information. All the participants were recruited by the following procedure:

1. First, potential participants were approached, after which I explained the purpose of the study, the number and duration of interviews involved, the procedure, and confidentiality and anonymity issues. As Banister et al (1994) emphasized, in order to establish rapport with participants, it is important in a qualitative study that participants be informed of the purpose, procedure, number and duration of interviews, and how the material will be dealt with at the completion of the study (Banister et al, 1994; MacMillan & Schumacher, 1989).
2. The potential participants in this study were assured that their confidentiality would be strictly protected in that their names or any other information that might reveal their identity would be eliminated in the final report. It was also emphasized that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. By doing so, the researcher lets the participants know that they are in charge of how much they choose to disclose (Banister et al, 1994). The potential participants were, then, asked to contact the researcher, should they wish to participate in the study.
3. Once the participants agreed to participate, the interview date and time were arranged. The consent form (Appendix A) was obtained at the beginning of the first interview after which a copy of the signed form was given to the participant.

All the participants fulfilled the following criteria: (a) English was not their native language, (b) they were enrolled in regular university courses, (c) they were able to communicate and read in English, (d) they provided informed consent for participation, and (e) they were willing to talk and draw about their experiences as international students. All of the participants resided in Vancouver at the time of the interview, and were graduate students at the University of British Columbia. Four of them were female and one was male. Four were married, two of whom lived with their spouses while the other two had left their spouses in their home countries. Two had young children. As for ethnicity, one was Mexican, one African, and three were Chinese. Their age ranged between 25 to 36.

Data Collection

The study involved one preliminary meeting, one in-depth semi-structured interview, and one validation interview. During the preliminary meeting, I introduced myself as a graduate student in the Department of Counselling Psychology, University of British Columbia, and explained to potential participants such issues as the rationale and purpose of the study, the requirements for participation, confidentiality, and their freedom to withdraw or refuse any question at any time of the interview.

The first interview was a semi-structured data collection interview. As Marshall and Rossman (1994) suggest, a good working relationship between the researcher and participants is

essential for interviews to be fruitful. For this reason, a semi-structured format was used during which the researcher respected how the participants framed their responses while the general structure was standardized across different participants.

The second interview was to ensure that the researcher's understanding of the participants' stories was accurate. The second interview was carried out over the telephone except for one participant who preferred to meet the researcher in person.

Structure of the Data Collection Interview

The length of the data collection interview was two hours. Four of these were conducted at a research room in the Department of Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. One interview was carried out at the participant's residence as she preferred to be home for her young child.

The interview consisted of three sections: a discussion of the participants' initial experiences in Canada, a review of their current life, and a discussion of their ideal future life. Each section includes a drawing exercise where the participants were asked to draw a picture that represented their experiences of the initial period, current life and ideal future life.

All three sections repeated the same procedure. Each section started with a relaxation exercise and guided imagery. Three different scripts of guided imagery were developed for this study (Appendix B) based on the group guidance model for ESL students outlined by Allan and Toffoli (1989).

The guided imagery is useful to alleviate participants' anxiety and to focus on the task at hand (Cormier & Hackney, 1993), and to help them get in touch with lost memory and emotions (Allan & Toffoli, 1989). It also aimed to encourage the participants to visualize their experiences for the following drawing task.

Following guided imagery, the participants were asked to draw a picture that symbolized their experiences. Wadeson (1980) suggests using art in a semi-structured session to elicit specific data. Wadeson further claims that using such a method yields an interesting discovery about how people experience certain phenomenon. Amundson (1988) suggests using a metaphor provides "a springboard for developing insights" (p. 391). Røijen (1991) documented the use of drawings as a means of communication between the researcher and participants in the study of immigrant families.

Participants were encouraged to describe their experiences and drawings in as much detail as possible. When most participants indicated that they did not know how to begin, I reminded them that their drawings would not be judged for artistic quality and that I would rely on them to describe their drawings rather than analyzing their drawings. Furthermore, I emphasized the fact that there was no wrong or right answer and any information they provided would be appreciated as valuable and meaningful. I also suggested that they could either draw

first and describe later or draw as they talked. All chose the latter.

Using open-ended questions and reflection, I facilitated the participants' expression of their thoughts and feelings, and description of their behaviours. This is called a new paradigm interview mode by Banister et al (1994) where participants' stories are treated as valuable and meaningful, and the interview is considered a collaborative process of a researcher and participants. Furthermore, as I facilitated the participants' story-telling, I tried to view their experiences from their frames of reference and to understand as if I were the participant. A sample of questions (Appendix C) was used to ensure certain areas were covered, while for the most part the emphasis was on flexibility and open expression.

At the end of the second section, participants were asked to compare their first and second drawings which represented their first period in Canada and their present life. They were asked to describe factors or events that may have contributed to change or no change between these representations.

Similarly, participants were asked to make a comparison between the second and third drawings, and to explore the ways in which they could actualize their ideal future life.

The interview finished with a sentence completion questionnaire (Appendix D). This method is suggested by Allan and Toffoli (1989) as a follow-up activity in the group guidance model for ESL students. Ruiz (1984) also recommends the use of

the sentence completion method with a cross-cultural population since the method enables individuals to reveal not only their personalities but also clues related to specific concerns. The purpose of using this questionnaire was to provide participants with an opportunity to give feedback on the drawing exercise in another format. I left the room while participants filled in the questionnaire, and explained to them that I would not read the questionnaire until the completion of the analysis in order not to influence the analysis of the interviews. The questionnaires were also filled in anonymously in order to encourage honest feedback.

Pilot Interviews

Three pilot interviews were conducted prior to data collection. This process was designed to verify the suitability of the interview format and to familiarize myself with the interview procedure and my role as a researcher. Breakwell (1995) emphasized the importance of pilot study in qualitative research by pointing out the fact that loosely structured interviews can easily lose sight of the main issues without adequate piloting.

All the participants for the pilot study were female spouses of international students. They were enrolled in an English for Second Language (ESL) class. While the issues these participants faced may have been different from those who enrolled in regular university courses, the pilot study provided me with an opportunity to determine if the wording and instructions were

clear to the potential participants, to practise allocating an appropriate amount of time to each section of the interview, and to reflect on the ways in which I conducted the interviews.

After having reviewed the interview tapes, I met all the participants in person for feedback sessions. Appropriate changes were made to the wording of instructions and guided imagery based on the recommendations by the participants.

Drawing Material

11 inch by 15 inch drawing paper was used in the interview. This size was selected based on the feedback from those who participated in the earlier pilot study. It was deemed suitable as it did not overwhelm them nor was it too small for them to draw their life experiences.

36 coloured pencils along with 24 crayons and 24 markers were presented at the interview. Crayons and markers were placed in a basket while pencils were lined up in a self-standing box. The participants in the pilot study provided feedback that the number of colours and types of medium were appropriate since they had adequate choice over colours and what medium to use.

Researcher's Impressions of the Interviews

Conducting in-depth interviews with international students provided me with challenges as well as a fulfilling experience. An international student myself, I often felt the interviews as if I was revisiting familiar memories. I was surprised at the degree to which the participants' stories were similar to my own experiences. My major task, thus, was to have my preconceptions

under check in order to hear what the participants were telling me rather than leaping to conclusions from my own experiences.

While the fact that I was an international student seemed to help ease the tension of the participants, it also clouded the boundary between a researcher, a counsellor, and a fellow student. This may have been stemmed by a sense of sharing the same struggles as other international students. One participant stated:

And that really helps, you know, when you find that you are not the only one with problems, and communication problems. And you start doing things with them, like for example, we play volleyball together, we play soccer together, we do several things together. And there's something, there's something there in common, that all of us have the same problem, communication.

Consequently, several participants asked me to share my experience. I approached this challenge by gently reminding them that the interview time was for them to tell their stories. I also tried to convey my understanding and appreciation of their experiences. It was important for me to find a balance between the roles of a researcher and an understanding ally.

The drawing task posed another challenge. Most participants communicated to me that they did not know how to start. Yet, after a gentle encouragement, they seemed to be immersed in the process of drawing and describing their experiences.

I was struck by the vividness of some participants' memories. One participant described the scenery he saw while

being lost in the building on his first day of school in striking detail. Another described in detail what her room looked like while crying in her room on the day she arrived in Canada. This may be an indication of how painful these memories were to those participants, and left me wondering how few opportunities there were to tell these stories.

Data Analysis

The interview data was analyzed concurrently with the data collection. Audio-tapes of the interviews were reviewed, and transcribed verbatim following each interview. Following the completion of transcribing, each tape was reviewed again to check the accuracy of the transcripts. I, then, proceeded to analyze the transcribed data based on the following steps outlined in Empirical Phenomenological Psychological (EPP) method (Karlsson, 1993):

- 1) The researcher reads the protocol until gaining a "good grasp" (p. 96) to proceed on to the next step.
- 2) The researcher divides the interview protocol into small units where the researcher perceives a shift in meaning. These units are called meaning units (MUs). Breaking down the text into smaller units is a "practical aid" (p. 96) to keep the data manageable. Karlsson emphasizes that MUs are not independent from one another but are "discernible parts" (p. 97) of the whole text.
- 3) The researcher traces out the psychological meaning of each MU, thus, moving from the particular fact to the meaning it had

for the participant. It is in this step that the participant's language is transformed into the researcher's. Karlsson suggests that each MU be understood in light of the whole context. Also, everyday-life language is preferable to theory-laden or too generic language.

4) The researcher rearranges the MUs in order to synthesize them into a "situated structure" (p. 106). A situated structure illuminates what the phenomenon is. The researcher's task is to group the MUs in a psychologically significant way.

In this step, I also incorporated dimensions of experience used by Guglietti-Kelly and Westcott (1991). Guglietti-Kelly and Westcott adopted the following dimensions in their study of shyness: experience of the situation, experience of the self, experience of activity, and experience of aftermath.

The first dimension, experience of the situation, indicates how an individual experiences the external situation while the second dimension highlights the internal experience that occurs while the person was in that particular situation. The first dimension may be exemplified by a statement such as "The building seemed enormous to me on my first day of school", whereas a statement such as "I felt really stupid when I spoke up in the class" would be an example of the second dimension.

The third dimension, experience of activity, illustrates what the person did in that particular situation. And the fourth dimension, experience of aftermath, includes statements that indicate the effects of the experience.

After dividing all the MUs into these four categories, I further grouped MUs that have commonalties and named each cluster with a theme. All the themes were put into a table which enabled me to gain a clear sense of the experience as a whole.

I, then, proceeded to write a summary for each section of the interview. Since an interview consists of three sections (initial period in Canada, present life, ideal future life), each interview resulted in three summaries.

5) The final step was to "move from situated structure to general structure" (p. 108). In this step, different protocols of the same experience were compared to delineate commonalties as well as individual variations. Karlsson suggests to go back to raw data in this step so as not to overlook relevant constituents in an attempt to move on to a more abstract level of understanding.

Validation of analysis was done in two steps; first at the time of dividing the text into MUs, and later after the completion of writing interview summaries. For the first validation, I met with a doctoral candidate of the Department of Counselling Psychology in University of British Columbia. A part of the text was divided concurrently by him and me, and compared afterwards. When there was a disagreement between his division and my division, each of us explained the reasoning behind that particular division. Then, we proceeded to divide some additional text. This process was repeated until the agreement reached approximately ninety percent.

For the second validation, the interview summaries were mailed to each participant, and their accuracy was checked in validation interviews. All the validation interviews were carried out over the telephone except for one participant who preferred to meet the researcher in person. Two participants added a couple of sentences to clarify the text, while the rest added no correction.

Summary

Qualitative methodology was used to guide this study. The data was collected through a drawing exercise and in-depth interviews. Three pilot interviews were conducted prior to data collection interviews. Five international students whose native language was not English participated in this study on condition that they provided a consent form, and were able and willing to draw and talk about their experience in Canada. Transcribed interview data was analyzed according to the EPP method (Karlsson, 1993) and the thematic categories used in Guglietti-Kelly and Westcott's study (1990). This resulted in the participants' accounts of their experiences and a number of common and unique themes.

Chapter Four

Results

This chapter presents the stories of the participants' experiences as international students. This is followed by a summary of common themes which emerged from the qualitative analysis and a summary of responses on the sentence-completion questionnaires which the participants filled in at the end of their interviews.

Stories of Each Participant

In order to gain a better understanding of each participant's unique experience, their stories are presented below. Each participant's story consists of three phases of their life in Canada: the initial period, present life, and future ideal life. All the names in these stories are pseudonyms, and while excerpts are quoted from the transcripts, repetitive stutters and incomprehensible utterances are omitted from the excerpts.

Miguel

Miguel is a 30-year old graduate student from Mexico. He came to Canada with his wife after being accepted into a graduate programme. They were living in Vancouver at the time of the interview, and had no children. The interview took place approximately six months after his arrival in Canada.

(A) Initial Period

Miguel's life in Canada began in anxiety and isolation. The first day of school well epitomizes his experience of the initial

period, and this was reflected in his drawing where he drew a large school building with dark clouds (Appendix E). Miguel explained that he felt overwhelmed and nervous at the sight of his department building because it looked enormous to him.

The situation became worse upon entering the building; Miguel quickly got lost and could not find the right room despite the fact that he had the room number. In his panic, Miguel kept on walking along the same corridor hoping that he would soon find the room. Inside, anxiety and a sense of isolation grew, but he did not want to ask others because of his English. He did not know how to say room numbers correctly in English, and it seemed too intimidating to speak to others in English. Miguel described this situation as follows:

I felt, I felt lost because I didn't know how to ex (sic), ask where the room was, where the room was or something like that. I remember last, twelve fourteen, the, the number of the room. Yeah, I remember, but I didn't know how to ask. For example, if I could say, "I'm looking for a room twelve fourteen" or "one thousand two hundred and fourteen."

Although he eventually found the room, his sense of solitude was never relieved. On the contrary, he came to feel more alone as he waited for forty-five minutes sitting in the empty classroom by himself. When the lecture started, he could not understand the instructor's English, nor did he talk to other students. Everyone else knew each other, and he watched them chat with one another from the last row of the room where he sat alone. When it was his turn to introduce himself, Miguel just

said his name and remained silent for the rest of the class. The whole day was difficult characterized by feelings of isolation and nervousness:

Yeah, I was just nervous about everything, yeah. Basically the communication was major problem, you know. And I saw the other guys, for example, the other classmates were talking to each other and I was just look, how do you say that, just start, eh, watching them talking. They knew each other before, because I start in January, they started in September. They knew each other and I didn't know them. Then, I didn't say anything to them and they didn't say anything to me. And I just left the room.

The feeling of isolation persisted for a few months. Miguel did not know anything about the helping resources available to international students on campus, and everyday was difficult for him. Often, Miguel did not want to go to school, and when he did go, feelings of shame and fear blocked him from approaching others. Several attempts to talk to others were perceived as failures, as he could not keep the conversation flowing or make himself understood. Other students tried to encourage him by asking him to repeat or to rephrase, but his sense of shame was so intense that he became completely withdrawn.

However, the experience started to take another turn when he succeeded in carrying a conversation with Canadians for the first time. Miguel talked with his Canadian classmates for an hour, and with this as a starting point, he began to feel included and cared for by others. Shortly after, a friendship began to develop between Miguel and a Canadian student, Nancy. While

communication was initially a major challenge for them, their friendship grew based on a mutual appreciation and respect for each other's skills. Being able to help Nancy with his expertise, he started seeing himself in a different light, as a worthy person. For Miguel, Nancy played a major role in bringing a positive change in his life.

Because of these friendships with Canadians, Miguel's confidence rose and he started feeling at ease speaking English. While he recognized the importance of talking to native English speakers to improve one's language ability, it had been difficult for him to overcome the mental barrier to do so.

It was also helpful for him to live in a multicultural neighbourhood where many were from outside Canada; it helped ease his feelings of isolation and shame. Miguel felt that he shared the same challenge with his neighbours, and this feeling enabled him to realize that his initial reaction was normal to a transition process.

Having gone through the initial period, Miguel now recognizes alternatives, such as counselling, that would have been helpful. However, he realizes that he had no means to know about these services in the beginning when they were needed the most. Miguel also believes that an orientation programme specifically for international students is needed to help them cope with the challenges he had gone through. Furthermore, he thinks services for international students are generally lacking on campus, and international students remain uninformed of the

services available to them. Miguel also suggests that departments hold an orientation programme every semester instead of only in the beginning of the academic year so that those starting in the second term would not feel left out.

The past six months have been an incredible learning period for Miguel. He has learnt many life lessons, but most notably, he has learnt to live with people of different cultural backgrounds. He now recognizes racial discrimination in his homeland and feels a sense of wonder that he enjoys living with people from so many different cultures. However, while it is exciting to see the extent of his personal growth, Miguel recognizes he still has future tasks, such as to overcome cultural barriers between him and his Canadian friends such as Nancy.

(B) Present Life

As shown in his drawing, "Miguel's current life is divided into two parts: family and school (Appendix E). His family life is only positive; Miguel is very happy because he is able to spend a good deal of time with his wife for the first time since they got married. Miguel expressed his happiness as follows:

We are just happy, really happy. We are enjoying our time here. We, yeah, like we are doing lot of exercise and we always have breakfast and lunch most of time, lunch and dinner together.

It is also their first time to live in a house without sharing it with relatives, and this also contributes to his happiness.

Miguel feels his lifestyle shifted since having come to Canada, and now his life is relaxed and happy. Miguel is very happy with his wife and hoping for a baby.

In contrast, school life turned out to be disappointing for him as it provides few challenges. A few hours of study a day is enough to fulfill the course requirements, and this leaves him frustrated and disappointed. Miguel described his perspective as follows:

I'm not certain about my studies. It's just like why, what I'm doing now, like I'm doing research now but I'm not certain about the goal of my research, and I hate that, you know. It's like looking for something that you don't know.

Furthermore, his advisor does not seem to understand his feelings. There is a communication difficulty between him and his advisor. While Miguel feels he could make himself better understood if he tried harder, he perceives the advisor to be impatient:

My advisor, you know, he talks really fast and sometimes I had problem to understand him. And he's not patient.

His feelings of frustration are mainly due to the fact that he is not sure of the purpose of the course he is currently taking. Miguel needs more advice, stimulus, and guidance from the advisor but feels the advisor knows very little about Miguel's area of interest. Judging from the amount of supervision he receives, he wonders if he is expected to work on

his own because he is a graduate student. While he hopes to get more involved with school life in the next semester when he will take more courses, he is apathetic and feels that the school does not really matter because he has a happy family life.

While Miguel is frustrated with his school life, having a close Canadian friend (Nancy) has been helpful. He feels connected with her despite the short period of their friendship, and he is proud of their friendship because they both earned it through hard work.

(C) Ideal Future Life

In Miguel's ideal future life, his work is peripheral compared to the future with his family. While Miguel likes his profession and hopes to get involved in both field work and managerial work as portrayed in his drawing (Appendix F), obtaining employment after graduation is something that needs to happen in order to provide for his family. He also realizes that he will have to work long hours especially if he goes home. Differences in working conditions between Canada and Mexico make him feel ambiguous about going home since spending time with family is important for him. Miguel likes the fact that in Canada people keep regular working hours.

In contrast, his family is the centre of his future. Miguel cares about the future of his family and becomes excited when thinking about it. As his drawing (Appendix F) indicates, his dream is to live in a house beside mountains with his wife and their children. He would like to spend a lot of time with them

doing things such as cycling and taking walks. He would like to have a baby soon, and he wonders if the past miscarriage by his wife is a reason for his wish for a baby, or if he feels babies would bring more happiness to an already good life with his wife.

While Miguel has a clear image of an ideal family life, he is not sure if it is realistic. He recognizes his wife's needs to do something for herself outside the home, but feels unsure if his ideal picture can accommodate such needs. He also realizes that because of his job he will not be able to continue the present lifestyle in which he spends a great deal of time with his wife.

For Miguel, the present life is a preparation stage for an ideal future. He realizes that his choice is either to go home or to stay in Canada, and he is aware of the effects of each choice on his life. While a decision has not been made, it seems more plausible to live in Canada to actualize his ideal picture. He thinks it may be a good idea to stay in Canada at least for a while to establish a basis for his future.

Lucy

Lucy is a 36-year old woman from Kenya. She is married and has three young children. She came to Canada to pursue graduate degrees approximately six years before the interview, and her family was still in Kenya at the time of the interview.

(A) Initial Period

Feelings of anxiety and uncertainty characterized the beginning of Lucy's new life in Canada. It was her first time to

live in a foreign country, and although she found her supervisor helpful, she felt anxious anticipating her new life. Lucy described her feelings as follows:

And to me, it was quite a, I didn't know how I'm gonna cope with everything, you know. And, of course, I had a really nice supervisor, yeah, he was very helpful. But still, you know, you are, you concerned about the students you gonna meet and... It's more like what's gonna, what's gonna happen, yeah.

However, the whole experience shifted when the class started. While it was difficult for her to describe what exactly went on during the classes, Lucy tried to explain the unique dynamics in the classroom through her drawing. Her drawing contains words such as survival, invisible, and stressful as well as pictures of the classroom scene and her children (Appendix G). Lucy used an exercise in the first class as an example of these dynamics. In this exercise, students were instructed to sit in small circles to introduce themselves. The pressure to say something was intense. But when she finally began to tell something about herself, other students kept interrupting her by asking "pardon?" in order to get her to clarify what she was saying. Since this experience, Lucy became increasingly nervous and self-conscious about speaking English.

Lucy also felt unvalued in the class since others did not seem to appreciate what she had shared with them. She thought maybe her stories were too foreign, and thus irrelevant to them:

You just feel like nobody. In fact, people are not familiar with your, with your background. You kind of, you know, you felt that you're really not valued.

Moreover, Lucy felt there was little room for her to speak during the classes as everyone was competing for good marks on class participation. The strong sense of competition and the evaluation criteria which facilitated competition were foreign for Lucy; she came from a culture where people work together rather than try to outdo one another. Struggling with a foreign language and foreign values, she became increasingly alienated from others.

Feelings of isolation intensified steadily. It was as if nobody noticed her although she was a so-called "visible minority". She desired to be connected with others but at the same time wished to remain invisible. Besides, no one seemed to have time for her. Lucy initially thought Canadians were all friendly because they smiled and said "hi", but it soon became obvious that doing so did not mean much to them. It was annoying to Lucy that Canadian students did not even wait for her response after smiling and saying "hi". To her, their smiles were not sincere but represented "superficial friendliness" which did not involve any real relationships:

Even when they say hello, which is an opportunity to kind of, ah, get to know them better or there for them to ask how you are doing, so that you say the truth, you find that they don't stop, to even hear your reply, you know.

She was so bothered by these smiles that eventually she preferred them not smiling at her rather than giving her "plastic smiles".

The lack of meaningful relationships distressed Lucy. She needed someone to listen to her and to share her feelings. Lucy wanted to belong, but did not like the fast pace of life in Canada where people are individualistic and goal-oriented. It was a clear contrast from her culture where individuals are part of a large circle (community). Lucy felt others did not have time for her because they had no time for those who were uncertain of themselves:

Yeah, you feel very isolated and the, you were so alone. You don't know who to ask questions. And people are really so focused on. They seem to know what they want and have no time, you know, for people who don't seem to know where they are.

Yearning for human connection, Lucy missed her family, especially her young children left behind in Kenya. She wondered how they were doing and worried that something bad could happen to them. It was very hard for her to face the fact that she had little control over what went on with their lives. She felt guilty and questioned herself for being in Canada for her own education:

...that's when you really questioned being here...because you talk on the phone, and there your children wondering why you were away. You left when they were sleeping, two years old... they ask you why you can't come and make cakes with them. And there you are, having a hard time

Lucy felt torn between two worlds: home life with children and life in Canada. The distance from her children was enough to make her feel "partially dead" inside. She expressed this feeling by drawing herself crying while thinking about her children.

Because of all the sacrifices she made to come to Canada, the pressure to succeed was intense. But because the system was unfamiliar and everything was done in a foreign language, failure seemed imminent. She felt as if she did not know what she was doing in class, and that the academic task was overwhelming. It was very stressful for her, and she thought of giving up at times.

It was a matter of survival. Lucy became particularly frightened when she heard about a female student from Africa whose death had gone unnoticed for a week:

First of all, I thought about my survival. I meant really surviving, you know, because I thought it was possible to die there, you know. So I didn't want to have to die in Canada, you know, come all the way to come and die here, oh no.

It was scary to think of the possibility of death, and out of fear, she decided to declare her priorities. She told her supervisor that her first priority was not academic success but to survive. The supervisor showed support and understanding, and subsequently she started socializing with those who were

supportive. It was important for Lucy to try not to dwell on her pain too much so she could cope with the present.

Overall, it was a very stressful period for Lucy. Looking back, she now realizes that other students were also stressed out and preoccupied with their own lives. Currently, Lucy accepts smiling and saying 'hi' to passers-by as a part of Canadian culture, and occasionally finds herself doing the same. She also realizes that many others go through the same process as she did, though there may be individual differences. Having come through the experience, Lucy now feels stronger and better-equipped to survive in a world whose values and culture are different from her own.

(B) Present Life

Lucy is currently right in the middle of a transition. It is a time to evaluate if it was worth coming to Canada before moving beyond being a student. This is the time to synthesize all information in order to reach a decision about the future. She calls this state "makana" in her language; makana means a state of going back and forth between different ideas or options. It is an uncertain phase where she wonders about how long she will survive and whether she will be able to enjoy life "beyond mere survival". Her uncertainty is expressed by questions such as "what next?" and "out where?" in her drawing (Appendix G). She is in-between "coming-in" and "going-out" stages.

While Lucy knows that she has a choice of staying in Canada or going back home, having to make such a decision proves to be

very stressful for her. Choosing her new home is difficult especially now that she has lived in Canada for so long that she does not know which place she can call home:

It's a lot of uncertainty, you know. You know, like where do I go? You know, go back to country, go back home, or do you stay here? Or where's home now? Is it the home I knew where I've been away for six years in the past, you know. Can I still call that home? How do I define home?

She also feels uncertain about bringing her children to Canada because of the effects the transition will have on them. Having to think about others before reaching a decision is very stressful, because she wants to make a right decision for herself and for her family.

Though she knows having support would be helpful, stress makes it hard to develop a support network for Lucy. For her, it is very important to have a community where people help one another regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity. However, while she knows she can reach out to others, it is easy for her to become isolated because of the school pressure. Nevertheless, Lucy realizes that her feelings are normal for those who go through a transition, and recognizes that she is responsible for her own life. Because the present situation is so wearying, she hopes it will end soon.

Comparing the first and second drawings, Lucy recognizes that each depicts different struggles. In the first period, the main issue was coming into a new culture and trying to survive,

whereas the issues in the second drawing concern having to decide the direction of her life.

She also recognizes changes in her experience. She has been successful at school despite her initial uncertainty, and also developed a support network:

And your experience change, you know, you've been successful, too. You found friends, you found a few friends here, there, you found that people are not really as terrible as you thought they were.

She now sees a value in coming to Canada, as she has learnt about another culture and different ways of looking at the world. It is important for her to appreciate her gains in order to make a sound decision about her future, and because of her achievement, she now feels confident and better-equipped to deal with any new challenges. Lucy feels like she will be able to survive no matter where she chooses to go.

(C) Ideal Future Life

Lucy's drawing of the ideal future life includes such words as "meaningful work", "satisfied", "happy", "love", and "community" (Appendix H). Among them, the most critical aspect for her is to find meaningful work which enables her to support her family. Because of the sacrifice her children have made for her education, it is crucial for her to be able to support them after graduation:

They (her children) suffered enough toward my programme. So I want to be able to wake up in the morning knowing where

I'm do, going, I'm gonna do, and also (that) I'm gonna support them.

She is hoping that a job will also be meaningful. For her, meaningful work is a job that has stability, permanency, a future, and with which she can support others. Lucy would like to obtain a job with some permanency considering her age.

While Lucy is uncertain of what is required to actualize her ideal, she recognizes that she will need time, preparation, and a network. Living in a community has a vital meaning for her; she sees that it is essential to have a community where people support and help one another reach one's goals.

Lucy used a metaphor of a bird to symbolize her present feelings; she feels like her wings were taken away for a long time, but now she is ready to fly again with her new wings. By doing so, she is hoping to help other international students see that they too will have a day of flying high.

Victoria

Victoria is a 28-year old woman from China who is married but has no children. The interview took place approximately eight months following her arrival in Canada while her husband was still in China.

(A) Initial Period

Victoria's first day in Canada quickly turned from a day full of excitement to that filled with sorrow and helplessness. She was excited because it was her first time to go abroad after a long wait to see the Western world. However, her excitement

only lasted for a short while. When she arrived at her new home, it struck her that her life had drastically changed, and Victoria lost all her energy. She sat by her suitcases and became completely apathetic; she did not want to do anything. The sound of people celebrating Christmas upstairs in another part of the house further depressed her. She became very sad and felt so alone that she started crying:

Especially that day was boxing day. They are celebrating Christmas downstairs, they are playing the music and I don't know anybody here, sit there, and I don't have any food to eat. I don't even have Canadian dollar. I don't know where is the bank, you know, know nothing. And I don't know what I can do. So when I hear the music and they laughing and talking, I started to cry. Very very sad and lost.

The picture of herself crying in her new room was so vivid in her memory that she was able to reproduce it in her drawing (Appendix I).

In the following week, as feelings of isolation were further entrenched, she feared for her survival. Because she had always lived with her family, the idea of living alone in a foreign country intimidated her. Moreover, the difference in money value between Canada and China made her worried; she could no longer expect her family to help her financially. Without family or friends and everything being so expensive and foreign, Victoria became fearful if she could survive in this new country.

It was a difficult first week characterized by fear and depression. In spite of having much free time, she was too

afraid to go out; everything was foreign, she had no sense of direction, and was scared of having to speak in English:

Just I'm so scared. I don't know everything here. I was scared of lost. I don't dare to talk to people at that time. I think my English is not good. I just want to be hide, to hide behind some place.

Wanting to hide from people, Victoria stayed home with the landlord's family and tried not to feel her emotions. She knew it would be better as the time went by. Her depression was so overwhelming that she often stayed in bed during the day. And whenever she dozed off, she had a dream of being in China. Deep sorrow and hopelessness struck her after she woke up. She felt as if she may never be able to go back home:

When I just wake up, I still think I was in China, but then several, after several seconds, I realize, I can't, I have to stay here. Very, very sad. It's just like, I can't go back, you know, forever, I was separated from my father forever.

The situation seemed to improve when Victoria visited the school with her landlord a week after her arrival. It was exciting to go to school as by then she was bored of staying home. She walked around on the campus with the landlord, and gained a positive impression about the school. What surprised her was the number of crows she saw on the campus. It was a little ominous as black birds symbolized bad luck in her culture. After a while, Victoria went to her department and met a woman at

the front desk. She tried to appear brave while feeling afraid and nervous inside.

The first few weeks of school were positive for Victoria. Although the first week of school was disorientating, meetings with her advisor and a professor left her with a sense of hope as they were both reassuring. She tried to be active during classes and began to feel good about herself after receiving positive affirmation from an instructor. Her life seemed to have started to move in a positive direction:

It's just started, so I was very active. I tried to speak more. So Dr. Wong said, "Oh you are fantastic". He said because he know I just arrive here for several days. He said usually Asian students will be very shy and, you know, very quiet. So, you know, I feel really good about myself.

However, the experience took another turn after a couple of weeks. Victoria found herself unable to understand lectures and could not participate in discussions. It was a recurrence of the negative feelings she had felt upon arrival. She was afraid that her English was not good enough, and she could not comprehend the sudden change of her status. It was like having fallen from a competent student to an incompetent one:

I was so used to be the top one... And now here, I, you know, I feel myself almost the last one.. All of a sudden... I can't understand.

Her confidence quickly dissipated as a consequence, and Victoria began to see herself in a negative light. Her

classmates tried to help her, yet she felt as though others saw her as a "stupid" person with no opinions. She was sensitive about how she appeared in the eyes of Canadian students who seemed so used to expressing themselves. The situation seemed beyond her control, and it was so hopeless that she dropped one course; there was then only one course which required class participation. Yet, having even one course felt like a heavy burden for her. The lectures were loaded with theoretical terms, and she felt exhausted after every class. All the academic tasks were quite new to her, and Victoria worried particularly about a class presentation. She did not know how to conduct a presentation because she had never done that before, nor did she think she knew enough to do so. While textbooks became her major resource, she constantly worried about failing the course and about her academic future. Her feelings about herself were extremely negative:

I lose my self-confidence. Every aspect is out of control, I can do nothing right. So the feeling of myself is very bad, you know.

Consequently, Victoria started withdrawing at school. Her negative self-image led to depression and a sense of isolation; lack of a support network further exacerbated the situation. It was too frightening to speak to others, and she became so depressed that she just wanted to stay home. Even on Chinese New Year which is a major holiday for Chinese, she did not want to go

out and celebrate. So she phoned home instead, but became more sad because she could hear her family celebrating together. She was criticized, however, when she shared her feelings with her father. He told her to change her attitude, which left her feeling like she was not being understood.

However, her father's criticism eventually became a resource that gave her direction. Victoria started reconsidering her father's words because of a high respect for him and a strong connection she had with him. She began to think she should take the proactive approach as her father had suggested. Later on, her father sent her a letter. The letter became a source of strength during times when she felt sad and alone:

He (her father) write the whole big, like several pages letter to me. And when I feel bad, I read it again, again, again, and again. And it really give me a kind of spiritual encouragement.

Looking back, Victoria recognizes her own role in making the situation difficult, but at the same time she realizes what she did during that period (staying home with the landlord's family) was a way of protecting herself. The first period remains a strong memory of struggle and sadness which will never be forgotten.

(B) Present Life

Victoria drew beautiful scenery to symbolize her feelings about her current life (Appendix I). During the previous summer she began to enjoy life by going out and exploring different

places. Her sister, who lived in the United States, provided her with support and encouragement during the first period, and this helped her a great deal. She now feels being in control and feels as if she were a Canadian. Victoria realizes some international students are not happy with their lives here, but she is quite happy.

Victoria's positive outlook on life extends to her financial future since she was granted financial aid. Upon arrival, she realized that she could not rely on her parents because of the difference in value of currency between Canada and China. It has been frustrating and at times it seemed impossible to support herself considering her limited language ability and knowledge about Canada. Thus, the news of being granted financial aid gave her a sense of hope. Victoria began to feel optimistic about her financial future.

The academic situation had also improved, and this solidified her self-confidence. Victoria had achieved high grades at the end of the first term with her advisor's help and support. During the summer she tried to meet various people and involve herself with various activities:

So summertime is coming and I tried to participate in volunteer activity in international house, yeah, started to contact those people, getting to know people. Just actively try to get more money and chances, you know. So in the summer, I feel very, quite good, yeah, I think, just like I'm Canadian.

She also audited a course she had once dropped. By the end of the second semester, Victoria achieved a high mark in the course she had once given up. This was a significant achievement for her since it involved a final exam with essay questions which presented a significant challenge for her.

Although Victoria's future has many uncertainties, a positive self-perception and feelings of being in control enabled her to stay optimistic. She has collected information, and now realizes that she has options such as moving to the United States for further education. She no longer worries about her future, because she feels competent in making her own decisions and because she believes focusing on the positive will empower her to cope with future challenges. Victoria is not afraid of life anymore because she is in control:

But at least I, I can, you know, think by myself. Yeah, I can make decision by myself now. I feel really good.

(C) Ideal Future Life

Victoria pictures her ideal life as living in Canada with her family, as indicated in her drawing (Appendix J). While it has been her dream to live in a Western country because of the limited options in China, being united with her family is also important for her. Thus, the most pressing task is to obtain permanent resident status in order to sponsor her family to live in Canada. She particularly wishes to have her husband come to Canada as soon as possible, because she feels separation has a detrimental effect on their marriage.

Another dream is to become a professional. She wishes to have a career, specializing possibly in counselling or special education. Whatever the specialization would be, she would like to have a meaningful job which would allow her to be creative and helpful. She does not want to become an elementary teacher or an office worker with routine tasks. In her ideal life, she and her husband would be professionals and they would live in a house with a view of a beach and mountains. She also would like to have a baby someday.

Victoria realizes that studying hard and finding a job after graduation will help her actualize her dreams. Because the most important goal is to bring her family together, she is willing to take a non-professional job at least temporarily. While her family is playing a major role in determining her future, she is also looking at other possibilities (getting further education in Canada or the U. S.) in case it does not work out to bring her family to Canada.

Jamie

Jamie is a 25-year old female graduate student from China. She is single, and came to Canada for further education approximately eight months before the interview. At the time of the interview, she was living by herself in Vancouver.

(A) Initial Period

Jamie was full of fear and excitement when she visited her Canadian school for the first time, but soon became overwhelmed by cultural differences between her home and Canada.

Registration posed the first challenge since at home everything was laid out for students; all she had to do was to go to the designated classes and listen to the instructors. Terms used for registration, such as "seminars" and "lectures", were confusing, and she had to ask other students and professors for help. She was overwhelmed by the fact that she had to do everything on her own, and it took her a while to get used to the idea.

In contrast, the first day of class revealed a welcome surprise. Not knowing anything about Canada, she was nervous about the idea of studying in English with Caucasians. Thus, it was a pleasant surprise to find Chinese students in the class. She felt much better after having talked with them.

The differences between Canadian and Chinese schools became obvious as the class proceeded. Canadian students interacted actively with instructors, which was very different from China where students rarely spoke out. She also felt that instructors in Canada were not so strict as those at home. Seeing these differences was exciting and interesting for her.

However, the experience took another turn when Jamie faced unfamiliar academic tasks. Assignments caused a great deal of anxiety because she had no idea what was expected of her. She wondered how she could do the task, and constantly felt unsure if she was doing what was expected.

In her struggle, language became a pressing issue and a source of frustration. She could not understand lectures fully, and while she tried to compensate for this by studying textbooks,

this resulted in greater frustration because she could not read quickly:

And it (reading) was so slow, yeah. Some, sometimes even one hour, I probably only read like two pages or so, yeah.

The lack of language skills led to anxiety and feelings of hopelessness. Jamie believed that others saw her as a slow person when she spoke English, and she consequently became very sensitive about speaking English. It was very frustrating and worrisome for her, because she did not know whether her English was, or would ever be, good enough to study with Canadians. This led her to feel pessimistic about her future.

The first period is also characterized by isolation. Jamie remembers standing alone watching other students talking happily with one another. Jamie expressed this feeling by drawing herself as a brown smaller figure while drawing others large and in bright colours (Appendix K). She explained that the colour of her figure symbolized the loneliness she felt, and the small size represented her negative feelings about herself. While feeling different and separated from others, Jamie dreamt of the day when she could join the group:

Yeah, they may be, you know, several people together and, yeah, and they are, they are, they are talking happy news, and anyway, so so. And I'm, I'm kind of loneliful. If someday I could speak really well and I have friends and, wow, that will be really nice. Look at these people, they are so happy and... Yeah, how come I cannot join that world, you know.

However, Jamie knew that the day would not come soon. She was fearful and worried, wondering how long it might take her to be able to live like other people having many friends and being happy. During this period, she felt so small and invisible that she felt as if others ignored her. She was lonely and did not have much confidence.

Looking back, Jamie now recognizes how much her English has improved since she came to Canada. She feels a sense of awe over the change that happened since the initial period.

(B) Present Life

Jamie's present life is characterized by a sense of being normal, and this is depicted in her drawing (Appendix K); the sky is normal and she is no different from others. The figure of herself has the same colour and exactly the same size as others. Its colour can change as her moods change, "sometimes blue, sometimes clouded, just like normal people". Feeling no different from others, she is now comfortable in Canada and feels good about being independent.

While her feeling of being different has decreased, Jamie still senses distance from Canadians. She has some Canadian friends but they are not close. Considering the fact that she feels close to other international students, there seems to be a cultural barrier between herself and Canadians.

Likewise, Jamie sees herself as being in-between two cultures. Although Canadian culture has become more familiar as

her knowledge of Canada has increased, she feels she cannot change herself to become Canadian. This leads her to feel uncertain about how to behave around Canadians because she does not know if they see her as "Chinese" or just "another student". One example is whether to call professors by their first names. She knows calling them by their first names is commonly accepted in graduate schools in Canada, yet wonders if they think her to be rude because it is not appropriate in China. There does not seem to be a way that transcends cultures, and this causes her to feel confused about how she should behave in order to be considered favourably:

Yeah, I know Canadian is that, you know. But which, which way shall I choose, I just feel really confused, you know. Is which way they will accept me more, you know.

Despite feeling confused at times and distant from Canadians, Jamie has some close friends and this has helped her feel a part of the world. She now feels included, and does not become jealous when she sees others talking happily with their friends. She also enjoys exchanging ideas with a few Canadian friends who sometimes explain Canadian ways to her.

Academic success has also contributed to her positive feelings towards her current life. Jamie gained self-confidence when she discovered that she could compete favourably with Canadian students. Now, she does not let the language limitation bother her because she knows that she is a capable person. When

people are impatient with her English, she just reminds herself that she is not inferior to them as she can speak two languages:

Sometimes I actually encountered some people, you know, they are quite impatient when they wait for a long time to get my response because I just cannot pick up the right word to express my... But I felt, "Oh well, probably I'm even better than you. I know other language. I'm not bad at anything."

Her feelings have changed since first arriving here. With increased familiarity and knowledge about Canada and heightened self-confidence, Jamie now feels in control of her life.

(C) Ideal Future Life

Jamie mixed different colours in her ideal future drawing to represent a variety of activities (Appendix L). The drawing includes times for working hard at her job, relaxing, and enjoying herself, and changes in colour depending on what she chooses to do and how she feels at a certain time:

If I would draw a life pictures, so probably it's like a, it should be changeable. Sometimes maybe green, sometimes yellow, and sometimes even really, I would use these kind of really bold colour, it's like really kind of heavy, stressed out and serious, hard working.

For her, balancing work and leisure is important as she sees both as complementary. She also thinks she would feel guilty if she did not work hard. For Jamie, it means integrating the virtues of Canadian and Chinese cultures since she considers being

industrious is a Chinese tradition whereas being relaxed is a Canadian characteristic.

While Jamie appreciates having inherited Chinese values which she feels make her a serious person, she would like to add some "light colour" into her life by incorporating Canadian culture. However, there are certain Canadian values she does not want to influence her. One such value involves having intimate relationships before marriage. While Jamie admits that her perception may be affected by her own prejudice of Canadian culture, she feels Chinese people take such relationships more seriously than her Canadian counterparts. She prefers the traditional Chinese way because she thinks it helps people to be more loyal to their partners.

Family occupies an important part in Jamie's ideal picture. Family provides her with a working team to face life together. This includes having a partner with whom she can share the hardships of life. Friends can be helpful, yet she feels they cannot replace family.

In order to actualize her ideal life, Jamie realizes she needs time. With time she will be able to absorb more about Canadian culture and to enhance her English language ability. She also perceives a degree and academic success to be necessary to reach her goal. Furthermore, to realize her ideal life, it will be helpful to have a close relationship.

Katherine

Katherine is a female Chinese student who came to Canada to further pursue her education. She is in her early 30s and lives with her husband and their two-year old daughter. Her husband is also Chinese and works in a local store. They are hoping that he will be enrolled in a Canadian university soon. The interview took place approximately ten months after her arrival in Vancouver.

(A) Initial Period

Katherine was very excited and nervous on the day she was to go to a Canadian school for the first time. It was because it had taken her one year to actualize her dream. During that one year, Katherine had many concerns: her English skills may not be enough to compete in a graduate school and class format and textbooks may be completely different in Canada. Support and encouragement from her Canadian friends were valuable in this period. She felt that without them she may have given up the idea of going to Canada.

But when it came, Katherine's first visit to school was marked by a careless remark by a Canadian professor. She unexpectedly met a professor and was quite nervous during their conversation. When the professor phoned her supervisor, however, Katherine heard him refer to her as "a young lady who could not speak English very well". Katherine was shocked. She thought her English was fairly good for an international student. She described her feelings as follows:

Yeah, it was really shock to me because I was thinking my English was okay when I was in China. And compare to other Chinese students, my, ah, how do you say that, my oral English is not too bad. Yeah, at, at least compared to those, um, Chinese counterparts. And I was thinking, "Okay, if they can handle them, I can handle them as well". But the first day, he said that.

She felt depressed, yet, despite her inner turmoil, she thanked him and left as if nothing had happened. She knew he meant no harm. After this encounter, however, Katherine became increasingly nervous about speaking English. She also felt an urgency to improve English.

In contrast, the first day of class started on a more positive note. Because of the support from other international students, Katherine felt confident in handling school. She was nervous, but more curious to see what would happen on that day. It was a nice surprise to find several Chinese students in the classroom. Katherine became happy as her school life seemed to have a good start. Her positive feeling and optimism dissipated, however, as soon as the lecture started. Katherine could not understand the instructor's English because of his heavy accent, and the content was also not very interesting. She decided to withdraw after several classes.

During the initial period, language posed the biggest challenge for Katherine. She did not feel that she was doing well, and was constantly worried about her studies. She felt insecure and anxious every time she met her supervisor. It was

very stressful, and the pressure she felt was heavy like the backpack she drew (a backpack symbolizes both the mental and physical burden she had to carry all the time). Majoring in science, however, relieved some stress since Katherine mainly dealt with numbers and symbols rather than language.

The initial period was also characterized by her diminished self-concept. Although there were many Chinese students in her department, Katherine felt the dominant presence of Canadians (this was depicted by the large figures in her drawing, Appendix M). It seemed that the majority of people at school were those who were born and brought up in Canada, and, therefore, knew the system, and had no problem getting around. Katherine felt small compared to others around her.

In this challenging situation, other students from China served as a major source of support. They provided her with advice, information, and encouragement. Because they were friendly and helpful, she felt as if they were walking beside her. Katherine also enjoyed the peaceful and natural environment of Vancouver.

Having gone through the first period, Katherine now clearly sees her goal as obtaining a degree. She feels confident and believes that she can achieve her goal.

(B) Present Life

Katherine sees her present life as the toughest period because of several new challenges. Her drawing shows herself,

her daughter, and her husband going in separate ways to places that are stressful for each of them (Appendix M):

Everybody's unwilling to go to those places. My husband doesn't want to go to the bakery. My daughter, she doesn't want to go to the baby-sitter. Me, myself, I would like to go to university but still there's so many difficulties out there waiting for me.

Katherine's life has drastically changed since the initial period because she changed her major and gave birth to her daughter.

Since she changed majors from science to arts, language and finances have become more pressing issues for Katherine. The school demands have become heavier as she now has to read, write, and give presentations in English. The financial situation has become more constrained because there is less financial aid available in her current department compared to her previous one. However, her current major is more interesting, and this helps her to stay motivated. She feels much better about her subject and enjoys talking to her supervisor.

In her family life, Katherine is experiencing stress and a sense of guilt. Her guilt stems from the fact that she has little time for her family and she sends her daughter to a baby-sitter. During one particularly stressful period her daughter cried constantly. Katherine tried to relieve the situation by changing baby-sitters, but to no avail. She did not know why her daughter cried so much, and worried about what was happening with the baby-sitters. While the situation has since improved, her

daughter still seems unhappy. Despite all the stress, however, Katherine recognizes the joy she gains from her daughter (to symbolize this, she drew her daughter in red, appendix M).

Katherine also feels guilty about her husband because she goes to school while he works. Although she recognizes her husband's gains, she feels he has lost something since he came here especially because he was a competitive student in China:

I feel guilty about my, I mean to him (her husband) as well, because, as I said he was the best student in our... As I said, we were classmates in high school and he was the best and he went to the number one university in China. And he came here simply because I came here. And because of his language, he had to go to work in a bakery.

Moreover, the heavy school load leads her to study even during weekends, and she feels guilty about not having time for her family. She perceives that her husband is unhappy, and is hoping that they will be happier once he enrolls in a university and once she graduates.

(C) Ideal Future Life

Katherine's drawing of her ideal future life is in bright pink and all her family members are happy together in a house (Appendix N). In her drawing, she has few financial worries and is happy with her family. Katherine is hoping to be enrolled in a Ph.D. program and hopes that life will be better for herself and her family once she obtains a job after graduation.

Katherine also hopes that her family will be able to enjoy each other's company when the financial stress is relieved. She

would like to spend more time with her family and enjoy nature with them. She hopes that her daughter will have "whatever the other kids have".

Katherine has a very strong wish for her daughter to become educated. She thinks this may be because of her cultural background where education is deemed to be most important. To her, education is a passport for a better life because it will enable her daughter to develop a career and become independent. She also feels that with education her daughter will have a better chance of becoming well-mannered, keeping herself occupied, and possibly finding a good husband. Nonetheless, Katherine hopes that the task of going to school will not be as stressful for her daughter as it was for herself.

All the family members have a road to reach their goals in Katherine's ideal life drawing (Appendix N). For her husband, she hopes that he will be able to fulfill his academic potential by going to a university in Canada. That might lead to a better life for them because both of them will be professionals.

Katherine believes hard work, both in terms of her study and language, will lead to the achievement of her ideal life. She also recognizes that time and opportunity will play a role in actualizing her goal.

Summary of Common Themes

Themes are reported under the three phases of adjustment suggested by Schlossberg (1981): moving in, moving through, and moving out. This section summarizes only the common themes that

were reported by more than two participants. A summary of unique themes are presented in Appendix O.

In each phase, the following three categories are used to differentiate aspects of the participants' experiences: emotional dynamics, external dynamics, and behavioural dynamics. Emotional dynamics are emotions and feelings the participants experienced, while external dynamics represent events and situational factors that the participants perceived. Themes under the behavioural dynamics summarize behaviours that the participants took in reaction to their emotional states and external dynamics. The summary of themes is presented in Table 1 (numbers in brackets signify the number of participants who reported each theme).

TABLE 1
Summary of Themes

Moving In - Anticipation Period

	Common Themes	Unique Themes
Emotional Dynamics	Excitement (2) Fear (2) Loneliness (2) Nervousness (2)	Shame
External Dynamics	Cold Weather (2) Communication Difficulties (2)	Facing Foreign Tasks Lack of Support
Behavioral Dynamics	Problem-Solving (3) Repression of Feelings (2)	

Moving Through - Initial Period

	Common Themes	Unique Themes
Emotional Dynamics	Reported by More Than Three Nervousness (5) Fear (4) Loneliness (4) Feeling of Inadequacy (4) Feeling of Invisibility (4) Excitement, Curiosity (3) Reported by Two Depression (2) Overwhelmed (2) Sense of Having an Ally (2)	Guilty and Torn Confusion of Self-Perception
External Dynamics	Interpersonal Issues (5) Communication Difficulties (5) Structural Issues (3) Physical Environment (3)	
Behavioral Dynamics	Problem-Solving (4) Withdrawal (3)	Using metaphorical support

Moving Out - Present Life

	Common Themes	Unique Themes
Emotional Dynamics	Reported by More Than Three Self-Confidence (5) Uncertainty about Future (4) Increased Comfort (3) Reported by Two Sense of Belonging (2) Financial Pressure (2) Stress (2)	Guilt Isolation Disappointment with school
External Dynamics	Reported by More Than Three Interpersonal Issues (4) Academic Life (4) Reported by Two Family (2) Future (2)	Identity Issue
Behavioral Dynamics	Problem-Solving (3)	Active Involvement with Family. Living Independently

Moving In - Anticipation Period

This period extends from a period where the participants waited for their departure to Canada until the time their first class began.

(A) Emotional Dynamics

Excitement, Fear, Loneliness, and Nervousness

While excitement, fear, and loneliness are commonly experienced by several, not all the participants experienced strong emotions in this period. This period posed a major challenge, particularly for Victoria. She described how she was suddenly struck by a feeling of apathy when she was dropped off at her new home:

And I just sit in the room. And suddenly, you know, I don't have any mood to, to be happy or to look around, you know. I just don't know what to do. I just sit, sat there.

For a week, Victoria was depressed and felt alone. Her feeling of nervousness on her first visit to school was shared by one other participant.

(B) External Dynamics

Two common dynamics were found as external factors that influenced the participants' lives before starting school. They were cold weather and communication difficulties.

Cold Weather and Communication Difficulties

Two participants reported cold weather and communication difficulties as influential factors during the period before the

first class began. Victoria remembered the day she arrived in Canada as cold and dark, and this impression set a tone for the difficult first week where she faced her new life without much support. She also experienced the first conversation with a Canadian as that of misunderstanding.

Katherine remembered the heavy snow on the day she visited school for the first time. Katherine also experienced her first conversation with a Canadian in an unfavourable way; she heard the man referring to her as "a lady who could not speak English very well". This experience resulted in intensifying her anxiety about English.

(C) Behavioural Dynamics

Two common themes were identified. The common themes were problem-solving attempts and repression of feelings.

Problem-Solving Attempts

Three participants reported that they made some attempts to improve their situations. These actions included seeking help, trying out a new academic course, and trying to make sense of their experiences. Victoria asked various people to help her with different tasks during the initial period. She asked her landlord to accompany her to school as it was intimidating to go there alone, and requested a course consultation with her supervisor when the school started. Katherine tried to make sense of what happened after having heard someone speak negatively of her English. It was her way of coping with feelings that were evoked by this incident.

Repression of Feelings

Two participants described that they tried to repress their emotions by trying not to feel them or to conceal them. Katherine attempted not to show her shock when she heard a negative evaluation of her English. Victoria was nervous when she talked to a Canadian for the first time, but acted to the contrary. Victoria also tried not to feel emotions when she was depressed for a week since her arrival in Canada.

Moving Through - The Initial Period

This period is defined as a period of struggling in a new environment which began with the first class.

(A) Emotional Dynamics

Nine emotional responses emerged as common to some participants. While each of these is defined and reported in separate sections, they frequently overlapped one another in the participants' experiences.

Of nine common themes, those experienced by more than three participants were nervousness, fear, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, invisibility, and excitement and curiosity. Two participants reported experiencing depression, feelings of being overwhelmed, and a sense of having allies.

Themes Reported by More Than Three Participants

Nervousness

Nervousness was one of the dominant emotions reported by all the participants. This feeling was explained as feeling worried,

anxious, insecure, uncertain, and sensitive to others' evaluation. While insecurity about one's English seemed to contribute to this feeling, facing unfamiliar situations and tasks also precipitated their nervousness. Jamie described her anxiety about being assigned foreign academic tasks as follows:

I felt kind of worried, yeah, writing assignments, how am I going to catch up?

Similarly, Lucy described her nervous feelings as follows:

When you go to classes, you feel like you don't know what you are doing here. Then, you are told you gonna have to write a thesis. Then, they come with a proposal, and you like, "Oh, what on earth is that?", you know.

Several participants expressed that they felt nervous and inferior because Canadian students seemed so competent. Lucy described her feelings as follows:

You see, most Canadians who go to graduate studies seem to know what they want. And they talk a lot. And you found that sometimes there's no space to talk, you know, whether you want it or not.

Katherine felt that Canadians had a dominant presence in her department. Jamie drew a larger figure to represent Canadians while drawing herself as a small person.

Fear

A person is feeling fearful when she/he is afraid or scared. Four participants indicated having experienced this feeling during their initial period in Canada.

Their accounts indicated that the following three factors contributed to their fear: a lack of familiarity, diminished self-confidence, and uncertainty over the duration of the current situation. For example, Victoria described that she was fearful because everything (including the surroundings, people, and the language) was foreign for her. She was scared of getting lost and of having to speak to people outside of her home.

The second factor concerns self-confidence they lost upon arrival. Miguel was afraid of talking to Canadians because he did not feel confident about his English. Victoria lost her self-confidence as she could not understand the lectures and became withdrawn in school.

The third contributing factor was uncertainty about how long the challenging situation would last. Lucy became fearful because she thought that she could become alienated to the point where she could die in isolation. Katherine was scared of the prospect that the initial situation could last very long.

Loneliness

A person feels lonely when she/he feels alone and isolated or alienated from others. It was a major challenge for four participants in the initial period. Two participants described a situation where they were watching a group of students talking

happily. Jamie described that she felt so far away from the others in spite of being so close to them in physical proximity:

See, from the geography perspective, maybe I'm quite close to them. I mean, compared to when I was in China, now I'm close to Caucasians. But I'm still far away from them.

Lucy's fear of becoming isolated intensified when she heard of a dead woman from her home country whose body went unnoticed for a week.

Feeling of Inadequacy

A feeling of inadequacy was another dominant emotion reported by four participants. This feeling was defined as a person feeling stupid or slow, or feeling that her/his stories are meaningless and irrelevant. It is characterized by a lack of self-confidence in one's capabilities.

Lucy described her feelings of inadequacy when other students in the class interrupted her by saying "Pardon?". She further felt that her stories were not valued in the class because they were foreign. Jamie explained her feelings of appearing slow to other students who seemed so quick in their thinking. Victoria was afraid of appearing stupid, and consequently grew sensitive about others' opinion of her. She described her feelings as follows:

I think they have the feeling this student, you know, so quiet and don't have any there, my own opinion, you know. Because Canadian students, they are so used to express themselves, to, to show up. So I was quite

sensitive in this aspect, other people's opinion on me and appearance especially.

Miguel felt so ashamed of himself for not being able to speak English that he became withdrawn in school.

Feeling of Invisibility

A feeling of invisibility was accompanied by a feeling of inadequacy in many instances. That is, a person feeling inadequate may be likely to feel invisible as well. However, the participants' accounts indicated that they felt completely ignored when they felt invisible, while a feeling of inadequacy seemed to have more to do with invalidation of their capabilities. Thus, when they felt invisible, it was a feeling of people not seeing their whole existence. This feeling was accompanied by feelings of shame, of being foreign, of being small, of not belonging, and of being ignored.

Three reported having felt this feeling during the initial period. Jamie reported that she felt others ignored her as if she were "out of the group". This led her to feel small compared to others. Lucy explained that she felt invisible in classes as if she were a nobody.

Excitement and Curiosity

Three participants reported having felt excited in the beginning of their initial period in Canada. An individual is excited when he/she feels active and curious to discover the differences between their home culture and host culture.

Katherine was excited and curious on her first day of school in

Canada. Jamie was excited that she could see differences in the ways in which the instructor and students interacted with one another. Victoria described that everything was new and exciting on the first day of school.

Themes Reported by Two Participants

Depression

Two participants reported having felt depressed during their initial period. They described this feeling as feeling grey, sad, and apathetic. Jamie expressed her feeling by drawing herself in neutral colours, and explained that she was feeling grey while seeing others as colourful figures. Victoria experienced an intense feeling of apathy upon arrival. She realized that her life had changed, and had no energy to take any action. She also described that she slept a great deal even during the day, when she felt sad and down.

Feeling of Being Overwhelmed

An individual feels overwhelmed when she/he feels having little control over the situation at hand. Two participants experienced this feeling. Miguel reported having felt overwhelmed when the instructor started a lecture in the first class. The instructor spoke very fast and Miguel could not understand most of it. Jamie described that she felt she had no control over the situation and that she could not predict what would happen next while in the initial period.

Sense of Having Allies

Two described that support by other international students was a valuable element in dealing with the challenges of their initial period. A person feels supported when she/he perceives her/his feelings to be understood and validated, and when she/he receives encouragement, reassurance, and help from others.

Katherine described that she felt as if "other Chinese students were walking beside her" in the initial period. Because of their reassurance, she felt confident of handling school life in Canada. Jamie's anxiety was reduced at the sight of Chinese students in her first class in Canada. She described that she was nervous when she entered the classroom but became much more comfortable after talking to these students. These descriptions indicate that a sense of sharing the same struggle played an important role in dealing with their new lives in Canada. Mutual support seemed to give a sense of community and of having an ally for these participants.

(B) External Dynamics

Five areas were identified as common situational factors that influenced the participants' experiences during the initial period since their first class. They were interpersonal issues, language difficulties, structural issues, and physical environment. All of them were reported by more than three participants.

Interpersonal Issues

All the participants experienced issues related to interpersonal relationships. These issues include experiencing difficulty in bonding with Canadian students, perceiving a lack of support, missing one's home country, and receiving support and affirmation from one's friends, family, and supervisor.

Lucy found that there was no room for bonding in Canada, and attributed this to individualism in Western culture. A lack of meaningful relationships distressed her because it was so different from her community-oriented culture. Similarly, Jamie saw herself as being out of the group; she perceived Canadian students were happy and comfortable while she was alone.

At the same time, some reported that they received support and positive regard from others. Lucy appreciated her supervisor's understanding and support. Katherine perceived support from other international students as a valuable help in the initial period.

Language Difficulties

All the participants reported to have experienced difficulties with English. Four out of five participants stated that they had difficulty understanding lectures. Jamie described that it was difficult to feel positive about herself because she could not understand lectures, and further attempt to compensate this by reading was met with another barrier as her reading was so slow. Victoria felt her experience shifted when she found out how little she understood in lectures. The initial confidence

she had felt dissipated quickly, and she withdrew from others by avoiding social contacts. These accounts suggest that language posed a major hurdle and affected the participants' psychological well-being as well as efficiency to deal with their new lives.

Structural Issues

Three participants raised structural issues that influenced their lives in the initial period. Examples include a lack of information, disorganization at school, finding structural differences between Canadian schools and those in one's home country, and dealing with unfamiliar tasks such as registration.

The participants' accounts exemplify these issues. Miguel had a hard time finding the classroom for his first class, and his second class was cancelled without any notification. Victoria experienced a similar challenge on her first day of school. She found the situation at school chaotic and had trouble finding the information she needed for registration. These experiences seemed to elevate their anxiety.

In contrast, Jamie found the differences between schools in Canada and those in her home country interesting. She perceived that students in Canada played a more active role during classes compared to those at home, and that the class format was not as rigid as it was at home.

Physical Environment

Three participants reported that environmental factors played a role in constructing their experiences. These factors were climate, natural environment, and architecture at school.

Two stated that the cold and dark climate affected their moods in a negative way. These two people began their lives in Canada in winter when there was little sunshine in Vancouver, and this seemed to influence their first impressions about their new lives in Canada.

Also, Miguel perceived the school building as enormous on his first day of school. Katherine reported that the beauty of nature relieved her stress during the initial period.

(C) Behavioural Dynamics

Two common behavioural themes emerged as actions that the participants took during the initial period. They were problem-solving behaviours and withdrawal, and both of these themes were reported by more than three participants.

Problem-Solving Behaviours

Four participants reported that they initiated some form of problem-solving behaviours. Three types of such behaviour were identified from their accounts: reaching out to others, trying to regain control over the situation, and trying to focus on tasks at hand.

All four participants described that they approached others to relieve a sense of alienation and isolation. Although Miguel perceived several of these attempts as a failure because he was unable to keep up conversation, he repeated such attempts until he finally succeeded in engaging in a meaningful conversation. Jamie explained that her anxiety was relieved significantly after speaking to Chinese students in the first class.

The second type of problem-solving behaviour was characterized by an attempt to regain control over the situation. Four participants described attitudes such as trying to solve the problem by him/herself, declaring priorities, actively participating in classes, and studying textbooks to compensate for a lack of English comprehension. Victoria and Jamie tried to supplement their inability to understand lectures by reading textbooks. Lucy declared to her supervisor that her first priority was not academic success but to survive in Canada.

A third form of problem-solving behaviour was marked by an attempt to focus on tasks rather than dwelling on their feelings. Lucy stated that she tried to let go of her pain in order to focus on the task at hand.

Withdrawal

Three participants withdrew from the situation either by physically dropping a course or by keeping silent during class. Victoria and Miguel reported that they said nothing in the classes in the beginning because they were unable to understand and to participate in class discussions. Katherine decided to drop the course after finding that she could not understand the lectures.

Moving Out - Present Life

This section summarizes the participants' experiences of their current lives.

(A) Emotional Dynamics

Six emotional themes were identified as common among several participants. Among them, more than three participants experienced a sense of self-confidence, uncertainty, and increased comfort with Canadian life, while two reported a sense of belonging, financial pressure, and stress. Although these themes are defined separately, they affect each other and overlap with one another.

Themes Reported by More Than Three Participants

Increased Self-Confidence

All the participants reported that their self-confidence has increased since the initial period. They described this feeling as feeling better about themselves, knowing themselves as a capable person, a sense of having control over their lives, and not being afraid of challenges. In four cases, academic success contributed to their elevated self-confidence. They all achieved academic success despite their language and cultural handicaps. Because they discovered that they could compete well with Canadians, their feelings about themselves improved a great deal. Jamie stated:

I guess also because, yeah, studies, because I really got a very good marks, you know. I felt really good, "Wow, you see, I can do as well as you guys".

In some cases, increased self-confidence led to a sense of being in control. Victoria and Jamie reported that they now feel

in control of their lives and are no longer afraid of their future.

Uncertainty

Four participants indicated that they feel uncertain about some aspects of their lives. This feeling was accompanied by feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and worry.

Some reported insecure feelings over academic matters, while one participant expressed uncertainty about others' opinions of her. Miguel is uncertain about the purpose of his current school life. Katherine feels insecure about her English. Jamie is not sure how to behave around professors in order to be considered favorably. She feels uncertain about how she is viewed as Chinese or just another student.

Family caused some to feel uncertain. Lucy found herself unable to make a decision about her future because of the impact her decision will have on her family. Her anxiety was further augmented by her uncertain feelings about where to call home. Katherine was worried about her daughter when her daughter cried constantly. She felt anxious and concerned about what had happened at the baby-sitters where she sent her daughter.

Comfortable with Life in Canada

Three participants indicated that they are now comfortable in Canada. They described that they felt happy and positive about their lives in Canada and that they were more used to Canadian culture. Miguel explained that he was accustomed to his life in Canada, and was happy with his wife living in Canada.

Victoria is now happy in Canada, and tries to focus on positive aspects whenever she faces hardships.

Themes Reported by Two Participants

Sense of Belonging

This feeling was described by two participants as "feeling like Canadians", "feeling normal just like Canadians", and perceiving themselves equal to Canadians. Jamie expressed this feeling by drawing herself in the same size and colours as Canadians. While she recognizes cultural distance between herself and Canadians, she does not see herself any smaller than they are, and does not become envious when she sees others being happy with their friends. Victoria described that she felt as if she were a Canadian now that she knew the system and had little problem getting around.

Financial Pressure

Two participants reported being under financial pressure. This was described as being preoccupied with one's financial situation, feeling stressed out about one's finances, and worrying about one's financial future. Katherine described the current situation as financially very stressful because her husband's minimum wage job was the sole source of income in her family. Lack of financial aid in her department also contributed to her stress. In contrast, Victoria feels optimistic about her financial future. Although money is always a concern for her, she now feels she will find ways to support herself.

Stress

Feelings of stress were characterized by an attempt to meet others' expectations of themselves, and spending a great deal of time trying to meet demands while having little time for themselves. Lucy described that she was "being kept on toes all the time" as she tried to satisfy demands of school to reach a decision about her future. The decision-making process proved to be stressful for her because of the pressure to make a perfect decision.

Katherine described her present life as "the toughest ever" due to the demands of child-rearing and pressure from school. Her current life is very stressful because she has multiple roles and responsibilities as a mother, a student, and a wife.

(B) External Dynamics

Although five themes were identified as common to several participants, only two were common among more than three participants. Each participant seemed to have a particular issue that was dominant in her/his present life, and this may be because each participant's unique life circumstances had become a more influential force since surviving the initial period. The five common themes were interpersonal issues, academic life, family, future, and financial stress (listed in order of commonalty).

Themes Reported by More Than Three Participants

Interpersonal Issues

Of four participants who reported to have interpersonal issues, two of them indicated that they experienced interpersonal difficulties. Miguel mentioned communication he had with his supervisor. Katherine experienced the situation where she became a mediator between two disagreeing parties. She also described the experience where she overheard others criticizing her.

Three participants stated that they received help and support from others. Despite some obstacles, Katherine gained confidence because of others' affirmation of her ability. Victoria counted support of her supervisor and her sister as a valuable element in her current life.

Academic Life

Academic life has both positive and negative aspects for four participants. Three participants accounted that their academic situation has improved since the initial period. For Victoria and Jamie, it was an unexpected academic success that contributed to their positive feelings about their current lives, while for Katherine, changing her major brought in both negative and positive points. Since she changed from science to arts, language became a heavier burden and school demand intensified. However, she has gained a sense of purpose since the change, and hence is currently happier about her academic life.

Themes Reported by Two Participants

Family

Two participants reported contrasting family lives. Miguel's family life is nothing but positive. He is very happy because he has a great deal of free time with his wife and they have a house to themselves. In contrast, having a family has become a major source of stress for Katherine. She is exhausted by many responsibilities, and feels guilty for having little time for her family. In spite of these demands, however, Katherine acknowledged the joy her daughter brings into her life.

Future

Two participants expressed their concern about the future. Lucy is concerned about the effect that her decision will have on her children's future. There are several questions that need to be answered, and this leads her to feel unsure of her future. Similarly, Victoria indicated her uncertain feelings about her future.

(C) Behavioural Dynamics

Various forms of problem-solving behaviours were described by three participants.

Problem-Solving Behaviours

Three participants described that they have tried to improve current situations by such means as sharing their feelings with others, focusing on positive aspects of their lives, collecting information, networking, and taking a proactive approach to tackle academic challenges.

As the current life situation varies between the participants, their challenges range from those of an academic nature to those of a financial nature. Yet the results indicate that they no longer withdraw from challenges but deal with them actively. For example, Jamie reminded herself of the fact that she was a capable person rather than becoming depressed whenever someone grew impatient with her English. Victoria decided to write an exam despite advice from some people not to, and accomplished her goal.

Ideal Future Life

The ideal future lives were described with such words as happiness, little worry, financial relief, relaxing life, and freedom. For example, it is essential for Lucy to become happy with herself, while for Jamie, incorporating virtues of Canadian and Chinese cultures constitutes an important part in her ideal life. Victoria described her dream of living in Canada with her family.

Four participants expressed their wish for happy family life in the future. Three wished to be able to enjoy spending time with their families. Katherine expressed her strong hope for a happier family life since the financial pressure is currently so intense and she feels her family members are unable to enjoy each other's company. Two hoped to have children and to live in a house with their families in Canada.

Some participants have certain wishes for other family members. Two participants communicated their strong wish for their spouses to become professionals. For Katherine, it not only means financial relief but also a way for her husband to self-actualize himself. She hopes that he will become happier as he fulfills his academic potential. Katherine also expressed her strong wish for her daughter to become educated. She feels that education will open many doors for her daughter in the future.

One unique issue emerged in terms of ideal family life. Miguel recognized his wife's needs to actualize herself, yet felt uncertain if his ideal life could accommodate such needs. He realizes that there may be a gap between his ideal future life and his wife's ideal life.

For their career, three mentioned that they hoped to find a meaningful job. A meaningful job is described as a professional occupation, a work which allows one to be creative and helpful, and a job which enabled them to support their family. For Lucy, it is imperative that she will be able to support her family; she feels that her family had made a great deal of sacrifice for her education, and hopes to reciprocate for what they have done for her during her school years. Victoria emphasized her wish to become a professional so she can help others. She does not want to have a "routine job" which she does not feel is self-actualizing. For Victoria, becoming a professional is also a means to sponsor family.

In contrast, for Miguel, the future of his career is not as important as that of his family life. Miguel sees employment as something that needs to be obtained in order to provide for his family. It is for him a means to establish the ideal family life, living in a house in Canada and enjoying spending time together.

Four participants answered that they needed some more time to actualize their ideal lives. Other factors that the participants think will help them achieve their goals are employment, support network, academic achievement, improved language ability, and increased general knowledge about Canada. For Lucy, it is critical to have a community where people help each other to achieve their goals. Lucy feels that community not only provides encouragement and support, but it also becomes a network to enhance one's chance of success. In contrast, Victoria sees that it is fundamental to obtain permanent resident status in Canada in order to bring her family to Canada.

Results of Sentence Completion Questionnaire

Responses on the sentence completion questionnaire reflected both the initial uncertainty about the drawing exercise and subsequent positive experience the participants had with drawing (see Appendix P). For example, one participant wrote, "I felt insecure about my drawings because I'm not used to draw anything", but reported that it was exciting to draw about her life and thoughts.

Other comments, such as "Drawing about myself makes me recall my experiences and feelings", indicate that the drawing exercise stimulated their thinking and helped them remember lost feelings and forgotten events. This was also shared by another participant who wrote "Drawing about myself makes me get in touch with my feelings in a concrete way".

The drawing exercise seemed to help loosen some participants' defences. One participant wrote that he/she felt free to say anything about him/herself, his/her family, and his/her future when he/she drew. Another participant reported that he/she talked about the most striking things when he/she drew. For others, it facilitated them to view their experiences from different perspectives; one participant described that he/she began to see things which he/she did not see before.

Four participants reported that drawing about their present lives was a pleasant experience. They indicated that this was because they felt positive about their current lives. Similarly, drawing about the future was a positive experience for four participants. It helped them to see options and to examine what constitutes their ideal lives. One participant wrote, "I was happy to be in a position to feel that I deserve a better future". Drawing about their future lives enabled some participants to see that the future is open to them and that their hard work would bear some fruit.

On the other hand, some participants expressed their reservations about using drawing to describe their experiences.

Comments, such as "It's difficult to draw feelings and emotions" and "It is hard to represent dynamics of life on a piece of paper", reflect the difficulty some participants had about expressing complex feelings and experiences in drawing.

In summary, despite their initial hesitation, the participants' feedback indicated that the drawing activity was a generally positive experience. Drawing stimulated their thinking and memory in some cases, while in others, it helped them feel at ease to express themselves and share their stories. The drawing exercise also enabled some to see their experiences with fresh eyes. Most participants felt positive about their current lives and their future, and this was reflected in their drawings.

Summary

While the participants' experiences varied during the period before school started, they commonly felt nervous, fearful, lonely, inadequate, invisible, and excited during the initial period of their school life in Canada. The most common coping method used by the participants was problem-solving actions such as trying to reach out to others or to regain control over the situation. Interpersonal issues, communication difficulties, structural issues, and physical environment commonly affected their experiences during the initial period.

In contrast, most participants felt positive toward their current lives. Themes that emerged as the most common among the participants include self-confidence, uncertainty about the future, and an increased sense of ease with their lives in

Canada. Interpersonal issues and academic life were the main issues which influenced their experiences. Three participants reported taking problem-solving strategies when they faced some challenges.

Description of an ideal future life included words such as happy, relaxing, freedom, a meaningful job, and financial relief. While there was general agreement about what the participants perceived as the ideal future life, the participants' ideas slightly varied from one another depending on their life circumstances. For some, being united with one's family was the most important goal, while pursuing a career seemed to weigh more for others. To realize their dreams, the participants responded that they needed time, opportunities, a support network, increased knowledge about Canada, and enhanced English abilities.

The results of the sentence completion questionnaire revealed that albeit with some reservations, the participants generally felt positive about the drawing exercise.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of international students' experiences through using a visual medium (drawings) and interviews. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with five graduate international students of the University of British Columbia in Canada. Three phases of their experiences in Canada (anticipatory period, initial period, and current life) were examined as well as what they wished for their future.

The results yielded a number of emotional, external, and behavioural themes in each of these phases. While the commonalties among the participants emerged as a result of qualitative data analysis, each participant's story was unique in terms of how they experienced these themes, and this uniqueness was illuminated both in their stories and in their drawings.

Some of the findings from this study are consistent with previous research on transition and international students. In this chapter, findings of this study are examined in terms of their contributions for theory and research, and their implications for counselling practice are explored. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are also addressed.

Integrating Current and Previous Research

Implications for Adjustment Theory

The results of the present research are consistent with Schlossberg's (1981) model of human adaptation to transition. Schlossberg proposed that the following three types of variables affect an individual's adjustment process: characteristics of the particular transition, characteristics of the pre and post transition environments, and characteristics of the individual.

According to Schlossberg, the characteristics of most transitions can be described by factors such as the individual's perception of role change, affect, and stress. The current study demonstrated the presence of these variables. All the participants indicated that both positive and negative emotions influenced their experiences. Furthermore, the results suggest that their feelings were the result of particular transitional events as well as a source to shape further experiences. Certain incidents led some participants to feel anxious, and this anxiety affected how they viewed themselves and the world around them. Also, several participants reported a perception of role change. For example, Victoria felt that her status had suddenly fallen from a competitive student to a "stupid one", whereas Katherine perceived her husband's identity had drastically changed since coming to Canada.

The current study also recognized Schlossberg's second category of moderators, the characteristics of pre and post transition environments. These environments are understood in

terms of their support system and physical settings, and the effects of these factors were evident in the participants' accounts. For example, several participants reported that the physical setting, particularly the cold climate of Vancouver, affected their moods during their initial period.

In terms of social support, Schlossberg suggests two types of support: personal and institutional. In this study, the participants revealed that friendships with both co-nationals and host-nationals enabled them to cope with the transition while a loss of a previous support system had a damaging effect, particularly in the initial period.

Also, the present study shed light on the importance of relationships with other international students. While previous research such as that of Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) tended to focus on the positive aspect of sojourner-host national contacts, the results from this study indicated that relationships with other international students were also important mediators of adjustment. While several participants described their sense of relief at the sight of co-nationals in school, they also reported that they felt a sense of sharing the same struggle with other international students. This sense relieved anxiety and feelings of isolation for some participants.

In contrast, none of the participants reported to have sought institutional support. While there was a resource facility on campus for international students, none of the participants utilized this facility during their struggles. This

may be because international students are likely to be left uninformed of services on campus as Miguel suggested in the interview, and/or due to international students' tendency to not seek professional help as some researchers have suggested (Toffoli & Allan, 1992; Wehrly, 1986; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990).

Finally, findings from this study identified the third category of mediators suggested by Schlossberg, characteristics of the individual, such as age, gender, values, ethnicity, and psychological competence. Some participants in this study indicated having experienced value conflicts. For example, Lucy found individualism in North America difficult to deal with because she came from a more community-oriented culture. Jamie reported feeling "in between cultures" because of value differences between her homeland and Canadian cultures.

Similarly, psychological competence was evident in the participants' accounts. On several occasions, the participants took an active problem-solving approach; the participants approached Canadians and co-nationals in hopes of building a new support network while at other times they studied hard to overcome their language limitations.

Schlossberg suggests that adaptation occurs when an individual moves from being preoccupied with the transition to integrating it into his/her life. The current study indicated that the participants had integrated the change in their lives. They commonly reported that they were comfortable with their present lives in Canada, and had gained self-confidence as a

result of the transitional experience. Some participants emphasized a sense of normalness. Victoria described that she felt "just like Canadians" whereas Jamie drew herself in the same size and colours as Canadians to signify her feeling of being normal and same as Canadians.

The study also found other mediators that were suggested by other researchers. Ward and Kennedy (1993a) proposed that an individual's language ability affects his/her sociocultural adaptation which in turn predicts psychological adjustment. The results of this study supported this notion. All the participants reported language as a major challenge, and some indicated that a lack of language skills led them to feel "foreign" and "different". This feeling of being different may have affected their psychological well-being, causing them to feel isolated, inadequate, nervous, and invisible. However, other factors such as cultural differences and personality factors may have also contributed to their sense of being different. Thus, the relationship between language ability, sociocultural, and psychological adjustment may have been interfered with or intensified by other variables.

While previous research typically indicates the advantage of having language skills in the sojourner's adjustment process (e.g. Ward & Kennedy, 1993a; Kagan & Cohen, 1990), the findings from this study illustrate one positive aspect from not having enough language ability; the initial lack of language ability contributed to a subsequent greater sense of self-confidence.

Several participants reported that because of their language limitation, academic success had more significant meaning for them than it would have if English was their native language. That is, they realized that they could compete well against native English speakers despite their language handicap, and their self-confidence was elevated significantly as a result.

Ward and Searle (1991) suggest that cultural knowledge influences one's sociocultural adaptation, and this was consistent with the results of this study. Several participants indicated that their knowledge about Canada had increased since first arriving here, and this had led them to feel more comfortable with their lives in Canada.

Concerns and Feelings of International Students

The current study supports some of the findings of previous research regarding international students' major concerns. Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) conducted a qualitative study which indicated that international students were primarily concerned with language, academic issues, cultural differences, racial discrimination, and social interactions with Canadians. All of these themes except racial discrimination were identified in the present study. For example, all the participants faced a language barrier and interpersonal issues. While other studies also suggest language as a key issue for international students (e.g. Deressa & Beavers, 1988), the results of this study indicate that language skills not only affect the participants'

efficiency to communicate but also their self-concept, feelings of isolation, and academic confidence.

Similar to the results of Heikinheimo and Shute's study (1986), both positive and negative aspects of cultural differences were recognized. Cultural differences posed a barrier to connect with Canadians while they were also seen as interesting and exciting. Jamie reported that she was fascinated by the way instructors and students interacted in Canada because it was very different from that in China, whereas Lucy felt it was difficult to bond with Canadians because Canadians were individualistic and seemed to avoid close relationships.

Previous research also recognized finances as a major concern for international students. (e.g. Deressa & Beavers, 1988; Parr et al, 1992), but the findings of this study suggest that the issue of finances weighed more in the participant's present lives than it did during the initial period of being in Canada. While the reasons for this is unclear, it may be that the participants had numerous other concerns when they started their new lives in Canada whereas finances emerged as a salient issue as they resolved other adjustment issues. Other issues identified in this study include family in their homelands and uncertainty about their future.

Results of the current study identified feelings and emotions that previous research suggest to be common among international students. These emotions include homesickness, loneliness, anxiety, and depression.

Lu (1990) explored emotional experiences of international students in Britain by administering questionnaires within two weeks of their arrival and two months after the arrival. The result was striking; more than 90% of participants reported homesickness at both times. While Lu suggests that homesickness remains stable and lasting, the current study contradicted this finding; only two participants reported homesickness which dissipated over time. The difference may stem from a difference of duration between Lu's study and this study. In Lu's study, the second questionnaire was administered two months after their arrival while all the participants in this study arrived in Canada at least six months prior to the interview. Thus, the results of this study suggest that the homesickness of international students may be relieved with time, albeit slowly.

The present study also supported previous research that found loneliness as a common emotion among international students. Hsu et al (1987) conducted a study to examine the frequency of loneliness among 131 Chinese students in America. Hsu et al found that international students were more socially lonely than their American counterparts. Based on this result, Hsu et al conclude that loneliness of international students stems from social alienation rather than from a lack of close emotional attachments. The descriptions of the participants supported this finding; four participants reported having experienced loneliness but their accounts indicated that their feelings of loneliness were more to do with feelings of being

different and a lack of sense of belonging. A sense of alienation was portrayed particularly in Jamie's drawing where everyone else was drawn colourfully while only her figure was drawn in gray, and in Lucy's account that she felt foreign and invisible. Thus, these results confirmed Lu's conclusion that international students' loneliness may be more the result of social factors.

All the participants reported feelings of nervousness and anxiety, and this was consistent with previous research. Pedersen (1991) suggests that anxiety occurs as a result of losing previous support systems and that its manifestation ranges from mild annoyance to feelings of panic and disorientation. In the current study, three participants resorted to withdrawing because of their anxiety. Several participants also indicated that they were always tired because of their anxiety.

Although several researchers contend that depression is prevalent among international students (e.g. Pedersen, 1991; Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986), only two participants in this study voiced such feelings. In contrast to this, the current study identified two common feelings that were rarely addressed in previous research: feelings of inadequacy and feelings of invisibility. Four participants described feeling inadequate and invisible, and this affected various aspects of their lives including academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Cadieux and Wehrly (1986) suggest that facing unfamiliar academic tasks and the competitive nature at school is likely to lead

international students to feel depressed, angry, and helpless. Three participants reported facing such challenges but described their feelings as feeling inadequate and invisible rather than being depressed. Further investigation is needed to clarify the difference and relationship among depression, feelings of inadequacy, and feelings of invisibility. It may be that feelings of inadequacy and invisibility are components of depression or they are the initial reactions which lead to depression.

Coping Strategies of International Students

While previous research often explores factors that affect the adjustment process of international students and their concerns and feelings during that process, few studies address coping strategies. As a result, international students are often portrayed as passive, helpless, and defenseless (Pedersen, 1991). Research that focuses on how to help these students often falls into the same trap of assuming them to be mere helpees. In contrast to this notion, however, the current study found international students to be active agents who tried to remedy their situations more often than they resorted to withdrawal.

Four participants tried some sort of problem-solving strategy during the period when adjustment challenges were most intense. These strategies included taking initiatives in approaching others to relieve a sense of isolation, asserting priorities to people around them, and studying textbooks thoroughly to compensate for their limited listening

comprehension. One participant consciously tried to change her attitudes and to take a proactive approach in order to overcome challenges. Others, despite repeated perceived failure, did not give up and kept on approaching others until finally meaningful relationships began to blossom. While the participants sometimes withdrew from their situations, this may also be a way of conserving mental and physical energy in order to cope with further challenges as one participant indicated during the interview. These results suggest that international students play active roles in their adjustment process rather than being helpless, and use their resources to cope with their struggles.

Use of Drawings with International Students

The current study demonstrated several advantages and limitations of using drawings with international students that were suggested by previous research. For example, Amundson (1988) points out that drawing provides a means for concrete case conceptualization, and the feedback of the participants suggests that drawings helped them to recall lost memories and conceptualize them in a concrete way. The researcher's impression also confirmed this; from the interviewer's point of view, I felt the drawings helped me to understand the participants' experiences with more confidence because of additional visual clues.

Drawings also functioned as a sharing point for discussions in the present study. Moody (1995) conducted a field observation study on an Indian reservation, and reported that visual art

facilitated mutual understanding between the therapist and clients, and helped them transcend cultural differences. The participants in this study indicated that drawings enabled them to talk freely about themselves, and I also sensed that drawings facilitated the sense of sharing. Drawing helped to assure that both the participants and the researcher were talking from common ground. In this way, drawings became a map to reduce the risk of misunderstandings as well as a guide for further discussions.

In terms of its limitations, this study also confirmed Amundson's (1988) suggestion that drawing exercises may evoke negative responses such as hesitation and fear. The participants generally show hesitation before starting to draw. One participant particularly expressed her discomfort about drawing her life experiences while others found it difficult to draw feelings and the dynamics of their experiences. However, the positive feedback after the drawing exercise indicates the importance of providing encouragement and reassurance in the beginning so as to help participants overcome their initial fear.

Practical Implications for Helping International Students

A practical implication of the results of this study is that international students are likely to benefit from counselling interventions particularly in the first period when they tend to feel nervous, fearful, lonely, and inadequate. Since the results found that support of co-nationals and fellow international students eased the participants' stress, it would be beneficial if centres for international students organize support groups and

advertise them widely on campus so that international students in different academic programmes would have the opportunities to meet one another and to form a community. This approach may be especially effective considering the general tendency of international students to not seek professional help (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986).

Another implication is that effort should be made to facilitate interactions between host nationals and international students to alleviate international students' sense of alienation. Westwood and Barker (1990) demonstrated the benefit of such interactions by finding a positive correlation between contacts with host nationals and academic success and also between such contacts and lower rates of dropping out of school. Several participants in this study indicated that they were presently comfortable with their lives in Canada and that their perceptions had changed from feeling different from Canadians to feeling the same as Canadians. Thus, if positive interactions between host nationals and international students can be facilitated, international students' sense of being foreign may be reduced. Host nationals who would participate in these endeavours should be trained in cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication, since some studies (e.g. Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1994) suggest that such interactions can be harmful to sojourners if the proper precautions are not taken.

An important implication for counsellors who work with international students is to recognize the heterogeneity of these

students. Although the results of this study found common themes in their experiences, the participants differed in the way they experienced these themes. For example, Lucy felt alienated when she introduced herself in the class and received no response, whereas Jamie felt the same feeling when she saw a group of Canadians talking happily with one another. The danger of stereotyping international students is emphasized by Pedersen (1991) who asserts that there is as much difference between any two international students as between either of them and a host national. Thus, while it is essential to be aware of issues commonly faced by international students, counsellors should treat each international student as unique and individual.

Similarly, counsellors should treat international students as a capable and active agent of their own lives instead of seeing them as defenseless individuals being confronted by harsh adjustment demands. While cross-cultural transitions often cause international students to feel anxious, fearful, and lonely, the results of this study indicated that they actively sought ways to remedy their situations. As Wehrly (1988) suggests, the courage to leave one's homeland to pursue goals in a foreign environment is in itself a strength. Therefore, focusing on their strengths while fully appreciating their struggles will reduce a risk of having these students feel patronized and consequently will empower them to move forward.

Finally, this study's use of drawings has valuable implications for those who work with international students. The

study demonstrated several advantages of drawing as a communication tool; it was generally beneficial for the participants to have their drawings as a basis of discussion as well as a form of additional information for the researcher. Because cultural differences can become a fertile ground for misunderstanding, having a visual clue in front of both client and counsellor may reduce such risk. Drawings also may relieve international students' anxiety about talking about themselves to a counsellor, because the conversation can take the form of describing their drawings.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The results of this study must be taken with caution for several reasons. First, the homogeneity of the participants should be taken into consideration. All the participants were graduate students of the same university, their ages were similar (from late 20s to mid 30s), and only one participant was a male. Also, since they volunteered to participate in this study, they may possess certain characteristics such as openness to talk about themselves. Thus, it is uncertain as to what extent their experiences represent international students' experiences in general. A small sample size also contributes to this uncertainty.

Secondly, a question remains as to what extent the characteristics of the researcher influenced the data collection and analysis. Although data analysis was validated twice, certain attributes of the researcher may have affected the way

the data was handled. One such attribute was the fact that I was an international student myself. While being an international student provided me with several advantages such as a sense of sharing the same struggle, my own experience as an international student may have affected the selection of questions during the interviews, the manner in which I facilitated the interviews, and the way I interpreted the participants' accounts.

Other attributes that may have impacted the study were my beliefs and assumptions. One such assumption is that most international students face challenges when they come abroad to study. While the participants' accounts confirmed this, there is a possibility that the participants sensed such an assumption and may have tried, consciously or unconsciously, to ascertain it by selectively relating their experiences to the researcher.

Finally, my belief that art can be an effective tool to understand an individual's experience may have affected the way the participants drew and answered the sentence questionnaires, and the manner in which I facilitated the interviews. Although there was an advantage in having experience with using drawing in counselling and in being familiar with drawing materials, this background may have influenced both myself as a researcher and the participants.

Considering these limitations, future replications of this study are needed to build a body of research to further examine the usefulness of drawings with this population and to deepen our understanding of the processes international students go through.

Future studies can focus on one ethnic group in order to investigate cultural influences on the sojourner's adjustment process.

Comparative studies may provide further insight into our understanding of international students' experiences. For example, studies can be conducted to compare the issues surfacing in drawings between two ethnic groups. Future research also may compare the challenges faced by undergraduate international students and those faced by graduate international students. Because undergraduate students are typically younger than graduate students, different developmental issues may interact with their adjustment processes. It may also be useful to compare male and female international students. Some international students may be from a society where gender roles and role expectations are vastly different from those in North America, and therefore, female and male international students may face different adjustment tasks and experience the adjustment processes differently.

Considering the difficulty some participants had with drawing their general adjustment experiences, future studies may adopt a critical incident method proposed by Flanagan (1954) and have participants focus their drawings on the incident which they feel critical in their adjustment processes. Doing this may provide participants with more structure, and reduce the possibility of having them wonder what they are supposed to do. It may also relieve their discomfort and anxiety, as drawing a

specific incident is probably less overwhelming than drawing general feelings or life experiences.

Finally, future research will benefit from a larger number of participants. Longitudinal studies to follow the course of adjustment with drawings will also add a valuable understanding to our knowledge of international students' experiences.

Conclusion

This study presented the findings from the descriptive study of international students' experiences. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of international students through drawings and in-depth interviews. The study utilized the drawing exercises to investigate the participants' courses of adjustment process from the anticipation period till their present lives. Their wishes for their future were also explored.

Study results revealed three dynamics in their experiences (emotional, external, and behavioural) and a number of common themes. The period during which the participants struggled to adjust to a new culture was characterized by such emotions as nervousness, fear, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of invisibility, and excitement. The present lives were described in a way to signify a sign of adaptation. The participants' subjective experiences were visually depicted in their drawings, and the drawing exercises generally provided positive experiences to the participants.

While many of the themes emerged in this study confirmed findings of previous research, the study added a valuable element to the understanding of these students' experiences by utilizing visual representations of their experiences and stories that were told from their frames of reference. The richness of information in the participants' stories and their drawings shed light on the struggles, strengths, and hopes of international students, and consequently serves to enable helping professionals to gain insight about these students' experiences. The results encourage further investigation to explore certain ways to help international students cope with their transitions and actualize their goals.

References

- Adan, A. M., & Felner, R. D. (1995). Ecological congruence and adaptation of minority youth during the transition to college. Journal of Community Psychology, 23, 256-269.
- Allan, J. (1988). Inscapes of the child's world: Jungian counselling in schools and clinics. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.
- Allan, J., & Toffoli, G. (1989). Guided imagery: Group guidance for ESL students. Toronto, ON: Lugus Publishers Ltd.
- Alexander, A. A., Klein, M. H., Workneh, F., & Miller, M. H. (1981). Psychotherapy and the foreign student. In P. B. Pedersen, J. G. Draguns, W. J. Lonner, & J. E. Trimble (Eds.), Counseling across cultures (rev. & expanded ed.) (pp. 227-243). Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
- Amundson, N. E. (1988). The use of metaphor and drawings in case conceptualization. Journal of Counselling and Development, 66, 391-393.
- Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M., & Tindall, C. (1994). Qualitative methods in psychology; A research guide. Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Berry, J. W., & Kim, U. (1988). Acculturation and mental health. In P. Dasen, J. W. Berry, & No. Sartorius (Eds.), Health and cross-cultural psychology (pp. 207-236). London: Sage Publications.
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. IMR, 21(3), 491-511.
- Brammer, L. M. (1991). How to cope with life transitions: The challenge of personal change. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Co.
- Breakwell, G. M. (1995). Interviewing. In G. M. Breakwell, S. Hammond, & C. Fife-Schaw (Eds.), Research methods in psychology (Chap. 15, pp. 230-242).
- Cadieux, R. A. J., & Wehrly, B. (1986). Advising and counseling the international student. In K. R. Pyle (Ed.), Guiding the development of foreign students (pp. 51-63). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Canadian Bureau for International Education (1989). The 1988 survey of international students in Canadian universities. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Chataway, C. J., & Berry, J. W. (1989). Acculturation experiences, appraisal, coping and adaptation: A comparison of Hong Kong Chinese, French, and English students in Canada. Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science, 21, 295-309.
- Coelho, G. V. (1982). The foreign student's sojourn as a high risk situation: The "culture shock" phenomenon re-examined. In R. C. Nann (Ed.), Uprooting and surviving (pp. 101-107). London: D. Reidel Publishing Co.
- Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. in R. Valle & M. King (Eds.), Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology (pp. 48-71). New York: Oxford.
- Cormier, L. S., & Hackney, H. (1993). The professional counsellor: A process guide to helping. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Dalley, T. (Ed.). (1984). Art as therapy: An introduction to the use of art as a therapeutic technique. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Deressa, B., & Beavers, I. (1988). Needs assessment of international students in a college of home economics. Education Research Quarterly, 12(2), 51-57.
- Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences. Journal of Religion and Health, 23(3), 197-203.
- Ebbin, A. J., & Blankenship, E. S. (1988). Stress-related diagnosis and barriers to health care among foreign students: Results of a survey. Journal of American College Health, 36, 311-316.
- Flanagan, J. (1954). The critical incident technique. Psychological Bulletin, 51, 327-356.
- Giorgi, A. (1986). Toward phenomenologically based research in psychology. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 2, 75-98.
- Golub, D. (1989). Cross-cultural dimensions of art psychotherapy: Cambodian survivors of war trauma. In H. Wadeson, J. Durkin, & D. Perach (Eds.), Advances in art therapy (pp. 5-42). New York: John Willey.

- Guglietti-Kelly, I., & Westcott, M. R. (1990). She's just shy: A phenomenological study of shyness. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 21(2), 150-164.
- Gunn, A. D. G. (1988). Health care and foreign students. Journal of American College Health, 36, 345-348.
- Haeger, F. M. (1978). Case study of self-therapy through art. In L. Gantt, G. Forrest, & A. Evans (Eds.), Art therapy: Expanding horizons. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association (pp. 33-36). Baltimore, Maryland: American Art Therapy Association.
- Hampden-Turner, C. (1981). Maps of the mind. New York: Collier Books.
- Heikinheimo, R. S., & Shute, J. C. M. (1986). The adaptation of foreign students: Student views and institutional implications. Journal of College Student Personnel, 27, 399-406.
- Henley, D. (1987). An art therapy program for hearing-impaired children with special needs. The American Journal of Art Therapy, 25, 399-406.
- Hsu, L. R., Hailey, B. J., & Range, L. L. (1987). Cultural and emotional components of loneliness and depression. Journal of Psychology, 121(1), 61-70.
- Ishiyama, F. I. (1989). Understanding foreign adolescents: difficulties in cross-cultural adjustment: A self-validation model. Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 5, 41-56.
- Ishiyama, F. I., & Westwood, M. (1992). Enhancing client-validating communication: Helping discouraged clients in cross-cultural adjustment. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 20, 50-63.
- Kaczmarek, P. G., Matlock, G., Merta, R., Ames, M. H., & Ross, M. (1994). An assessment of international college student adjustment. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 17, 241-247.
- Kagan, H., & Cohen, J. (1990). Cultural adjustment of international students. Psychological Science, 1(2), 133-137.
- Karlsson, G. (1993). A concrete illustration of the empirical phenomenological psychological (EPP) method. Psychological

qualitative research from a phenomenological perspective
(Chap. 6, pp. 93-123). Stockholm, Sweden: Almarinst & Wikseld
international.

- Kelley, J. B., Kelley, J. M., & Moore, P. (1978). The art therapy group with autistic children and young adults. In L. Gantt, G. Forrest, & A. Evans (Eds.), Art therapy: Expanding horizons. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association (pp. 16-19). Baltimore, Maryland: American Art Therapy Association.
- Leong, F. T. L., Mallinckrodt, B., & Kralj, M. M. (1990). Cross-cultural variations in stress and adjustment among Asian and Caucasian graduate students. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 18, 19-28.
- Lomeo-Smith, J. (1979). Cultural influences in art therapy with Hispanic patients. In L. Gantt & A. Evans (Eds.), Focus on the future - the next ten years. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association (pp. 17-22). Baltimore, Maryland: American Art Therapy Association.
- Lu, L. (1990). Adaptation to British universities: Homesickness and mental health of Chinese students. Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 3(3), 225-232.
- MacMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (1989). Research in education: A conceptual introduction (2nd ed.). Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1994). Designing qualitative research (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McNiff, S. (1981). The arts and psychotherapy. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.
- Mickle, K., & Chan, R. (1986). The cross cultural adaptation of Honk Kong Chinese students at Canadian universities; A report prepared for Canadian Bureau for International Education. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Moody, J. (1995). Art therapy: Bridging barriers with Native American clients. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 12(4), 220-226.
- Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment at new cultural environments. Practical Anthropology, 7, 177-182.

- Ogbudimkpa, J. E., Creswell, W., Lambert, B., & Kingston, R. (1988). Health needs assessment of international students and their families at the University of Illinois. Journal of American College Health, 36, 313-316.
- Osbourne, J. W. (1990). Some basic existential-phenomenological research methodology for counsellors. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 24(2), 79-91.
- Padilla, A. M., Wagatsuma, Y., & Lindholm, K. (1984). Acculturation and personality as predictors of stress in Japanese and Japanese-Americans. Journal of Social Psychology, 125(3), 295-305.
- Parr, G., Bradley, L., & Bingi, R. (1992). Concerns and feelings of international students. Journal of College Student Development, 33, 20-25.
- Pedersen, P. B. (1991). Counseling international students. The Counseling Psychologist, 19, 10-58.
- Pinholster, R. (1983). From dark to light: The use of drawing to counsel nonverbal children. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 17, 268-273.
- Rhyne, J. (1978). Expanding our comprehension of visual imagery. In L. Gantt, G. Forrest, & A. Evans (Eds.), Art therapy: Expanding horizons. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association (pp. 95-97). Baltimore, Maryland: American Art Therapy Association.
- Riley, S. (1978). Techniques of adolescent art therapy. In L. Gantt, G. Forrest, & A. Evans (Eds.), Art therapy: Expanding horizons. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association (pp. 30-31). Baltimore, Maryland: American Art Therapy Association.
- Rohrlich, B. F., & Martin, J. N. (1991). Host country and reentry adjustment of student sojourners. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 15, 163-182.
- Røijen, S. (1991). Art therapy in transcultural family therapy. Contemporary Family Therapy; An International Journal, 13, 563-571.
- Ruiz, A. S. (1984). Working with groups: Cross-cultural group counseling and the use of the sentence completion method. Journal of Specialists in Group Work, 9(3), 131-136.

- Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. Advances in Nursing Science, 8, 27-37.
- Sandelowski, M., Davis, D. H., & Harris, B. G. (1989). Artful design: Writing the proposal for research in the naturalist paradigm. Research in Nursing and Health, 12, 77-84.
- Schlossberg, N. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. The Counseling Psychologist, 9, 2-18.
- Sims, A., & Stelcner, M. (1981). The costs and benefits of foreign students in Canada: A methodology. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Smith, E. M. J. (1985). Ethnic minorities: Life stress, social support, and mental health issues. Counseling Psychologist, 13(4), 537-539.
- Statistics Canada (1992). International student participation in Canadian education. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Taft, R. (1977). Coping with unfamiliar cultures. In N. Warren (Ed.), Studies in cross-cultural psychology (Vol. 1, pp. 121-153). New York: Academic Press Inc.
- Thrasher, S., Yee, E., & Zahnstecher, S. (1989). West Indian children and their families: Art therapy with new immigrants. In H. Wadson, J. Durkin, & D. Perach (Eds.), Advances in art therapy (pp. 43-59). New York: John Willey.
- Toffoli, G., & Allan, J. (1992). Group guidance for English as a second language students. The School Counsellor, 40, 136-145.
- Vogel, S. H. (1986). Toward understanding the adjustment problems of foreign families in the college community: The case of Japanese wives at the Harvard University Health Services. JACH, 34, 274-279.
- Wadson, H. (1980). Art therapy research. Art Education, 33, 31-35.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1992). Locus of control, mood disturbance and social difficulty during cross-cultural transitions. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 16, 175-194.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993a). Psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions: A comparison of

- secondary students overseas and at home. International Journal of Psychology, 28, 129-147.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993b). Where's the "culture" in cross-cultural transition?: Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 24(2), 221-249.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1994). Acculturation strategies, psychological adjustment, and sociocultural competence during cross-cultural transitions. International Journal of Psychology, 18(3), 329-343.
- Ward, C., & Searle, W. (1991). The impact of value discrepancies and cultural identity on psychological and sociocultural adjustment of sojourners. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 15, 209-225.
- Wehrly, B. (1988). Cultural diversity from an international perspective, part. 2. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 16, 3-15.
- Westwood, M. J., & Barker, M. (1990). Academic achievement and social adaptation among international students: A comparison groups study of the peer pairing program. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 14, 251-263.
- Westwood, M. J., & Borgen, W. A. (1988). A culturally embedded model for effective intercultural communication. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 11, 115-125.
- Westwood, M. J., & Ishiyama, F. I. (1990). The communication process as a critical intervention for client change in cross-cultural counseling. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 18, 163-171.
- Zheng, X., & Berry, J. W. (1991). Psychological adaptation of Chinese sojourners in Canada. International Journal of Psychology, 26, 451-470.

APPENDIX B

Guided Imagery Scripts

Guided Imagery 1- My First Day at a Canadian School

Make sure you are in the relaxed position. Now close your eyes and try to relax your whole body. Notice any part that is tense and try to relax it. Take a deep breath, hold it, and then exhale slowly. While you are exhaling, relax your body from head to toe. Try to imagine you can see your muscles relaxing as you focus on your body. You feel very comfortable now. You see nothing in this room or anywhere around you. All you can see right now is in your mind. Take three or four very long and deep breaths. As you inhale, take into your body relaxation, and as you exhale, let go of any tension you might have in your body. In... and out. In... and out. Now think about your first day in Canadian school.

What was your first day like in Canadian school? Remember the first time you went to school in Canada. What time did you wake up? How did you feel when you woke up? Were you excited? Nervous? Or scared... What did you do to prepare? Did you have breakfast? Did you talk or eat silently... What did you do after breakfast? Did you talk or eat silently... What did you do after breakfast... What time did you leave home? How did you go? Did you go by yourself or with someone... How did your school look like? Is there anyone with you or are you by yourself? What did you do at school? Did you know anyone who was in your class? Did you talk to anyone? What happens before you left school... What was the easiest thing that you had to do at school? What was the most difficult? After a week or so, how did you feel about your school? Were you happy with your school? Or were you unhappy?

In a few moments, you will be back in this room. Slowly open your eyes. Using any image or colours, draw a picture that shows how you felt about your first day in Canadian school. It can be any image, and there are no right or wrong images or answers to this picture.

Guided Imagery 2 - My Present Life in Canada

Make sure you are in the relaxed position. Now close your eyes and try to relax your whole body. Take a deep breath, then exhale slowly. Try to imagine you can see your muscles relaxing as you exhale. You feel very comfortable now. You see nothing in this room or anywhere around you. All you can see right now is in your mind. Take three or four very long and deep breaths. As you inhale, take into your body relaxation, and as you exhale, let go of the image you drew a while ago. In... and out. In... and out. In... and out. Now think about your life here in Canada.

What is your average day like? Imagine a typical day in your life. What time do you wake up? How do you feel when you wake up... Do you have breakfast by yourself or with anyone? Do you talk or eat silently... What do you do after breakfast? Do you have to go anywhere? How do you spend your morning... What do you do at lunch time? Are you alone or with anyone? What happens after lunch? Do you take a break in the mid-afternoon? What happens before dinner... How do you spend dinner? Do you prepare your food? Do you typically eat alone or with someone... And what happens after dinner... What do you do at bedtime? Imagine now that you are lying in bed before you go to sleep thinking your day over. Are you basically happy with your life in Canada? Or are you unhappy? What kind of things do you enjoy during your day? What kind of things do you not enjoy?

Slowly push down on the surface upon which you are sitting and slowly open your eyes. Using any images or colours, could you draw or sketch a picture that show how you feel about yourself and your life in Canada now. It can be any way you want it. There are no right or wrong answers or right or wrong images to this picture.

Guided Imagery 3 - My Ideal Life in Canada

Close your eyes and try to relax your whole body. Take three or four deep breaths. In... and out. In... and out. In... and out. As you inhale, your whole body becomes relaxed. And as you exhale, let go of the images you drew. Take another deep breath. Inhale, hold it, and then exhale slowly. You see nothing in this room or anywhere around you. All you can see right now is in your mind. Take very long and deep breaths. In... and out. In... and out. Now think about ideal life here in Canada.

What is an ideal day like for you in Canada? Imagine all your wishes come true and you are very happy here. What time do you wake up? What do you see around you... Do you have breakfast by yourself or with someone... What do you do after breakfast? Do you go to anywhere? Or do you stay home? How do you spend your morning... What happens around the lunch time? What do you do after lunch? Are you with someone? Or do you spend afternoon by yourself? What do you do in the afternoon? What happens before dinner... How do you spend dinner? Do you eat by yourself or with someone... What do you do after dinner? What do you do at bedtime? Imagine now that you are lying in bed and thinking about your day. What made it ideal? As you look into the future what would you like to see?

In a few moments, you will be back here in this room. Rest for another moment. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes. Using any images or colours, please draw a picture that describes how you wish your life to become in Canada. It can be any way, and there are no right or wrong answers or images to this picture.

APPENDIX C

Sample Questions of Data Collection Interview

- (a) Please draw a picture that describes how you felt when you started your life in Canada.
- (b) What were you thinking when you drew this picture?
- (c) What does this picture means to you?
- (d) How were you feeling while you were drawing this picture?
- (e) Draw a picture that describes how you are feeling about yourself and your life in Canada.
- (f) Do you see any difference in you picture compared to your first picture?
- (g) What brought the change or no change?
- (h) How would you like to bring changes to your present life?
- (i) What have you tried to bring changes to your present life?
- (j) How would you like your picture to become? Please draw a picture that describes how you would like your life to be.
- (k) What do you think you will need to reach this picture (the drawing of ideal future life) from the present life picture?

Prompts

Tell me more about that.

How did you feel?

What went through your mind when that happened?

What did that mean to you?

SENTENCE COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE
RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND DRAWING

1. When I drew,
.....
.....

2. Drawing about myself makes me
.....
.....

3. When I talk about my drawing,
.....
.....

4. When I drew about the present,
.....
.....

5. When I drew about the future,
.....
.....

6. It's easy to draw
.....
.....

7. It's difficult to draw
.....
.....

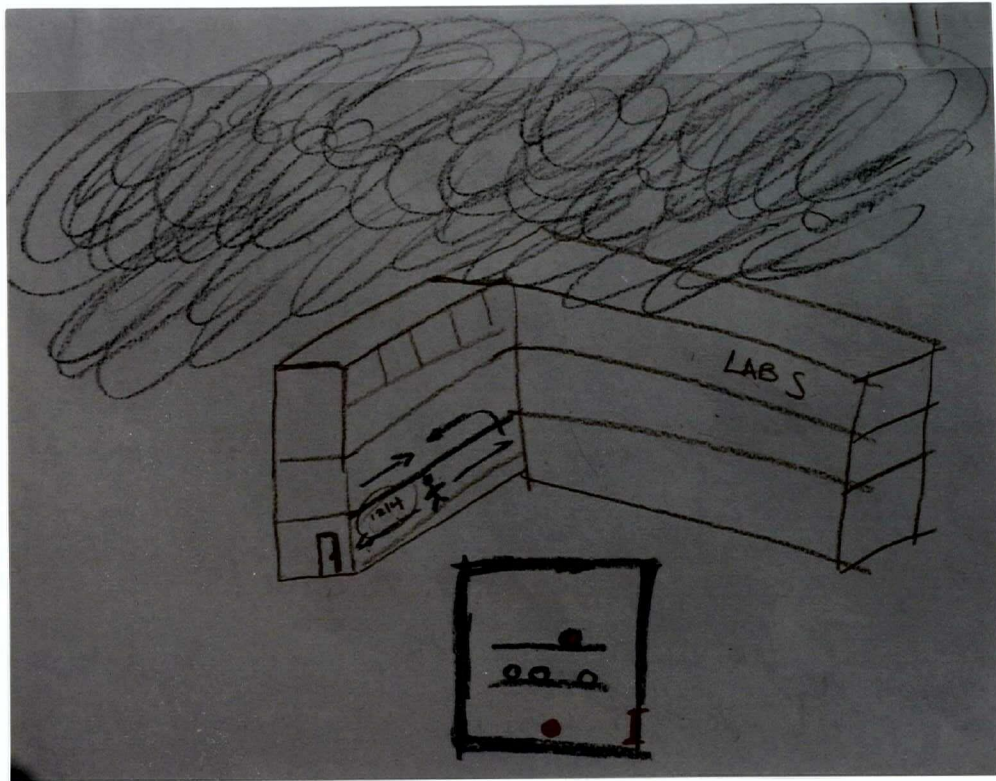
8. When I talk about myself,
.....
.....

Thank you very much.

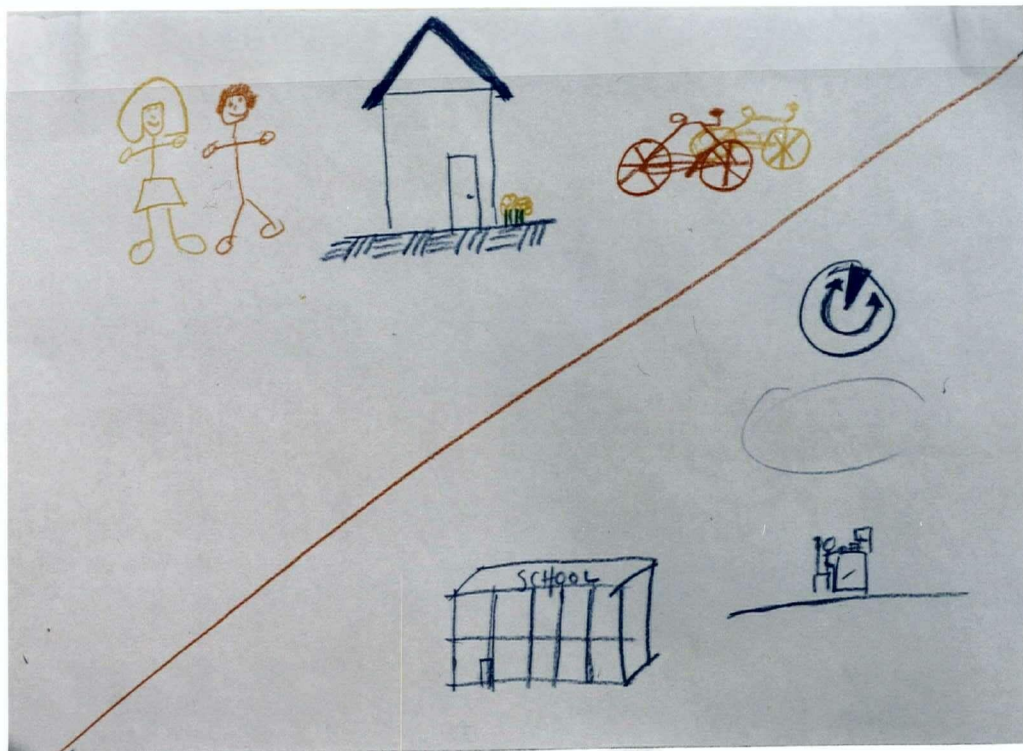
APPENDIX E

Miguel's Drawings - Initial and Present Life

Initial Period

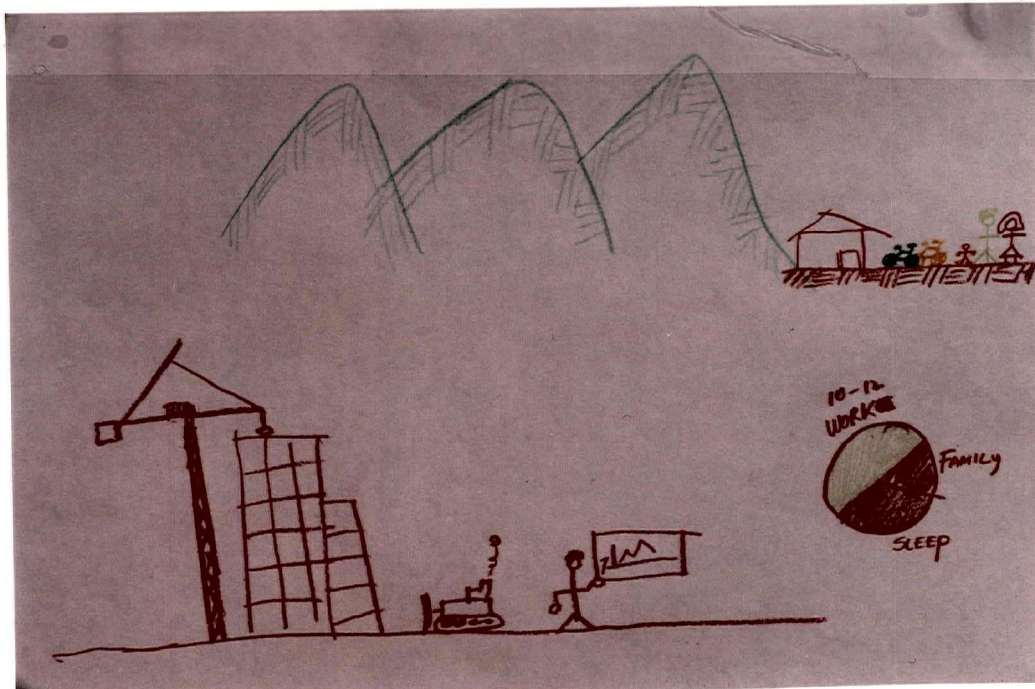


Present Life



APPENDIX F

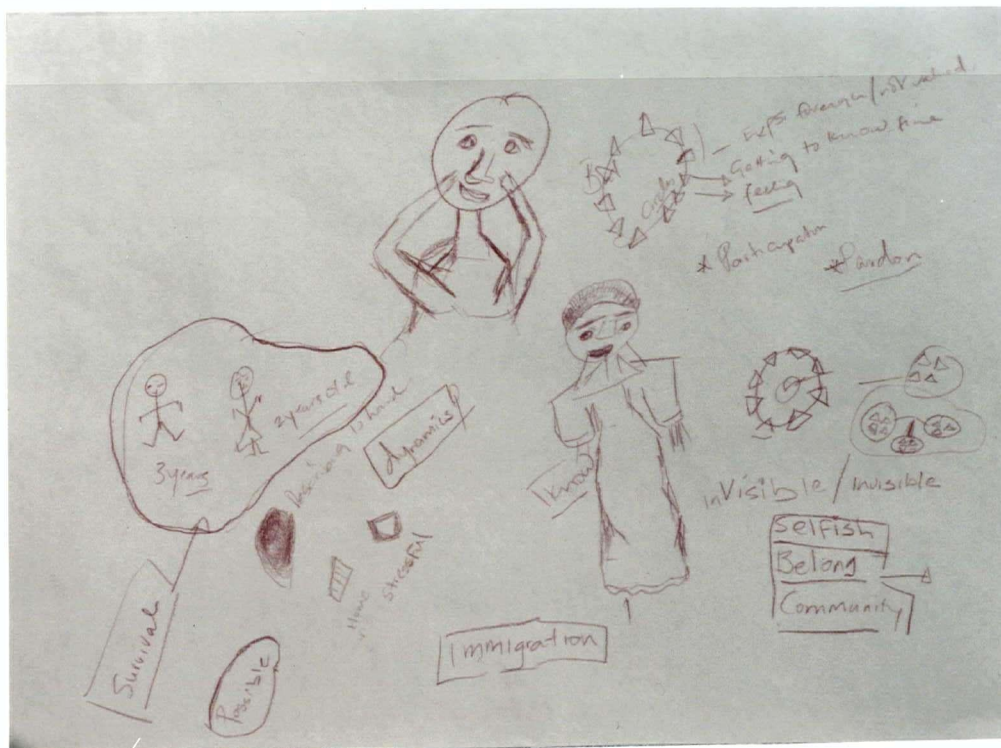
Miguel's Drawing - Ideal Future Life



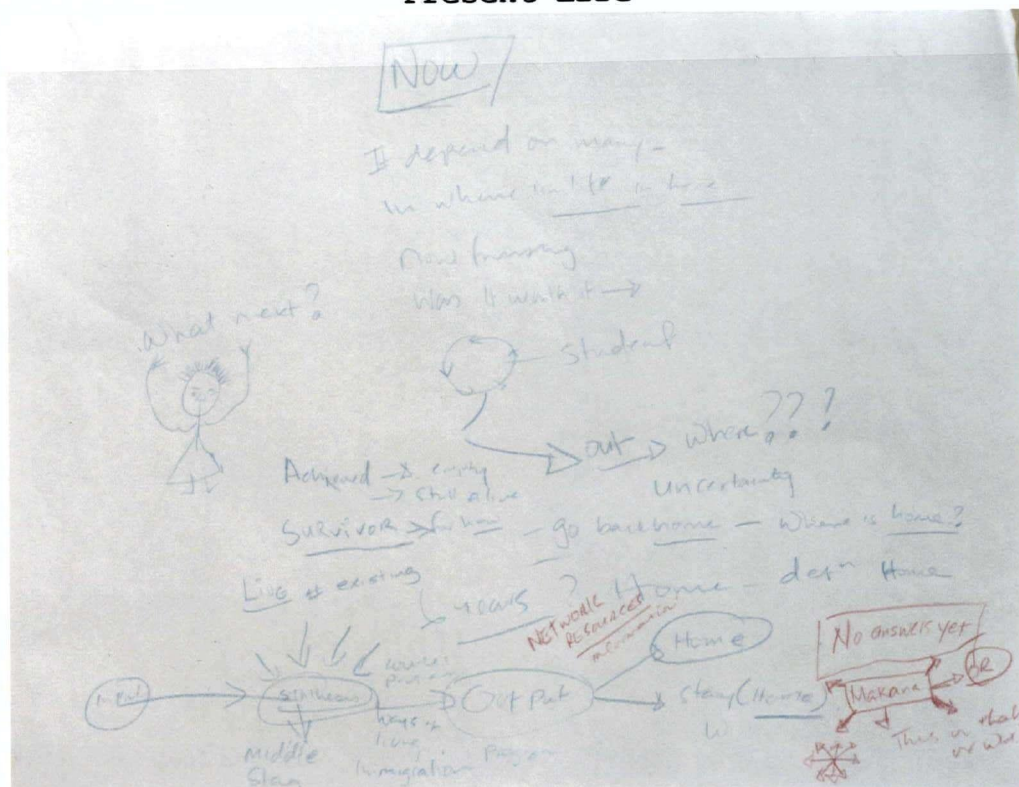
APPENDIX G

Lucy's Drawings- Initial and Present Life

Initial Period

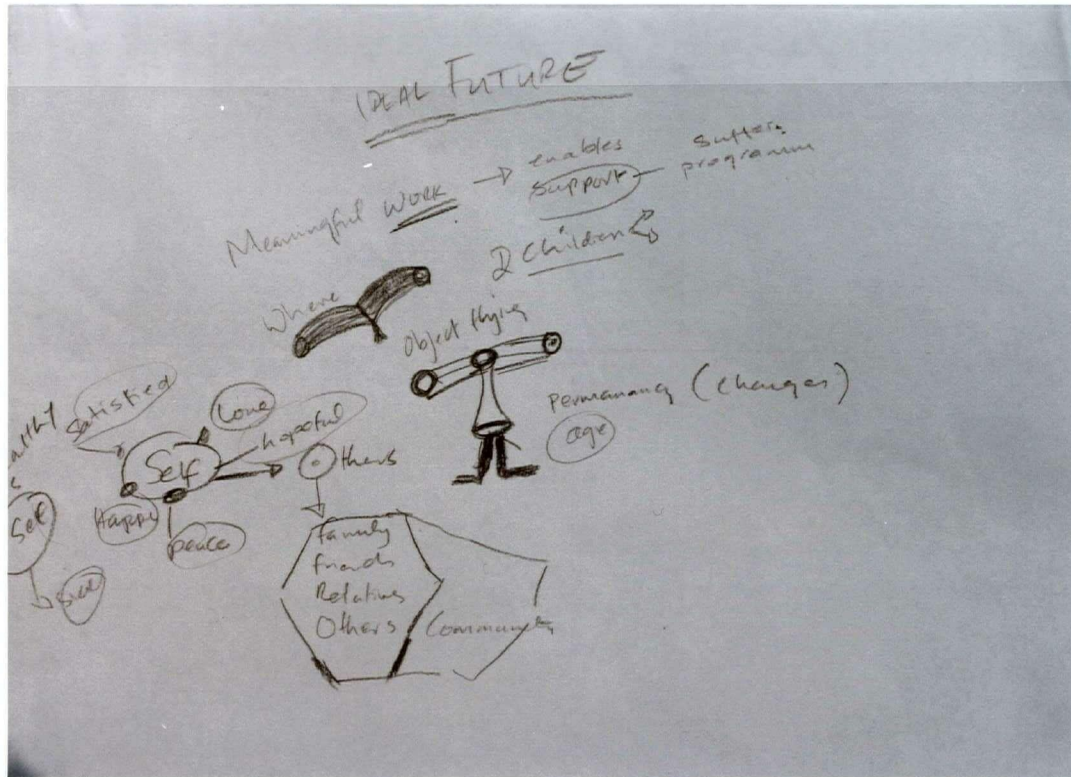


Present Life



APPENDIX H

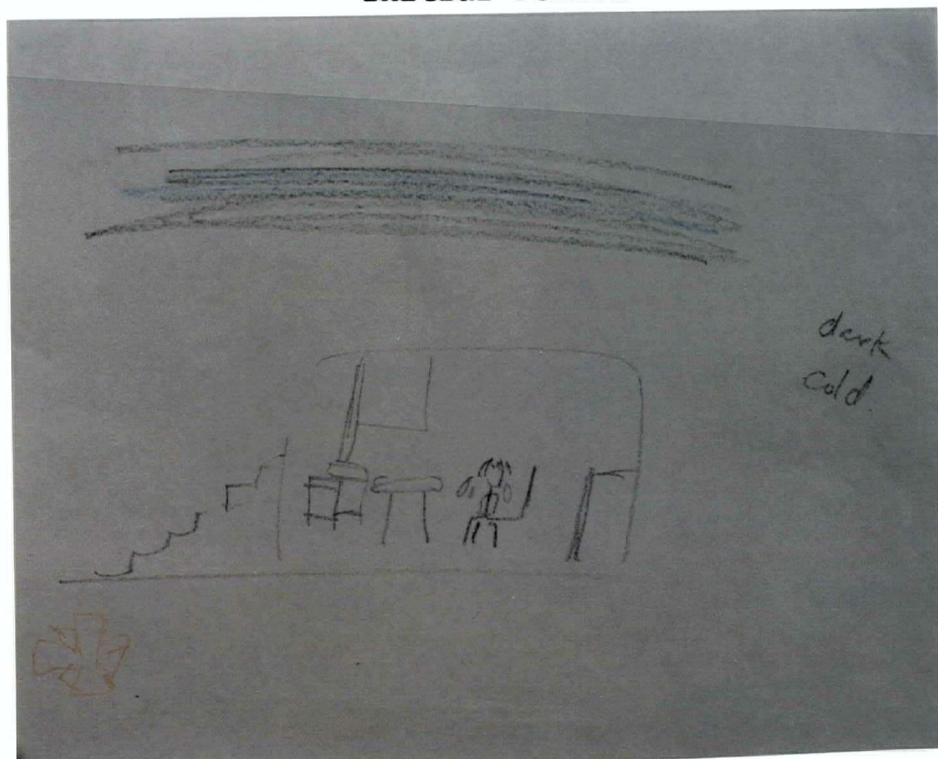
Lucy's Drawing - Ideal Future Life



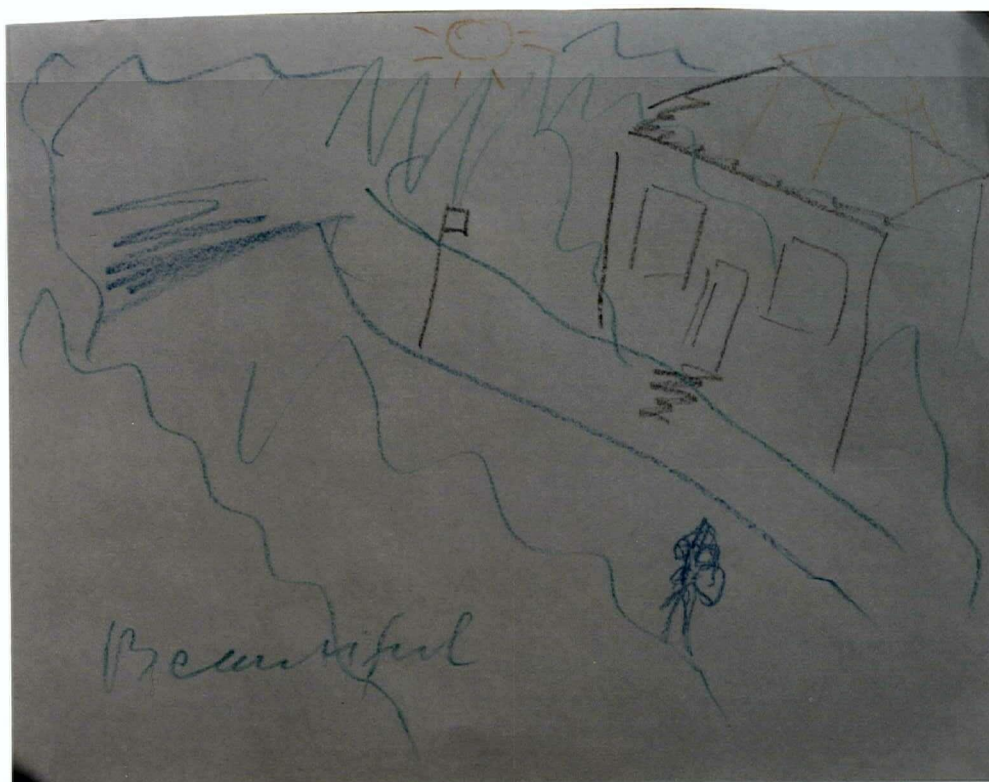
APPENDIX I

Victoria's Drawings- Initial and Present Life

Initial Period

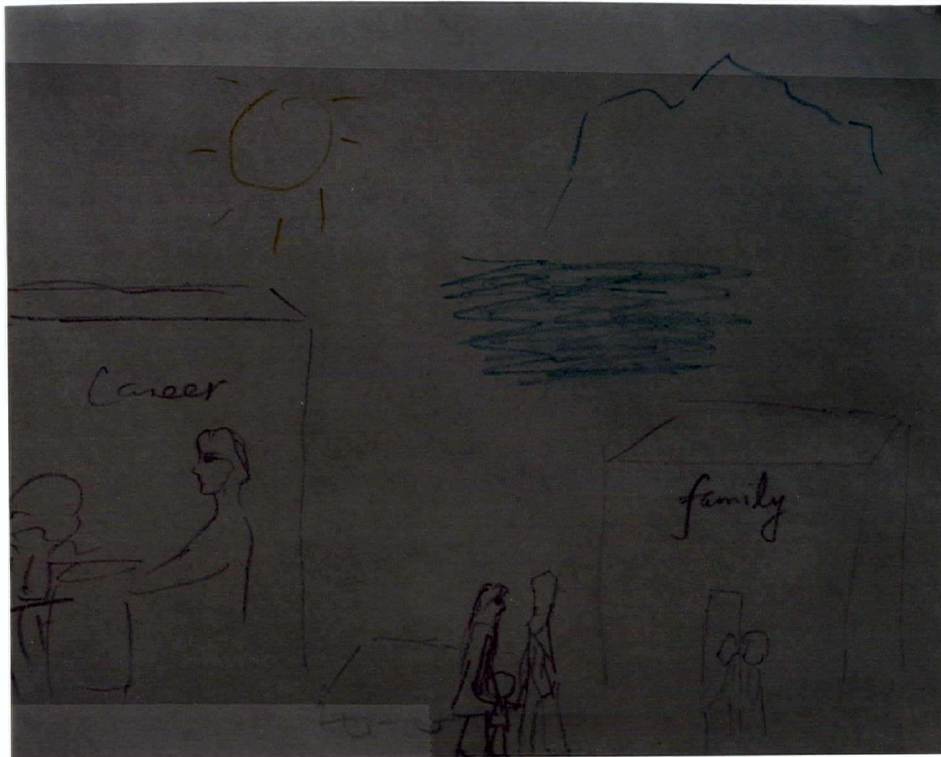


Present Life



APPENDIX J

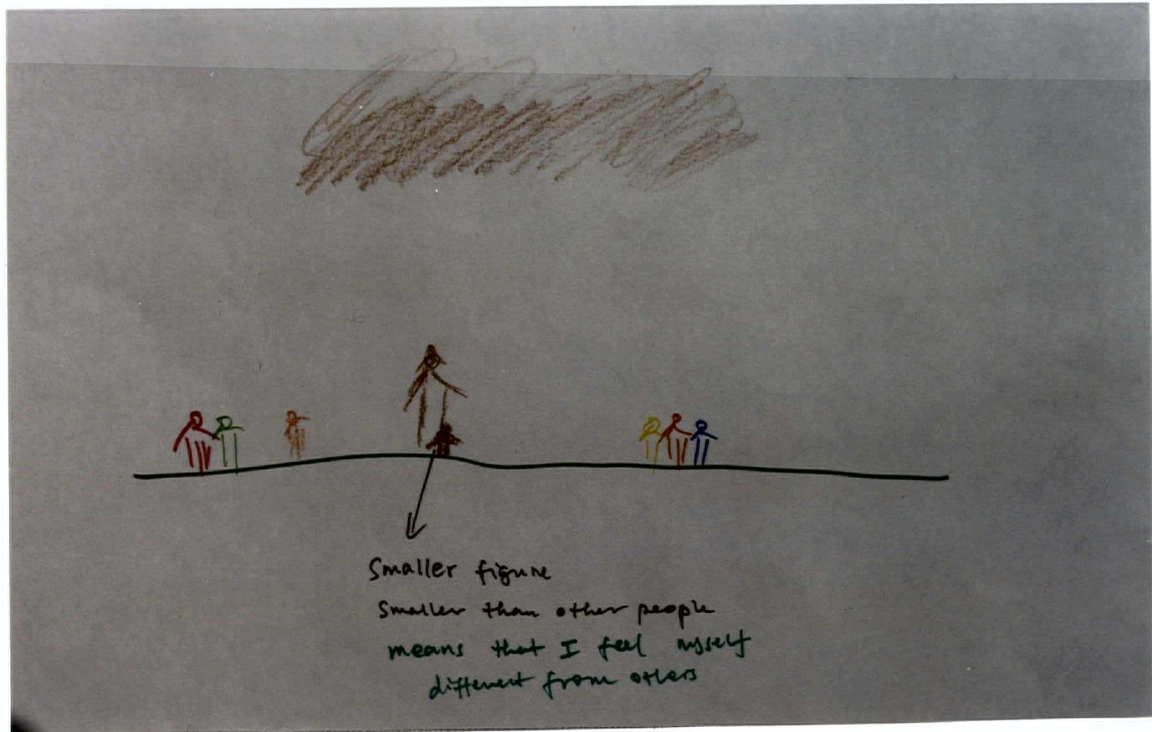
Victoria's Drawing - Ideal Future Life



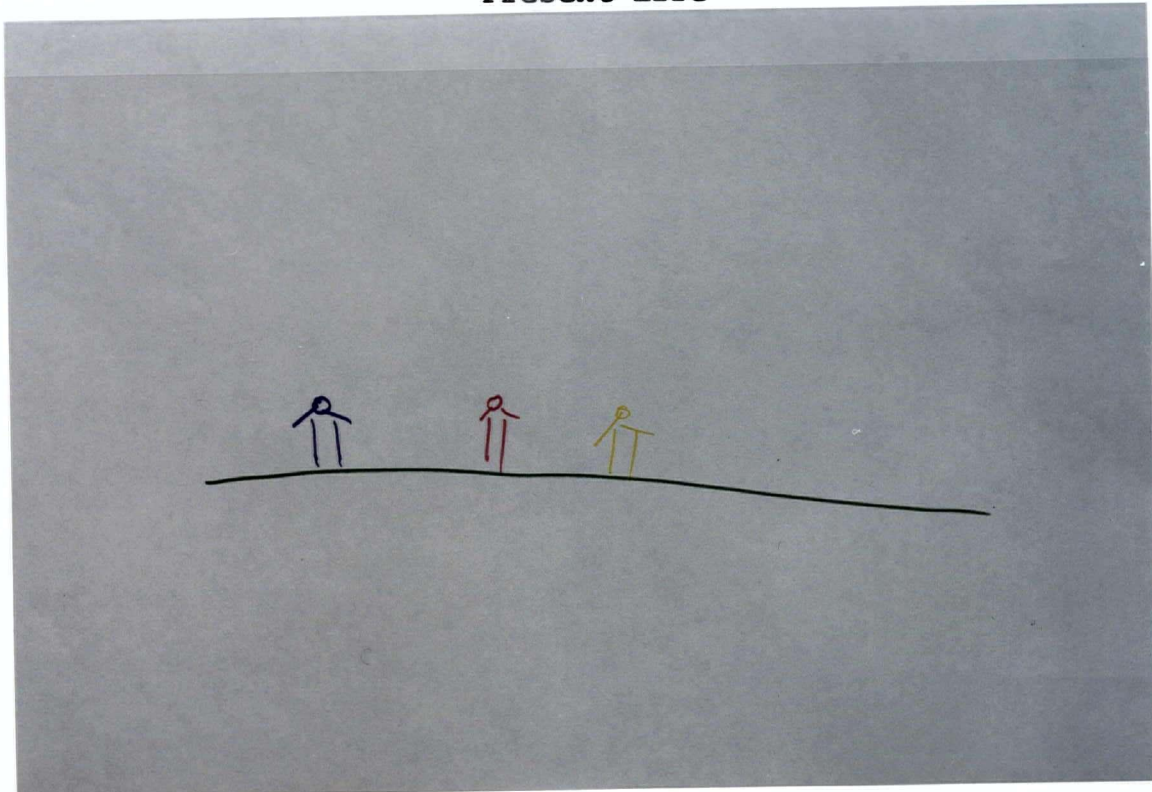
APPENDIX K

Jamie's Drawings- Initial and Present Life

Initial Period



Present Life



APPENDIX L

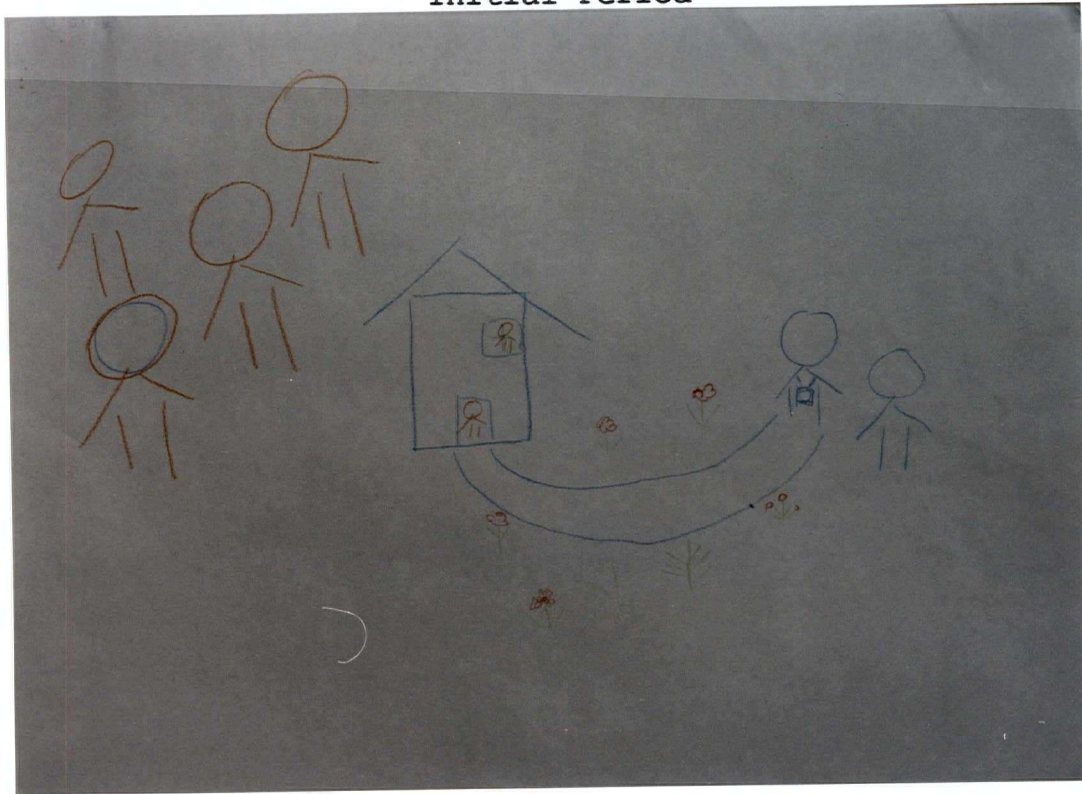
Jamie's Drawing - Ideal Future Life



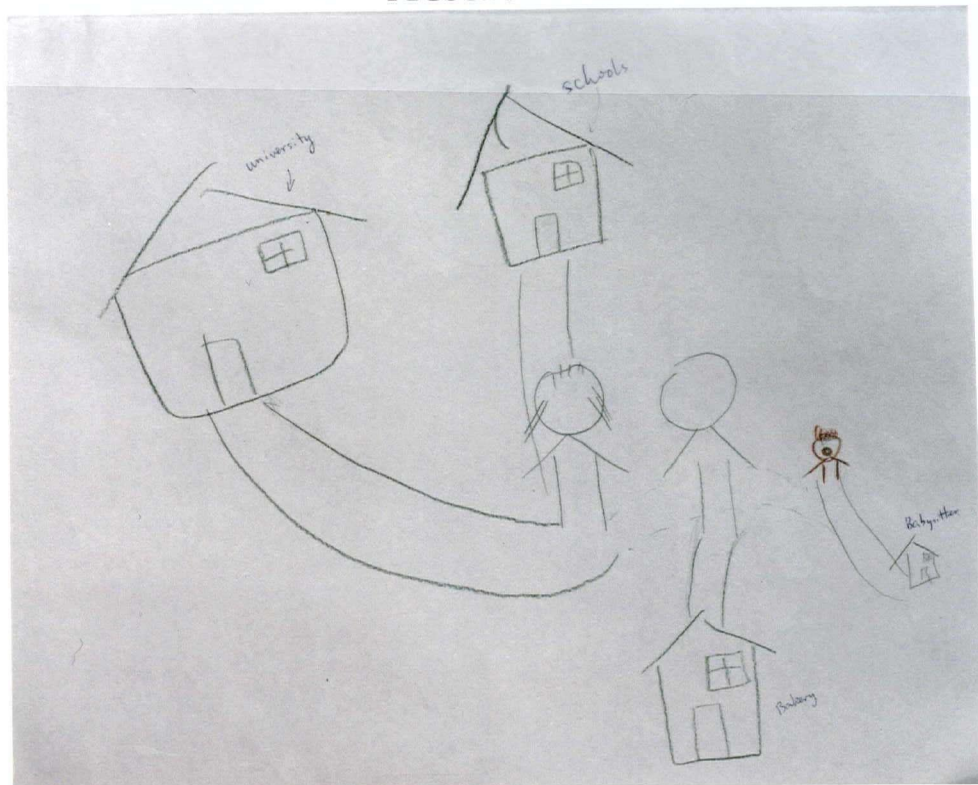
APPENDIX M

Katherine's Drawings - Initial and Present Life

Initial Period

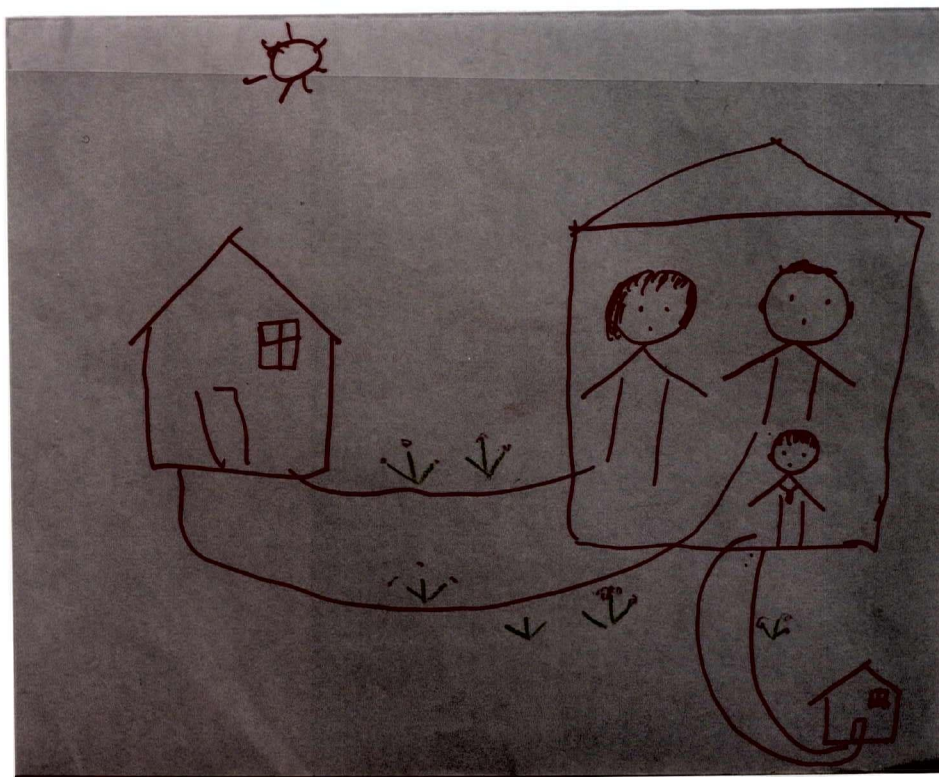


Present Life



APPENDIX N

Katherine's Drawing - Ideal Future Life



APPENDIX O

Summary of Unique Themes

Moving In - Anticipation Period(A) Emotional DynamicsShame

Victoria described having felt so ashamed during the first week after her arrival in Canada. Her feelings of shame were so intense that she wanted to hide from others.

(B) External DynamicsFacing Foreign Tasks

For Jamie, an unfamiliar task in school posed the first challenge. Jamie struggled with registration and the idea of having to do everything on her own. It was a clear contrast to her home where everything was predetermined and laid out for students. Jamie explained as follows:

We did something like register courses, and something like paying tuition fees. And I didn't have such experience before. (In China,) we don't need to register. Yeah, it's automatically, you just go to class and a teacher will tell you everything. And every student has exactly same class and lessons you take.

(C) Behavioural DynamicsWithdrawal

Victoria avoided social contacts in the first week of being in Canada. She stayed at home in bed most of the time, and waited for time to pass. While Victoria later recognized her role in making the situation worse for herself, she also believed

that it was a way to store some energy and to gather courage to face her new life.

Moving Through - Initial Period

(A) Emotional Dynamics

Feeling Guilty and Torn

Lucy described that she felt guilty because she had left her small children for her own education. She was torn between her life in Canada and her life as a mother at home, and this made the initial period very difficult for her because her children were always on her mind. These feelings intensified the pressure to succeed as she thought of the sacrifice her family made for her education.

Confusion over Self-Perception

Victoria's experience was unique in that her self-image changed drastically over the course of her school life in Canada. She was confident in the beginning, but soon realized that she was not a competent student in Canada as she had been in China. This change of self-perception caused her to feel confused about her identity.

(C) Behavioural Dynamics

Using Metaphorical Support

Victoria relied on her father's letter as a major source of support when she felt sad and depressed during the initial period. Although the letter was initially perceived as a criticism, it became an important source of inner strength after

she had time to absorb his message. She stated that the letter gave her strength and courage at times of feeling down.

Moving Out - Present Life

(A) Emotional Dynamics

Guilt

Katherine described feeling guilty towards her family. She feels guilty about sending her daughter to a baby-sitter, about her husband working, and about having little time for them. The various responsibilities she had (as a mother, wife, and student) contributed to this feeling, and this was fueled by the unhappiness Katherine sensed from her husband and her daughter. The life in Canada for her and her family proved to be very challenging as they all struggled with the new culture, new custom, and new language.

Isolation

Lucy reported feeling isolated at times. She explained that she became preoccupied with the heavy school load, and as a consequence, had little time or energy left for social activities. However, she recognized the value of support in dealing with stressful situations, and knew that she could reach out to others.

Disappointment with School

Miguel described his sense of disappointment in school. While he enjoyed having much free time, he felt a lack of purpose in his school life. He explained that he felt he could achieve

more, but sensed that his supervisor did not understand his dissatisfaction. The communication difficulty he experienced with his supervisor contributed to his dissatisfaction with school. His sense of disappointment seemed to be further fuelled by the high expectation he had of school life in Canada. Miguel said that the lack of workload and supervision led him to be apathetic about school, and that he tried to divert himself from his unhappiness by focusing on his positive family life.

(B) External Dynamics

Identity Issue

Jamie explained how she saw herself as being in between Canadian and Chinese cultures. While her knowledge about Canada has increased and she does not feel inferior to Canadians anymore, Jamie feels that she cannot change herself to be like a Canadian. This caused inner conflicts at times. She perceives distance between herself and Canadians, and her future task seems to lie in finding her own place beyond cultures.

(C) Behavioural Dynamics

Enjoying Family Life

Miguel is actively participating in his family life by sharing chores and recreational activities with his wife for the first time since they got married. Because family has an important meaning for Miguel, being able to spend time with his family makes him feel content with his life.

Living Independently

Jamie expressed satisfaction with being independent. Although living alone posed a challenge in the initial period, she currently feels positively about being able to handle her life.

APPENDIX P

Participants' Responses on Sentence Completion Questionnaires

1. When I drew,

Participant A: I felt unsecure about my drawings because I'm not used to draw anything. I didn't know how to start.

Participant B: I tried to tell my feelings.

Participant C: I felt not easy to find a particular drawing to deliver my feelings which I experienced before. However, I felt using colours is easier for me to reflect my feelings.

Participant D: First, I'm little bit wonder what I "should" draw, so I ask you to confirm "what I should draw". I'm little bit not clear what is supposed to draw at first.

Participant E: I got the opportunity to put on paper my experiences of being a student in Canada.

2. Drawing about myself makes me

Participant A: Happy. It is very exciting to draw about your life or thoughts.

Participant B: Rethinking my life.

Participant C: Recall of my experiences and feelings.

Participant D: I don't care about how well I draw about myself because I know it's just like a kind of "symbol" to reflect my feeling and thinking so I didn't pay attention to colour and figure and drawing skills.

Participant E: Get in touch with my feelings in a concrete way.

3. When I talk about my drawing,

Participant A: I feel free to say anything about me or my family or my plans for the future.

Participant B: I talked about the most striking things.

Participant C: I am more certain of the feelings I experienced.

Participant D: I feel good and necessary to describe what I mean through my drawing.

Participant E: I begin to see things or aspects/meanings that I didn't have before.

4. When I drew about the present,

Participant A: I felt happy because I like the way I'm living.

Participant C: I felt pretty easy as I am quite comfortable about my present life.

Participant D: I feel pretty good about my current life, so I draw a beautiful scene to reflect my satisfying feeling.

Participant E: I felt quite happy because I have survived.

5. When I drew about the future,

Participant A: I thought about the options I have; I thought about the decisions I have to make.

Participant C: I first found it's hard but then I found it's not that hard.

Participant D: I consider different aspects of my ideal future life. I want to draw a picture: my family in "paradise".

Participant E: I was happy to be in a position to feel that I deserve a better future. I had worked hard enough.

6. It's easy to draw

Participant A: After you did it for a while. Once you start, it is easy to continue. The present is the easiest part to draw.

Participant C: Present Life.

Participant D: Future than "before" because the feeling to future day is sort of generalized feeling.

Participant E: Not really. Particularly when your images are complicated as life experiences are.

7. It's difficult to draw

Participant A: When you think about the past because you have to go back, to feel what you felt before.

Participant B: The feeling and emotion.

Participant C: A particular image, but easier to describe in words.

Participant D: "First day in Canada".

Participant E: Yes - life experiences are unidimensional and it is hard to represent dynamics of life on a piece of paper.

8. When I talk about myself,

Participant A: I feel ashamed because it is not easy to describe oneself without saying something wrong.

Participant C: I felt as if I were in the old days when I first came here.

Participant D: I feel relax and excited. I like to talk with people and do self-analyze.

Participant E: It's quite easy and I feel that it is part of sharing - getting to know each other. I wish the interviewer would "open" herself, too. Kind of feel one-sided.