Student Perspectives on Transnational Education: A Grounded Theory Study

by

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Globalisation has flattened the commercial playing field, specifically for business and in particular, education. It has provided education organisations with another avenue through which to provide their services to those keen to learn.

The technological developments that have made it possible for business to collaborate and outsource without regard for distance and time has also provided higher education providers with learning networks that make it possible to provide and enhance learning opportunities for students on an anywhere and anytime basis.

Much of the previous research on transnational higher education has been related to the educational offerings of public providers, as well as the use of technology to mediate learning and teaching. However, there is limited research that considers transnational education from a student perspective of the education experience. The current study addressed this gap as it investigated student perspectives on a private provider of higher education. This is important for two reasons; first, transnational education is at the forefront in the changes taking place today in higher education. Second, in Australia the number of private providers of higher education is growing.

The Case Organisation used in the study is a non-self accrediting provider of higher education, is registered and accredited with the Queensland Office of Higher Education, and delivers programs in Business and Information Technology to students across the globe. The data were collected in two stages: Stage One, an online survey to elicit information regarding the interaction points students have with the Case Organisation. Stage Two used the themes identified in Stage One as the starting point for the electronic interviews with participants.

The Glaserian variant of Grounded Theory is the methodology underlying the study as it is able to accommodate any form of data, provides a set of systematic procedures to guide the research process as a meaningful guide to actions, and develops a theory that would offer insight and understanding into the substantive area of study.

The results of the study show that for the participants transnational education is seen as a means to achieving the desired goal, and a life-changing activity that ultimately would allow them to change their current situation for a better one. The students’ motivations to study varied as did their reasons for selecting to study with the particular Case Organisation. However, their main concern was ‘support’. Learning support is provided
Abstract

in two ways, firstly, through the learning materials, and secondly, through human support. Of these, the human support was shown to be more critical.

From the findings, a theory was developed (Student Perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE) Theory) that portrays the importance of the constant interplay and interactivity, for the students, between the elements of a student’s self management, real world learning and human support. The students recognized that they need to be self managing by being dedicated, committed and employing coping strategies that will assist them not only with their learning, but also with family, work, and other activities that all vie for attention in a student’s life. Students appreciated that the learning materials were related to real world workplaces, and the ability to apply their learning in their current and prospective workplaces. Students revealed not only an expectation of the traditional academic support (constructive feedback, preparedness, timeliness), but also an expectation that there is a caring, concerned person at the ‘other end’ who is understanding and supports students when needed. Of these three, it is the provision of human support that is the most critical.

The SPoTNE theory was nested back into the existing body of knowledge through a consideration of the theories of Andragogy, Transactional Distance theory and the Learning Strategies System. The SPoTNE theory is consistent with four of the six principles of Andragogy, though it challenges the Transactional Distance theory when it comes to the importance of interpersonal emotion. The SPoTNE theory also identified that support from home, and the personal characteristics of drive and determination also should be added into the Resources Management Strategies within the Learning Strategies System.

The theory that emerged and is presented in this thesis provides an insight into the students and what they perceive transnational education to be. Therefore, it enlightens transnational educators about the need to effectively communicate and engage with and support transnational learners. Furthermore, the provision of professional development for educators who deliver content to transnational students is paramount, especially in the areas of communication and pedagogy. Institutions employ experts in their disciplinary fields. However, the theory presented shows that there is a need for these disciplinary experts to become education experts.
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Print Name: Sherre Roy

Signature: ……………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ………………………………………………………………………………………
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Case Organisation, particularly its staff and students, their assistance and patience is greatly appreciated.

To Associate Professor Kathy Lynch (Principal Supervisor) who has been a dedicated guiding force, mentor and friend. Thank you.

To Professor Tania Aspland (Secondary Supervisory) for her guidance during the conceptual phase of the study, she was severely missed towards the end of the journey. Thank you.

To Dr Peter Innes, your support, kind words, and critical examination have been invaluable. Thank you.

To my fellow HDR students, thank you for your friendship, support, and conversation. What can tend to be a lonely journey was made social and fun. Thank you all.

To my husband, who will probably never read these words, thank you for your love, support and understanding.

Finally to my mother, for her unwavering support and love, who sadly passed before I completed the journey.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

ALTC – Australian Learning and Teaching Council

AUQA – Australian Universities Quality Agency

AQF – Australian Qualifications Framework

CMS – Course Management System

EHEA – European Higher Education Area

ERA – European Research Area

Globalisation – “exchanges that transcend borders and which occur instantaneously and electronically” (King, 2004, p 48)

IELTS – International English Language Testing System

IMF – International Monetary Fund

INQAAHE – International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

LMS – Learning Management System

MCEETYA – Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

TQS – Transnational Quality Strategy

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Transnational Education – “All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.” (UNESCO/Council of Europe)
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Topic Background

Students’ perspectives of transnational education is one that appears to be straightforward; however, there are three diverse background areas which impact on the topic area of transnational higher education: first, globalisation, second, the higher education landscape, and third, research into student perspectives.

Each of these diverse background areas will be considered in this section. The first is globalisation; while the term denotes a process, definitions vary greatly. Section 1.1.1 sets out to provide a brief picture of the development of globalisation as well as a definition. The next section (1.1.2) provides a brief look at the Australian higher education landscape, while Chapter 2 covers this in more detail. Finally Section 1.1 will conclude by identifying the current and previous research into student perspectives on education.

1.1.1 Globalisation

Globalisation as a phenomenon has flattened the commercial playing field, specifically for business and in particular, education. Globalisation as a term is ambiguous and has become a “buzzword” (Scholte, 2000, p 43) that can be used as “a social scientist’s jargon, a journalist’s catchphrase, a publisher’s sales pitch, a politician’s slogan, and a businessperson’s fetish” (p 46).

To begin to untangle the jargon, catchphrases or slogans, and develop an understanding of how globalisation is changing the higher education landscape, a definition is required. However, there appears to be many differing definitions (Jovanovic, 2010; King, 2004). It may be helpful to consider some definitions in line with one suggestion.
regarding the development of globalisation. Friedman (2006, pp 9 - 10) describes three eras of globalisation.

Globalisation 1.0 (up to 1800 AD) refers to the time when countries were globalising, addressing the question “where does my country fit into global competition and opportunities?” (Friedman, 2006, p 9). Scholte (2000) suggests that this type of globalisation is better understood in the terms ‘Universalism’ (the movement of people and cultures to other parts of the world) and ‘Imperialism’.


The term globalisation is generally used to describe an increasing internationalisation of markets for goods and services, the means of production, financial systems, competition, corporations, technology and industries.

Amongst other things this gives rise to increased mobility of capital, faster propagation of technological innovations and an increasing interdependency and uniformity of national markets. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003)

Also capturing this essence is the Oxford Dictionary definition stated by Jovanovic (2010):

The action, process, or fact of making global; esp. (in later use) the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale, widely considered to be at the expense of national identity. (p 13)

Globalisation 3.0 (2000 AD – today) is characterised by the “newfound power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally” (Friedman, 2006, p 10). Globalisation 3.0 came about through the emergence of advanced telecommunications and their convergence (i.e. personal computers, fibre-optical cable, the Internet, mobile devices and work flow software). These relatively new conditions convey the concept of ‘Deterritorialization’ offered by Scholte (2000), who prefers “the growth of ‘suprateritorrial’ relations between people” (p 46). This ability changes the nature of social space (Scholte, 2000). Similarly McGrew (1992) in defining globalisation
identifies scope and intensity as two distinct dimensions of globalisation.

On the one hand it [globalisation] defines a set of processes which embrace most of the globe or which operate world-wide; the concept therefore has a spatial connotation. Politics and other social activities are becoming stretched across the globe. On the other hand it also implies an intensification in the levels of interaction, interconnectedness or interdependence between states and societies which constitute the world community. (p 23)

The changed social space outside of territorial borders of Scholte (2000) and the stretching across the globe and spatial connotations of McGrew (1992) convey a picture of the world today. Therefore, globalisation can be defined as “referring to exchanges that transcend borders and which occur instantaneously and electronically” (King, 2004, p 48). The ability of individuals to bypass territorial borders and move through a world where geographical distances have no impact, provides education organisations with another avenue through which to provide their services to those keen to learn.

1.1.2 Australian Higher Education Landscape

In a world where there is economic uncertainty and shortages of skilled workers, the higher education landscape is both dynamic and filled with opportunity. Transnational higher education is one of those emerging opportunities which higher education providers have embraced to fill the gap of economic uncertainty and skill shortages. Australia’s attempt to best position itself in this scene can be traced through a consideration of seven governmental reports. Of these the Murray (1957), Martin (1964), Hoare (1995), West (1998) and Bradley (2008) reports were undertaken to establish a picture of the higher education sector, and to recommend changes to the system designed to ensure that higher education would continue to serve the country in future years. The Dawkins (1987) and Nelson (2003) reports were policy statements outlining proposed reforms, which would be subject to the passage of Commonwealth legislation. A timeline of the reports along with a list of the Australian Prime Ministers from 1949 to 2010 provides some context of the political status at the time is presented in Figure 1.1. The West Report (1998) was the first to consider that a student centred funding framework would be required for the sector to grow and address the future developments that were foreseen to fundamentally change the operating environment for higher education providers. However, the Nelson Report (2003), which followed, made recommendations that maintained the status quo. The Bradley Review (2008) recommendations and the government’s response, show a shift towards a student
centred funding framework as portrayed in the following statement:

By putting students clearly at the centre of its reforms, the [Commonwealth] Government has signalled its commitment to the expansion of a high quality university sector, to educate the graduates needed by an economy based on knowledge, skills and innovation. (Australian Government, 2009, p 5)

Figure 1.1 Timeline of Higher Education Reports and Australian Prime Minister (1949 – present 2010).
(The relevant portion of Wikipedia’s list of Australian Prime Minister by political affiliation timeline has been overlaid with the report and review names and their dates.

Only the Hoare (1995) and Bradley (2008) reports specifically identified internationalisation as a development that would significantly impact the higher education sector through the development and delivery of education, adding to the diversity of university income, or the need to be internationally competitive. Yet this internationalisation has become a significant part of the higher education landscape in Australia to the extent that the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) takes internationalisation into account when conducting audits (Stella & Liston, 2008). AUQA interprets internationalisation to include:
Chapter 1. Introduction

- Arrangements for the teaching and learning of international students in Australia (including partner arrangements and campuses);
- Arrangements for teaching and learning of international students overseas (transnational education, including partner arrangements and campuses);
- Internationalisation of the curriculum;
- Other international activities, such as research collaboration, study abroad, staff mobility.

(Stella & Liston, 2008, pp. 8-9)

While this research is undertaken in the Australian higher education landscape, it is important to understand what is happening at a global level as all higher education areas are in competition trying to engage the same prospective international/transnational students, while at the same time trying to cope with domestic demand and funding challenges. Chapter Two provides a more detailed discussion that represents a global overview of the higher education landscape.

1.1.3 Current Research into Student Perspectives

Previous research in transnational higher education has mostly been related to the educational offerings, at course and/or unit level, of public providers as well as the use of technology to mediate learning and teaching. However, there is limited research that considers transnational education from a student perspective, in particular, reasons for choosing to study transnationally, quality and relevance, and engagement with the institution (Ziguras & Hoare, 2009). Somewhat confusingly, previous researchers have used differing terms in relation to canvassing students ‘experiences’; ‘perspectives’, or ‘perceptions’. This section will concentrate on research that has used either ‘perspectives’ or ‘perceptions’. Defining the terms provides clarity even though some researchers appear to use the terms interchangeably.

The Australian Concise Oxford dictionary (1997) definitions are:

Perception – “an interpretation or impression based on one understands of something”.

Perspective – “a mental view of the relative importance of things”.

This study has chosen perspective, as the focus of the study is to find out what is important, relevant, and/or problematic to the student as they go about their studies where information technology is the sole medium for communication and learning.

Some of the research into student perspectives is summarised in Table 1.1 so as to show
the breadth of research undertaken across a variety of delivery mediums. The following discussion will consider a selection of the research available into student perspectives and in particular, those which focus on the three areas identified by Ziguras and Hoare (2009):

- Reasons for choosing to study in a foreign program at home rather than domestic or overseas alternatives;
- Engagement with awarding institution;
- Perceptions of quality and relevance of transnational programs.

**Reasons for choosing to study in foreign programs at home rather than domestic or overseas alternatives.**

The contextual environment for the Chapman and Pyvis (2006) study is ‘off-shore’ where students are studying in a different country to the education institution providing the service. Four cases were considered in their study, three partnering arrangements (an Australian university and an overseas provider partnership), and an Australian university that had a campus overseas. The assumption is made that the students had face-to-face contact with their lecturers as there is no mention of e-learning or online learning as being a factor in the study. Chapman and Pyvis (2006) identified that additional to the usual considerations of cost, timetabling, style of delivery, and institutional reputation, students’ assessments of programmes also included an ‘international’ element. This international element arose from the students’ perceptions and expectations that an international education would contribute to the development of an ‘international person’: a status symbol in relation to their own professional and career development.
Table 1.1 Overview of selected literature on student perspectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Surveyed (author, year, title)</th>
<th>Aim and Salient Points from the findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miliszewska &amp; Sztendur (2010) Australian TNE Programmes in Southeast Asia: The Student Perspective.</td>
<td>To examine the beliefs and behaviours that need to accompany technology to achieve the desired effect. The results identified that it was essential for universities to understand the learners’ perspective to be able to improve and sustain transnational programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helterbran (2008) The Ideal Professor: Student Perceptions of Effective Instructor Practices.</td>
<td>To identify student beliefs about teacher educator qualities and practices. The findings mirrored other research on the topic of teacher effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menchaca &amp; Bekele (2008) Learner and Instructor Identified Success Factors in Distance Education.</td>
<td>To identify and understand learner and instructor, optimal tools and strategies for success in online distance education. Results indicate that optimal distance environments should address human, technology, course, leadership and pedagogic factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, Moore (2007) Students Perceptions of characteristics of Effective College Teachers: A Validity Study of a Teaching Evaluation Form Using a Mixed-Methods Analysis.</td>
<td>To analyse the content-related and construct-related validity of a teaching evaluation form. The result was the development of a model of teaching evaluation (CARE-RESPECTED) which contains four meta themes (communicator, advocate, responsible, empowering) and nine themes (responsive, enthusiast, student centered, professional, expert, connector, transmitter, ethical and director) that provide a picture of an effective teachers’ characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert, Morton, Rowley (2007) e-Learning: The student experience</td>
<td>To develop a picture of Master student’s perspectives of their e-learning experience. The criteria identified showed student satisfaction was higher when there was synergy between theory and practice; there were specific subject themes; discussion forums and student interaction were included; and other learning support was provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price (2006) Lectures’ vs. students’ perceptions of the accessibility in instructional materials.</td>
<td>To study differences between lecturers’ and students’ perception of accessibility of learning materials. Lecturers concentrated on the pedagogical value while students focused on the surfaces attributes (appearance, engagement features)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapman &amp; Pyvis (2006) Quality, identity and practice in offshore university programmes: issues in the internationalization of Australian higher education.</td>
<td>To identify why students study for degree delivered ‘off-shore’. Students consider international education as part of their long-term career trajectory. They also seek to belong to the education community and juggle competing life demands through prioritising and compartmentalising activities and roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLoughlin (2004) Student Perceptions of quality in online pedagogy: Implications for design.</td>
<td>To examine students online learning to identify what constitutes a good experience. Found that the use of learner centered principles are the starting point for a quality online experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choy &amp; Delehaye (2002) Andragogy in Vocational Education and Training: Learners’ perspective</td>
<td>To investigate learners perspectives on the practice of Andragogy. Result indicated that youth learners (ages 17 – 24 years) prefer the feel-good aspects of Andragogy but were not willing to assume responsibility for their learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howland &amp; Moore (2002) Student Perceptions as Distance Learners in Internet-Based Courses</td>
<td>To examine students experiences to identify an optimal learning environment and strategies students use to be successful. Students with positive attitudes to the online environment displayed attributes of constructivist learner including self-direction. Students with negative attitudes needed more direction. Self-management, self-monitoring and motivation were identified as strategies used by students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement with awarding institution

A more recent study by Miliszewska and Sztendur (2010) using a similar environmental context as Chapman and Pyvis (2006) (Australian universities partnering with local education providers), offers insights into the educational experience of the participants, in particular, through the identification of a range of critical success attributes (Miliszewska & Sztendur, 2010). These attributes ranged across ten identified dimensions as listed in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Student Perceptions of Critical Success Attributes
Reproduced (without the third column) from Miliszewska & Sztendur, 2010, pp 28-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Is motivated and self disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knows how to work independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works as a team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University instructor and learning environment</td>
<td>Understands programme requirements, students’ characteristics and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses effective communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates dedication to programme, teaching and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local instructor and learning environment</td>
<td>Understands programme requirements, students’ characteristics and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses effective communication skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University instructor-Technology and organisation</td>
<td>Is well prepared and organised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has experience with technology-based programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides well-designed syllabus and presentation outlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local instructor – technology and organisation</td>
<td>Is well prepared and organised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has experience with technology-based programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and instruction design</td>
<td>Is relevant to job/career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Timely feedback on assignments and projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies that encourage communication between students, and students and instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and assessment</td>
<td>Assessment of the relevance of the course content to practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of assessment match learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment of students’ attitudes and levels of satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Is available and reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is helpful and easy to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Management and Organisational Support</td>
<td>Timely preparation of course materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institution ensure high quality of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student support services are provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of particular interest is the inclusion of organisational support as a dimension. In general, past research has concentrated on the student-teacher relationship. In this study, the identification by students that the support services provided by the institutions were important to them, extends the students’ relationship past that of the teacher to include other staff of the institution.
Perceptions of quality and relevance of transnational programmes

Chapman and Pyvis (2006) concluded that becoming part of the community and achieving career trajectories were important to students. However other studies concentrate on the teacher-student nexus (Helterbran, 2008; Menchaca & Bekele, 2008; Miliszewska & Sztendur, 2010; Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, & Moore, 2007; Price, 2006) identifying preparedness, professional qualities, and subject knowledge of the teacher as contributing to the perception of quality. The majority of these studies were undertaken in face-to-face educational environments. These qualities are no less important for students in the online environments. An additional quality, that of relevance, arises for students studying online. The student’s ability to see the relevance of what they are being required to learn and how it applies in the real world of everyday experiences becomes important to them (Gilbert, Morton, & Rowley, 2007; McLoughlin, 2000). These perceptions of subject relevance can extend to include the programme as a whole.

1.2 Research Opportunity and Justification

In a world where exchanges between people can occur instantaneously and transcend borders (King, 2004), new opportunities abound for both education providers and students. While Australian universities face challenges in securing Commonwealth Government funding at the same time as competing for global students, the number of private providers grow and are recognised as part of the Australian higher education landscape.

Research into student perspectives covers a wide range of environments and situations, however much of the Australian research into student perspectives on transnational education concentrates on cohorts of students in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, with virtually no research in other parts of the world (Ziguras & Hoare, 2009).

Thus there lies an opportunity to investigate students’ perspectives of transnational education. As such, it is an opportune time for this study, given the dynamic nature of the Australian higher education landscape and the perception that transnational education is at the forefront of changes taking place today in the higher education sector (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007, p i). Therefore, much can be learned that could assist all providers of higher education to ‘get it right’ from the students’ perspective.
1.3 Aims of the Research

This study began with the desire to find out how the students of the Case Organisation were coping with their studies. To be able to do this, two aims were identified:

1. Examine the emerging transnational higher education landscape, and

2. Examine students’ perspectives of transnational higher education where information technology is used as the sole medium for all communications and learning.

In achieving the first aim there was a need to understand the current higher education landscape before considering the emerging transnational higher education landscape. Therefore Chapters Two and Three are provided to orientate the reader in this. When considering the research opportunity and the second aim, it was identified that there was no explicit theory to base the study around. An approach was needed that was fluid and unstructured enough to allow a holistic, diverse picture of the student and their perspectives to emerge, while at the same time being able to guide the research process through a set of systematic procedures (Creswell, 2005). This would enable an “ever opening and evolving theory” (Glaser, 1978, p ix) of the subject area, to be developed: Student perspectives on transnational education.

Before describing why a theory is needed, it is appropriate to state a definition of what theory is. Grbich (1999) defines theory as being

\[ \text{derived from the exploration of phenomena, the identification of, and interrelationships between, concepts surrounding phenomena and the subsequent development of a framework within which some comments can be made. (p 27)} \]

More simply, “A theory simply explains what a phenomenon is and how it works. A theory explains the phenomenon by identifying its main ideas, or concepts, and by stating the relationships among these concepts” (Terraco, 1997, p 115). Glaser and Strauss (1967) state something similar, “the form in which a theory is presented does not make it a theory. It is a theory because it explains or predicts something” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 31).

Knowles, Holton III and Swanson (2005) take the above definitions one step further by including the idea of internal consistency; a theory is a “comprehensive, coherent, and
internally consistent system of ideas about a set of phenomena” (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005, p 10). The phrase ‘internally consistent’ is reminiscent of statistical validity and reliability. From the Grounded Theory perspective, theory should be grounded in the data and be parsimonious (Glaser, 1992, p 116). For this research the definition used for theory is a convergence of these:

*A theory that in a coherent and parsimonious way, explains what a phenomenon is and how it works.*

As identified in section 1.1.3 much of the research in transnational higher education has been related to the educational offerings at course and/or unit level of public providers, as well as the use of technology to mediate learning and teaching. However, there is very little research that considers transnational education from a student perspective, in particular, the reasons for choosing to study transnationally, the perceptions of quality and relevance, and engagement with the institution (Ziguras & Hoare, 2009). To achieve the aim of this research and to provide a holistic picture, the results of the research should provide a coherent way of conceptualising student perspectives on transnational education to assist those who are planning, drafting policy and procedures, and educationalists and learners engaged in transnational higher education.

The Grounded Theory methodology was chosen as the research design as it allows for an “ever opening and evolving theory on a subject” (Glaser, 1978, p ix). In addition, it provides a set of systematic procedures (Creswell, 2005) to guide the process whilst being fluid and unstructured enough to allow a holistic, diverse picture of the student and their perspectives to emerge. A more detailed examination of Grounded Theory appears in Chapter Four.

1.4 Contribution to Theory

The emergent theory, Student perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE) theory, is a valuable contribution to the study of student’s perspectives of education regardless of their place of education. The study identified pedagogical and operational recommendations that offer valuable insight into the areas of policy, curriculum planning, and staff development. The results of the study show that for the participants transnational education is seen as a means to achieving the desired goal and a life-changing activity that ultimately would allow them to change their current situation for a better one. The students’ motivations to study varied as did their reasons for selecting
to study with the particular Case Organisation. However, their main concern during their studies was ‘support’. As students learn, support is provided in two ways; first, through the learning materials, and second, through human support. Of these two interaction points the human support was more critical for these students.

Three associated theories were considered to further enrich the SPoTNE Theory, and provide further insight into the landscape of transnational higher education. The main areas within the body of knowledge that have been identified as being associated with elements of the SPoTNE theory are adult education (Knowles’s Andragogy), learning strategies (The Learning Strategies System) and distance education (Moore’s Transactional Distance theory).

The SPoTNE theory is consistent with four of the six principles identified in Knowles (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005) though it challenges Moore’s Transactional Distance theory (Moore, 1993) when it comes to the importance of interpersonal emotion. The SPoTNE theory also identified that support from home and the personal characteristics of drive and determination should be added into the Resources Management Strategies within the Learning Strategies System (McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin, & Smith, 1986).

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The journey to discover student perspectives on transnational higher education did not follow the traditional thesis structure due to the methodology used: that is the Glaserian variant of Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is a process of discovery; of generating theory through constant comparative analysis of the data. The writing of a Grounded Theory thesis is one of helping the reader to understand the thought processes of the researcher and therefore, leading the reader through the process of discovery and as such the literature review is dispersed throughout the thesis (specifically Chapters Two, Three and Six). The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter One provides an overview of the research project, identifying the research problem, objectives of the research, a brief description of the theory that emerged through the process of discovery and a description of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two is the first of two background chapters provided to orientate the reader into the landscape of the study. The chapter looks globally at the higher education landscape
by investigating the current state of play of higher education in Europe, Asia, the United States of America, and Australia.

Chapter Three, the second background chapter, introduces the student population and communication medium of transnational higher education as the phenomenon that is changing the higher education landscape.

Chapter Four considers the research design by identifying the research question and methodology and the researcher’s theoretical perspective. The chapter concludes with a critical analysis of Grounded Theory and justifies the choice of Glaserian Grounded Theory variant for the study.

Chapter Five discusses the research design for the study. It introduces the Case Organisation and participants, describes the data collection methods and the process of analysis. The emergent theory is described, and finally the worthiness of the theory against the identified criteria is discussed.

Chapter Six nests the emergent theory into the existing body of knowledge through a consideration of the associated theories of Andragogy, Learning Strategies Systems and Transactional Distance.

Chapter Seven discusses the contributions to knowledge that arise from the research study. Implications for practice are also considered with suggestions for future research.

1.6 Summary
This chapter has introduced the research study through a brief discussion of three diverse background areas; globalisation; Australian higher education landscape; and research into student perspectives. The overlap of these areas establishes a research opportunity where research into the student’s perspectives would be welcomed. The aims of the research were presented as being 1) to examine the emerging transnational higher education landscape and 2) examine student perspectives on transnational higher education where information technology is used as the sole medium for all communications and learning. This was followed by a brief introduction into how the emergent SPoTNE theory contributes to the current theoretical knowledge and also an outline of the thesis structure.
To understand what is happening at a global level the next chapter reinforces the dynamic nature of the landscape through consideration of higher education in four areas: Europe, United States of America, Asia and Australia. These four areas were selected as they are in competition with each other trying to engage the same prospective international/transnational students, and at the same time trying to cope with domestic demand and funding challenges.
# CHAPTER 2 HIGHER EDUCATION – A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

<table>
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<td>ASIA ........................................................................... 21</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>SUMMARY ....................................................................... 33</td>
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## 2.1 Introduction

Access to higher education has become a requirement in today’s modern society. However, this access is limited by a number of factors, the primary one being the relative disproportion of the number of institutes offering higher education to those who want access to them. Further, technology has enabled access to higher education at a distance: globalisation has had a great impact. However, this has brought a need for stringent quality assurance standards, appropriate curriculum development, and student services.

The discussion in Chapter One regarding globalisation identified that with the advances in telecommunications technologies individuals can bypass territorial borders and move through a world where geographical distances have no impact. This chapter presents an overview of higher education in a global context. The higher education areas selected for investigation are Europe, the United States of America (USA), Asia, and Australia. Europe and the USA have been chosen because they are Australia’s competitors in the provision of higher education for overseas students seeking an international education whether in Australia or transnationally with an Australian organisation. Asia has been included as it has been traditionally Australia’s biggest market for international students and are highly sought after by Europe and the USA.

## 2.2 Europe

The joint declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system, known as ‘the Sorbonne Joint Declaration’, stressed the role of universities in developing the European cultural dimension. This declaration emphasises that to a large extent universities have played a pivotal role in the development of the “intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimension of the continent” (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para 1). A year later the European Ministers of Education identified
“the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens’ mobility and employability and the Continent’s overall development” (The Bologna Declaration, 1999, para 9). The signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 by 26 countries put in motion what has became known as the Bologna Process. The Bologna declaration provides guidance to the creation of a European higher education system which is seen as:

an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space. (para 2)

The signatories of the Bologna Declaration supported the principles of the Sorbonne Declaration and pledged to coordinate their country’s policies to achieve three priorities:

1. the introduction of the Three Cycle System;
2. quality assurance; and
3. the recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

These priorities have been translated into the following six action lines:

Action line 1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
Action line 2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles;
Action line 3. Establishment of a system of credits;
Action line 4. Promotion of mobility;
Action line 5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance; and
Action line 6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

Since 1999 more countries have committed to the process; as at 2008/2009 there were 46 countries committed to the process. Every two years the Ministers of Education meet to check the progress that has been made towards the objectives of the Bologna Declaration as measured against the action lines. As a result of these meetings, additions have been made to the original action lines. These are:

Action line 7. Life long learning;
Action line 8. Higher education institutions and students;
Action line 9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Prague Communiqué, 2001, para 12 - 14); and
Action line 10. “Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the ERA.” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p 7)

The From Berlin to Bergen Report (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2005, p 9) contains the
results of the follow-up seminars and other reports relating to frameworks for quality assurance, recognition of degrees and study periods, and the Stocktake Report. At the time of the report, the stocktake project identified the progress that signatory countries had made towards implementing the intermediate priorities that had been set for the next two years. These priorities were:

Priority 1  Quality assurance (Action line 5) promoting cooperation across Europe with the aim of developing comparable methods and criteria;

Priority 2  Two-cycle systems (Action line 2 & 10) the adoption of two main cycles of education, undergraduate and postgraduate. Access to the second cycle requires successful completion of the first; and

Priority 3  Recognition of degrees and periods of studies (Action line 3) establishing a system of credits, recognising previous study amongst member countries to promote student mobility.

The Bologna Follow Up Group (2005) reported that “good progress” had been made towards each of the three priorities, with more than half of the participating countries having quality assurance structures in place. Seventy three percent had the two-cycle system in place on either a wide scale (54%) or in a limited capacity (19%) (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2005, p 36). Progress on the third priority saw many of the graduates of 2005 receiving a Diploma Supplement2 automatically and free of charge. In addition, there was continued development towards the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as the “common currency” (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2005, p 37) which would facilitate mobility.

Limitations for all three priorities were identified, giving an indication that there is still work needed to sell the Bologna Process to the community as Europe progresses towards “the jointly agreed principles” (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2005, p 3) in the Bologna Declaration. The Bergen Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers for Higher Education identified that the EHEA should be seen as being “open and should be attractive to other parts of the world” (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p 4).

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2 “The Diploma Supplement (DS) is a document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving international ‘transparency’ and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended.” (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html, 29th December 2008)

The London Communiqué (2007) indicated that developments since the Bergen Communiqué of 2005, had brought the realisation of the EHEA aims closer to reality and that good progress had been made overall. The Stocktake Report (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2007) presented at the meeting gave green scorecards on the good progress made in three cycle degrees (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate), quality assurance, recognition of degree and study periods, and linking higher education and research. The scorecards were ranked by colour categories, green being the highest achievement in a particular category, followed by light green, yellow, orange and red which indicate no or very little progress had been achieved. The Bologna Follow Up Group (2007) gave a positive outlook for achieving the goals of the Bologna Process by 2010.

The 2009 Bologna Process Stocktake Report was designed to see if the goals of the Bologna Process would actually be achieved by 2010. The Bologna Follow Up Group reported:

Even though the overall picture may not look quite as green as it did in 2007, there are encouraging signs in that some of the action lines are almost complete and some countries have considerably improved their scores over the two year period… The 2009 Stocktaking shows that not all the goals of the Bologna Process will be achieved by 2010. (Rauhvargers, Deane, & Pauwels, 2009, p 12)

The ministerial Communiqué for 2009 (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009) identifies that the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and subsequent policies are still valid and acknowledge that achievement of these objectives “requires increased momentum and commitment beyond 2010” (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, p 2).

Internationally, Europe hosts 52% of international students and is the leading host region for students from Europe and Africa, whilst also being attractive to American and Asian students (International Organization for Migration, 2008). The majority (81%) of these foreign students are European students studying in other European countries (International Organization for Migration, 2008). The main reason identified for this trend is attributed to the Bologna Process and the Erasmus Programme (International Organization for Migration, 2008) which was established to encourage student mobility.

### 2.3 United States of America

The United States of America (USA) has long been a major player in higher education,
particularly as a host country to international students. This section will consider the
domestic and international aspects of the United States (US) Higher Education Sector,
beginning with the domestic higher education sector.

Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008), Governor Hunt states “our higher
education performance is not commensurate with the current needs of our society and
our economy” (p 4). The President for the Centre further elaborates

we continue to slip behind other countries in improving college
opportunities for our residents. In addition, large disparities in higher
education performance by race/ethnicity, by income, and by state limit our
nation’s ability to advance the educational attainment of our workforce and
citizenry – and thereby remain competitive globally. (p 5)

The ‘Measuring Up’ report card has been produced biennially since the year 2000 and
grades the States’ performances in following key areas:

1. College Preparation;
2. Participation;
3. Completion;
4. Affordability;
5. Benefits; and

**College Preparation** - The 2008 report indicates that high school students who
complete on time are more likely to enrol in college than in the 1980s and 1990s.
However, a large proportion of these need remediation once they enrol if they are to
succeed at college. Larger proportions of students fail to complete high school, though
some as adults will complete the alternative high school certification, but do not enrol in
college in large numbers.

**Participation** - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
(OECD) data provided in the report identified that 34% of US young adults (18 – 24
years old) enrol in college and that this represents a modest increase on previous years.
The enrolment of working-age adults (25-49 years) without a bachelor degree or higher
continues to decline.

**Completion** - Despite having made gains in college participation since the early 1990s,
the overall completion rate remains low. The example given identifies that, in the top
performing States, only 68% of students at a four-year institute complete a bachelor degree within six years of enrolling.

**Affordability** - According to the Measuring Up Report (2008), a college and/or university education has become less affordable for students and their families since the 1990s with the downward trend continuing in 2008. Based on the percentage of family income the report identified that working and poor families will pay, on average, 40% of their income to enrol a young adult in a public four-year college degree. For middle and upper-income families, the percentage is 25% and 13% respectively. Although there is financial aid available, this support has not kept pace with the increase of tuition fees.

**Benefits** - The USA measures ‘educational capital’ by the percentage of adults (25 – 64 years old) with an associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree or higher. Since the 1990s individual States have increased their ‘educational capital’. The benefits of higher education still vary by race/ethnicity and State of residence. The figures cited for five States identifies that between 32- 43% of ‘Whites’ hold a bachelors’ or higher degree. The figure ranges between 8% to 22% for ‘Blacks’, Hispanics and native Alaskans (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008, p 17).

**Learning** - Previous Measuring Up Reports in 2004 and 2006, give ‘plus’ grades to the States that had participated in pilot programs assess students’ learning. However the 2008 Measuring Up Report gave all States an ‘incomplete’ for this area, indicating that this incomplete grade “highlights the fact that the United States lacks consistent measures of student learning in higher education” (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008, p 23). This is seen to be the missing piece in maintaining America’s competitive advantage in producing college graduates (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008, p 24).

The 2006 report identifies what the report card is seeking in terms of learning; the indicators for this area are grouped into three weighted themes:

1. **Literacy** – the proportion of citizens who achieve high levels of literacy;
2. Graduates ready for advanced practice – those citizen who take membership to a professional body or exams to enter licensed professions; and

Brennan in concluding the Measuring Up 2008 Report (The National Center for Public
Policy and Higher Education, 2008) asserts that university leaders who have invested all their resources into developing ‘institutional prestige’ at the expense of the national higher education sector have disadvantaged the future diverse educational needs of the next generation. In closing he states:

The problems are now so serious and stakes so high that the most experienced educators and political leaders must work together for policies that will enable higher education to continue to serve the millions of Americans whose well-being depends upon it. (p 26)

Internationally, the USA has been identified as the major country for international higher education/post secondary students (Institute of International Education, 2009). According to the ‘Open Doors’ Report (2009), the USA hosted 671,616 international students in the 2008/09 academic year. India, China and South Korea have been identified as the top three places of origin for international students, with the University of Southern California hosting the largest number of international students (7,482). The net contribution that these international students and their families contribute to the US economy is US$ 17.8 billion per annum (Institute of International Education, 2009).

Paradoxically the United States of America, while receiving significant income and cultural exchange from international students, struggles to provide for the educational needs of its own citizens.

2.4 Asia

This section will concentrate on the regions of Eastern, Southern and South-Eastern Asia, as they are the top source countries for onshore international students to Australia (Australian Education International, 2009) as well as the United Kingdom and the USA. Table 2.1 identifies the countries that belong to these sub-regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1 Asian Sub-regions and their countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Asia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Countries in bold represent the top five source countries for Australia in 2009.*

Internationally, Asia exports large numbers of students to Australia, the USA and the United Kingdom (UK). 2009 statistics from the USA identify that of the top five source countries for onshore international students, four are from Asia with the majority
coming from India and China (Institute of International Education, 2009). Australian data from Australian Education International (2009) identify that of the total commencements of higher education students in 2009, 61.26% (55,104 of the 89,942) of onshore international students came from Asia. Similarly, the UK in 2007/08 shows the majority of non-EU international students came from the Asia Region. Table 2.2 presents the comparative statistics for Asian students studying in the three identified countries. Shown are the top five source countries for UK, USA and Australia. The numbers of non-Asian students are not applicable (n/a) to the current discussion and are therefore not shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Table of comparative statistics for Asian international students studying in the UK, USA and Australia

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>47 035</td>
<td>1 China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>34 065</td>
<td>2 India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>34 065</td>
<td>2 India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3 China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>12 695</td>
<td>4 Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93 795</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5 Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5 Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>12 695</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>103 260</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>61 504</td>
<td>1 China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>98 510</td>
<td>2 China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>75 065</td>
<td>3 Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4 Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>29 264</td>
<td>5 Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>306 099</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* UK stats source (UK Council for International Student Affairs, n.d.);
** USA source (Institute of International Education, 2009);
*** Australia source (Australian Education International, 2009)

With such a migration of Asian students moving from their home country to study overseas, Southeast Asian governments took steps to harmonise their higher education sectors. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) through the Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED), developed a proposal “putting forward the ideas of a policy mechanism leading to the establishment of a ‘common space’ in higher education or ‘higher education area’ in Southeast Asia” (Dato' Dr Ahamad Bin Sipon, 2008). The Australian Newspaper (Powell, 2008) reported that scholars and bureaucrats from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) “took the first faltering steps towards a compatibility and harmonisation agreement” (Powell, 2008) for an higher education area. The deadline for completion has been set as 2015.

### 2.5 Australia

As with the rest of the globe, Australia’s higher education sector is also dynamic and undergoing change. The 2008 Review of Australian Higher Education was
commissioned to assess whether “this critical sector of education is structured, organised and financed to position Australia to compete effectively in the new globalised economy” (Bradley, 2008, p xi). The findings of the Bradley Review indicate:

[The] analysis of the performance of Australia’s higher education system points to an urgent need for both major structural responses and additional investment. In 2020 Australia will not be competitive with the top group of OECD countries in terms of the performance of higher education if there is a failure to act now. (p 13)

Throughout Australia’s higher education history similar comments are repeated through the reviews and reports commissioned since the end of the Second World War. The apparent inability of successive Australian governments to construct and support a structured, organised, and financed flexible higher education sector has left Australia in a position that will make it difficult to compete globally as students will be attracted to Australia’s major competitors, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (see Table 2.2).

A recounting of Australia’s chequered history of the higher education sector can be explored through considering seven governmental reports. The Murray (1957), Martin (1964), Hoare (1995), West (1998) and Bradley (2008) reports were undertaken to establish a picture of the higher education sector, and to recommend changes to a system designed to ensure that higher education would continue to serve the country in future years. The Dawkins (1987) and Nelson (2003) reports were policy statements outlining proposed reforms, which would be subject to the passage of Commonwealth legislation. A timeline of the reports aligned with the relevant Australian Prime Ministers from 1949 is presented in Figure 2.1 and provides some context of the political status at the time. Each of these reports will be considered in chronological order in this section.

The Higher Education Landscape before 1957

Pre-war World War II, universities negotiated with their respective State governments for funding to supplement fee income. During the Second World War the realisation formed that there was no scientific or research culture within the universities and that there was significant need for funds from the Commonwealth Government. A tax imposed as a wartime emergency measure allowed the Commonwealth to inject funds into the university sector through various means:

- Direct grants;
- Scholarships for school leavers;
- Funds to encourage enrolment by returned servicemen;
- The founding of the Australian National University in 1946 as a research oriented institution. (Scott, 1999, p 24)

The Murray Report (1957)

The ‘Report of the Committee of Australian Universities’ (1957), also known as ‘The Murray Report’ identified several problems within higher education:

- Pressure of increased student numbers including part time and external students;
- The high student attrition rate;
- Lack of facilities e.g. libraries, laboratories, teaching rooms, consumable materials, etc.;
- Lack of teaching staff due to insufficient salaries and no provision for superannuation, study leave, conference attendance, etc.;
- Lack of scholarships and grants for students;

- The need to extend pure and applied science departments to cater for the technological training needed to assist the industrial expansion expected in the future; and the need to expand postgraduate research.

Recommendations suggested that the Commonwealth Government provide funding for capital works to provide needed facilities and consumable materials, and an immediate increase in academic salaries (Committee on Australian Universities, 1957, pp 120-126). As a result of these recommendations funding was made available to the universities (Scott, 1999, p 24).

**The Martin Report (1964)**

The Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia or ‘The Martin Report’ (1964) was asked to “consider the pattern of tertiary education in relation to the needs and resources of Australia, and make recommendations to the Australian University Commission on the future development of tertiary education” (Martin, 1964, p. i). The Committee identified two issues:

1. The rapid increase in numbers of people seeking higher education; and
2. The rapid acceleration in the rate of increase of knowledge.

Australia’s tertiary sector at this time included Universities, Technical Colleges and Teacher Training Institutes. The Committee came to the conclusion that the focus for university attendance was due in part to the lack of “other tertiary institutions of comparable status in the eyes of the community” (Martin, 1964, pp. 36-37). Martin (1964) recommended “the expansion, improvement, and establishment of appropriate institutions to provide a wider diversity of tertiary education” (p 37). Specific recommendations were made for each type of tertiary education provider. The recommendations for universities included a focus on staff recruitment and salaries, transfer arrangements for students between providers, and continued capital expansion. For other tertiary providers, such as technical colleges and teacher training institutes, the recommendations would have more impact, including teacher training and technical support to technical colleges.


Two decades after the Martin Report, the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, issued a discussion paper to begin the process of examining the performance of the Australian higher education system. As a result a policy statement
was produced to set out the Commonwealth Governments’ long term strategy for the development of the higher education sector. The strategy was entitled ‘The National Unified System’. This included:

- Measures to make more productive use of institutional resources and facilities, including institutional consolidations and more systematic credit transfer arrangement;
- Greater targeting of resources at the institutional level and improved institutional management;
- Increased flexibility and incentives for performance for both institutions and individual staff; and
- Encouragement of an environment of productive competition between higher education institutions. (Dawkins, 1988, p 11).

These measures would be achieved initially through the financial efficiencies which would be gained through the consolidation of Colleges of Advanced Education (Technical Colleges and Teacher Education Institutes) with Universities. The consolidations would reduce the number of higher education institutes from 65 to 39.

Participation in the unified system would provide institutions with greater flexibility and access to funding, which would be provided by the Government. The report claimed that institutions would enjoy:

- More flexibility to determine the particular courses to be offered and areas of research to be undertaken;
- Greater control over their own resources, enhanced revenue-raising options and decreased intervention by governments in internal funding and management decision; and
- Guaranteed triennial funding based on agreed priorities for institutional activity and performance against those priorities than an arbitrary system of institutional classification. (Dawkins, 1988, p 27)

The educational profile for these institutions would be an agreement in which priorities for activity and performance would be measured and funding made available.


In the early 1990s it was noted that the higher education sector was under pressure from several quarters:

- Continuing demands for accountability and performance;
- Direct competition within the sector from other universities, TAFE and private providers;
- The end of assured government funding with a policy change towards TAFE;
• The changing working, teaching and learning environment due to ICTs;
• Mass participation in higher education;
• Increasing concentration on research activities and greater competition for funding;
• Internationalisation of higher education; and
• The dynamic nature of the higher education sector. (Hoare, 1995)

The terms of reference for the established committee were to “examine and advise on the management and accountability requirements for ensuring Australia has a high quality, efficient and effective higher education sector” (Hoare, 1995).

It is worth noting that this is the first review that identifies international higher education amongst the pressures that will impact the sector, in particular, the “development and delivery of education to overseas students either within Australia or off-shore, while continuing to meet obligations to domestic students” (Hoare, 1995).

The committee grouped their recommendations into four key areas:

1. **Accountability and Governance** focused on the governing bodies, their purpose, appointment, performance and review of their performance, as well as the role of the Vice Chancellor as steward of the institution on behalf of the governing body. It was noted that in some States legislation would need to be changed to enable the recommendations to be carried out. It was recommended that where appropriate these legislations be reviewed and amended.

2. The recommendations for **Strategic Management** focused on higher education providers developing a more strategic and systematic approach to their management, all levels within the university having access to leadership skills development and finally that a review of the reporting requirements for Commonwealth, State and other stakeholders be undertaken to streamline the collection of data and to reduce the administrative burden associated with that task.

3. The dynamic nature of the higher education sector meant that **Workplace Reform** was required at a fundamental level. The committee made several recommendations. One, that there be an alignment of people practices with the vision and strategic objectives of the institution. Two, institutions need to phase in a comprehensive approach to performance management for both academic and general staff. Three, there should be a stronger focus on staff development
and training. Four, a review to be conducted of superannuation arrangements which were seen as unsatisfactory, and finally that these reforms should be facilitated by an overhaul of the industrial relations within the sector.

4. A review of Finance and Asset Management arrangements should be undertaken.

It was noted that the above recommendations could not be carried out without some additional funding from the Commonwealth. The committee’s final recommendation asked that a ‘University Change Implementation Scheme’ be established to provide advice and funding, as well as monitor and report on institutional progress.

**West Report (1998)**

The first sentence of the West Report (1998) identified that “In the decade that has passed since the last major review of higher education in Australia there have been sustained and far-reaching changes to higher education” (p 1). The last major review referred to was the Dawkins Report (1988). West identified the Hoare Report (1995) as a review of university governance and management (West, 1998, p 89). Although tasked with “charting a course for higher education for the next 20 years” (p 16) the committee foresaw an expanded need to improve the nation’s economy for the benefit of all:

We therefore face a real question of how we can set out to improve our nation’s economy for the benefit of all Australians. The Review Committee believes that higher education can play a critical role by equipping Australians with the skills and knowledge to meet the social and economic challenges of the twenty-first century and by the development of a vigorous wealth generating educational industry.

Over the next 20 years, the whirlwind of change that characterises our lives today will increase. The trend to globalisation will intensify and the world will be highly competitive. The digital revolution will cut even more deeply into our lives. The Review Committee considers that education and training will enable people to respond to these challenges and opportunities. All Australians must have access to postsecondary education and training opportunities if they are to participate fully in the life of the nation. Participation in lifelong learning is expected to play an increasingly important role in our lives. Therefore, we must develop a culture in which learning, even to the most advanced levels, is accepted as part of the social and economic fabric—an environment in which individuals are encouraged to continue to use the skills acquired at school, TAFE or university, in new and recurring formal and informal learning contexts throughout their adult lives. If we accomplish this, we shall have built a ‘learning society’.
Higher education has a distinctive and important role to play in the learning society. In particular, higher education should, whatever form it takes, whether it be professional, technical or liberal, open, nurture and refine minds, and create independent learners. It should enable individuals to grow intellectually, to achieve personal fulfilment and to contribute fully and at the highest levels to society, the workplace and the nation. It is the Review Committee’s task to make recommendations for a framework that will enable an Australian higher education system of international quality to flourish in a rapidly changing and highly competitive world. (p 43)

The West Report (1998) did not list the problems that had been identified but rather what the committee perceived to be the future developments that would fundamentally change the operating environment for providers of higher education. These were:

- Community expectations will increase;
- Demand for access to higher education will increase;
- Development in information technologies has the potential to revolutionise management and education; and
- Competition will increase amongst higher education institutes and players outside the established networks. (pp 17-18)

The Committee advocated:

- a student centred funding framework—such a framework would increase the choices available to both students and providers of higher education, while encouraging institutions to be more responsive to the needs and preferences of their students;
- a research funding framework in which funding priorities and decisions are more responsive to national needs; and
- a range of measures to re-engineer the regulatory framework and facilitate the structural change needed to equip Australian higher education to meet the challenges of the next century and to enable us to develop a world-class education industry. (p 99)

The recommendations were designed to begin the process for forming a “new policy and financing framework” (West, 1998, p 16) for higher education.

**Nelson Report (2003)**

As with the Dawkins Report (1988), the Nelson Report (2003) was a policy statement, subject to the passage of Commonwealth legislation before the reforms could be implemented.

Through the consultation process several problems within the higher education sector were identified by Nelson (2003):

- Costs of courses had increased;
- Access to increased resources was needed;
- Duplication of university activities, and course offerings and too many units having very small entitlements;
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were under-represented;
- Large student attrition rates; and
- Issues with governance arrangements for some institutions. (p 9)

All of these were “exacerbated by excessive and restrictive regulatory and reporting demands currently imposed by both the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments” (Nelson, 2003, p 9). Furthermore, the Report asserted that “heavily centralised Commonwealth bureaucratic arrangements had produced a sector that is not maximising its potential and is limited in its ability to be internationally competitive” (p 9).

The reform proposed by the Nelson Report (2003) contained three major elements:

1. **Support for higher education institutions** through the ‘Commonwealth Grant Scheme’ which would replace the existing system of block operating grants;
2. **Support for students** through a “suite of income contingent loans under the new Higher Education Loan Program” (Nelson, 2003, p 12);
3. **Support for a diverse and equitable system** through performance and incentive funding which would be made available to “encourage universities to differentiate their mission and to achieve reform in the areas of learning and teaching, equity, workplace productivity, collaboration and quality”. (p 13)

Many of the reforms proposed by Nelson (2003) were implemented in 2005 (Pick, 2006, p 268).

**Bradley Report (2008)**

In 2008 the Australian Commonwealth Government commissioned a review of the higher education sector. The review panel was given the task of examining and reporting “on the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting the needs of the Australian community and economy and the options for ongoing reform” (Bradley, 2008, p 205).

Australia’s higher education sector has grown in response to economic and societal changes of the time. Bradley (2008) succinctly summarised the developments in the sector during the previous two decades as:

- Increasing the contribution by students to the costs of their education;
- Increasing the diversity of university income sources, including from international students;
- Improving productivity and efficiency in higher education;
- Introducing competitive or performance-based education; and
- Diversifying higher education by government support for private provision. (p 4)

Three broad issues identified as needing attention were:

- A national framework for tertiary education;
- An internationally competitive higher education system; and
- Australia’s long-term competitive position in tertiary education. (p 1)

As a result of the review, the panel recommended a package of reforms which targeted students, institutions and the national framework. The reforms focus on a student demand driven system. All qualified students would receive a subsidised place at the University of their choice. In addition, financial support for students would be increased for all students, but particularly those of low socio-economic and/or Indigenous backgrounds. Furthermore, all higher education institutions would be accredited with a proportion of future funding to be allocated based on performance against targets, with a separate pool of funding available to assist institutions to make changes needed to meet student demand. Moreover, future funds for research would be increased to address the rising costs experienced by the higher education sector. The national framework would be reviewed with the panel recommending that the Commonwealth Government assume primary regulatory responsibility and funding for the tertiary sector.

The Commonwealth Government’s response to the panel’s recommendations was to “make unprecedented investment in our universities and tertiary education system to drive comprehensive report across the post-compulsory education and training sector” (Australian Government, 2009, p 5). The proposed reform agenda was published under the title ‘Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System’ in 2009, and provides a strategic plan for reform in the sector over the coming decade, identifying 2010 and 2011 as transition years with the new student centred funding system fully implemented from 2012. The key reforms are identified in Figure 2.2.
A consideration of these seven reports identified that since the Second World War, the higher education sector in Australia has experienced a severe lack of financial resources, ever increasing student numbers, and with the effect that globalisation has had on the world, the sector has not been able to position itself to “flourish in a rapidly changing and highly competitive world” (West, 1998, p. 43). Of all the reports there are only two, Hoare (1995) and Bradley (2008), which specifically identify internationalisation as a

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**Figure 2.2 Key Reforms to the Tertiary Sector as identified in Transforming Australia's Higher Education System (The Australian Government, 2009, p. 9)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real action for real participation—attainment, access and engagement</td>
<td>Enhance access to higher education through a major package designed to radically improve the participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds (low SES) in higher education, and enhance their learning experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Growing Higher Education Sector: promoting greater diversity and</td>
<td>Support increasing diversity and quality within the tertiary sector; phasing in a new system to allocate funding based on student demand; support for encouraging more students to choose teaching and nursing and to study overseas; and support for the renewal of student services and amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sustainable Tertiary Education Sector: providing certainty and</td>
<td>Providing funding certainty and creating a more sustainable higher education sector through higher indexation of teaching and learning grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Investment for Research: ending historic funding</td>
<td>Increasing funding for the full cost of university research, and enabling universities to strive for research excellence in areas of strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Australia’s Tertiary Education Infrastructure: a massive</td>
<td>A massive upgrade of university and TAFE infrastructure to meet the teaching and learning requirements of students, teachers, and researchers now and into the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Era of Quality in Australian Tertiary Education: establishing</td>
<td>Establishing the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), which will provide the foundation for enhancing quality and accreditation in higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Support for Students: landmark reforms to student income</td>
<td>Landmark reforms to student income support which will redirect assistance so that it reaches the most needy students to boost their higher education participation and attainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Fair Deal for Australia’s Regions: supporting regional tertiary</td>
<td>Supporting regional tertiary education provision with a review of regional funding; encouragement to explore new models of delivery and access to new structural adjustment funding for the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Tertiary Pathways: building stronger connectivity between</td>
<td>Building stronger connectivity between the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Relationship between Government and Educators: a relationship</td>
<td>A relationship built on mutual respect, trust, and agreed funding compacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
development that will significantly impact the higher education sector, whether through the development and delivery of education, adding to the diversity of university income, or the need to be internationally competitive. Internationalisation has become a significant part of the higher education landscape in Australia, to the extent that Commonwealth Government’s recent changes to student visa rules is predicted to have a wide reaching negative effect for the higher education sector (Lane, Healy, & Trounson, 2010; Smart, 2010; Trounson, 2010).

2.6 Summary
This chapter has provided a brief overview of what has been happening in higher education around the globe both domestically and internationally. In the higher education areas discussed, internationalisation has become a priority as regions and countries position themselves to become key players in what has become a global higher education market where international students provide significant income for the host countries.

Nationally, recounting the history of Australia’s higher education sector has identified that Australia is on the cusp of change. The Murray (1957), Martin (1964), Dawkins (1987), Hoare (1995) and Nelson (2003) reviews and reports, established and refined the current structure of the sector. The West Report (1998) was the first to consider that a student centred funding framework would be required for the sector to grow and address the future developments that were foreseen to fundamentally change the operating environment for higher education providers. The Nelson Report (2003) made recommendations that maintained the status quo. However, the Bradley Review’s (2008) recommendations and the government’s response to them, clearly shows a shift towards a more student centred funding framework.

By putting students clearly at the centre of its reforms, the [Commonwealth] Government has signalled its commitment to the expansion of a high quality university sector, to educate the graduates needed by an economy based on knowledge, skills and innovation. (Australian Government, 2009, p 5)

Investigating higher education activity around the globe has identified a very dynamic market place with each geographical region undergoing different processes to give their citizens the skills and knowledge to face the challenges of the future.

The movement of students to other countries for educational purposes has expanded the
higher education landscape for education organisations. Globalisation has reduced geographical distances, and with favourable financial and economic conditions, students have taken advantage of the mobility offered to study in other countries. Australia has benefited from this trend, however, the recent changes to the student visa rules places higher education providers in a challenging position. Their services are needed to skill the future workforce, but they also need the income from international students.

The mobility of students between countries to pursue higher education opportunities is only one of several modes available for the provision of education into the international market. This market has changed over the years as the cost of studying (both financially and emotionally) in another country has grown. Institutions across the globe are looking at transnational higher education as a way of delivering education to the ‘masses’. The next chapter therefore, looks at transnational higher education.
CHAPTER 3 TRANSNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION - THE EMERGENCE

3.1 Introduction

One of the aims of this research was to examine the emerging transnational higher education landscape. The first part of this examination has been described in the previous chapter through a discussion of the existing landscape of higher education around the globe by considering those areas which have an influence on the higher education marketplace in Australia. This was followed by a review of the current status of higher education in Australia. Although each area is in a ‘state of flux’ as they address quality, student numbers and policy; the overall global higher education landscape can be described as being dynamic.

The emergence of transnational higher education is assisting with the evolution of higher education. Although transnational higher education has been developing and expanding in various forms, advances in information communication technologies provide opportunities for providers of higher education to maximise student engagement from almost anywhere across the globe.

Therefore, this chapter will first define transnational higher education, and second, review the emergence of transnational higher education. The chapter also considers the stakeholders in this changing higher education landscape, and its communication medium.

3.2 Transnational Higher Education

Transnational higher education as a concept is not new and has several definitions. The Australian Commonwealth Government acknowledges that international engagement is important to Australian education, and has developed a framework known as
Chapter 3. Transnational Higher Education – The Emergence

‘Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS)’ to “protect and promote the quality of our education and training delivered in other countries” (Australian Government, 2005, p 1).

The definition of transnational education included in the document is as follows:

Australian transnational education and training, also known as offshore or cross-border education and training refers to the:

- marketing
- enrolment processes, and
- delivery and/or assessment

of programs/courses in a country other than Australia by an Australian-approved provider, where delivery includes a face-to-face component. The education and/or training activity may lead to an Australian qualification or may be a non-award course, but in either case an Australian-approved provider is associated with the education/training activity. (Australian Government, 2005)

The TQS document describes the framework agreed upon by the Australian Ministers of Education and Training. The various components of the document include goals, principles and key areas for action, benefits of the strategy and implementation of the strategy. This definition can be applied to the majority of private providers who deliver higher education in Australia and some of which deliver transnational courses.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)/Council of Europe “Code of Good Practice in the provision of Transnational Education” (2001), provides the following definition for transnational higher education:

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system. (UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001)

For the purposes of this research the UNESCO/Council of Europe definition of transnational higher education has been adopted because it provides a broader definition with the inclusion of distance education, which is the way in which many organisations deliver degree programs.

Of importance to this research is an understanding of the terminology used in relation to transnational higher education. While this thesis uses the term transnational higher education, in general, there are other closely related terms used in the international
literature that convey a similar concept such as: “Globalisation, borderless education, cross-border education, transnational education, virtual education, internationalisation ‘abroad’, internationalisation ‘at home’ ” (Knight, 2005, pp 3-4). These terms highlight the changes, complexity, confusion and evolution in terminology relating to international education over the past 15 years.

Particularly relevant to this research is globalisation, with the term according to Knight, emphasising “the idea of a worldwide flow of people, terminology, economy, ideas, knowledge, culture but did not focus on (but nor did it exclude) the relationships between countries” (Knight, 2005, pp 4-5). Knight, identifies four changes that have focused attention on the movement of education across borders:

1. an increased demand for tertiary education given the role of the knowledge society and economy;
2. the introduction of a market and trade approach to international education
3. a renewed emphasis on education mobility; and
4. advances in the use of information and communication technologies for delivery of education. (Knight, 2005, p 5)

### 3.2.1 Transnational Higher Education

Globalisation has opened up a world of opportunities for higher education. Transnational higher education is one of those emerging opportunities which higher education providers have embraced. Since the 1990s Australia, Britain and the USA have been actively participating in the delivery of programs in Europe and South East Asia (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007).

There are several ways providers deliver programs to non resident learners. McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) identify three: distance education, partner-supported delivery (twinning and franchising), and branch campus. Bjarnason (2004) and Naidoo (2008) identify similar ways of delivering the service, describing them according to the ‘Modes of Supplying Services’, identified in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) document. Knight (2003) identifies these modes in relation to the provision of higher education:

**Mode 1 - Cross-border supply** focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer or the service provider to physically move. Examples in higher education include distance education and e-learning.
**Mode 2 - Consumption Abroad** refers to the consumer moving to the country of the supplier which in education means students taking all or part of their education in another country.

**Mode 3 - Commercial Presence** involves a service provider establishing a commercial facility in another country to provide a service. Examples in higher education include branch campuses or franchising arrangements.

**Mode 4 - Presence of Natural Persons** means people travelling to another country on a temporary basis to provide a service, which in education would include professors or researchers. (p 3)

The modes identified as having particular relevance to transnational higher education are Mode 1 and Mode 3 (Bjarnason, 2004; Naidoo, 2008). Table 3.1 maps the Bjarnason (2004) and Naidoo (2008) classifications against those identified by McBurnie and Ziguras (2007).

*Table 3.1 Summary of Modes of Transnational Education Delivery*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mode 1 - Cross-Border Supply</td>
<td>Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Virtual/Distance Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode 3 - Commercial Presence</td>
<td>Partner Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Franchising</td>
<td>• Twinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Twinning Degrees</td>
<td>• Franchise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Program Articulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Branch Campus</td>
<td>Branch Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Corporate Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distance Learning (particularly where a local partner provides a level of support to students and a basis for commercial presence)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) list the more common forms of transnational delivery for Mode 3, with Bjarnason (2004) and Naidoo (2008) noting other less common forms of delivery for that same mode. However, each of these delivery types have been used with varying levels of success.

Bjarnason (2004) identifies the types of institutions which are active within the transnational landscape as using either Mode 1 or Mode 3 or a combination of both modes:

- Public education providers (those organisations funded from the public purse);
- Private, not-for-profit (organisations founded by social elite or religions - prevalent in USA);
• Private, for-profit (relatively recent and proliferating globally); and
• Corporate (generally offers only to employees, however have gained momentum primarily in the USA since late 1980 but extending globally). (Bjarnason, 2004, pp 150 - 152)

Quality and accreditation has increasingly come to the fore with the growth of transnational higher education. Jones (2001) highlights its importance:

Regardless of the ways in which education is delivered its quality assurance and maintenance of standards is of paramount concern among many national and international institutions, organisations and private sector companies and students. (Jones, 2001, p. 107)

Sanyal and Martin (2007) identify ten definitions for quality which include; providing excellence, providing value for money, and exhibiting fitness for purpose. More specifically quality in higher education focuses on one or more of the following; excellence, fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose, or enhancement for improvement (Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2004). Common to all these approaches to quality are the integration of four elements:

1. The guaranteed realization of minimal standards and benchmarks;
2. The capacity to set the objectives in a diversifying context and to achieve them with the given input and context variables;
3. The ability to satisfy the demands and expectations of direct and indirect consumers and stakeholders;

There are several mechanisms which are used to ensure quality and the maintaining of standards; Quality Audit, Quality Assessment/Review, and Accreditation (Sanyal & Martin, 2007).

A quality audit is “the process of reviewing an institution or a programme” (Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2004, p 22). The process concentrates on determining if the institution’s stated aims are being met.

A quality assessment is the “process of the systematic gathering, quantifying, and using of information in view of judging the instructional effectiveness and the curricular adequacy of a higher education institution as a whole or of its educational programmes” (Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2004, p 22). Sanyal and Martin (2007) indicate a
quality assessment leads to quality assurance and establishing confidence among the various stakeholders.

**Accreditation** is the result of an external body having assessed the provider and/or its programs, and found that they meet a set of pre-determined criteria or standards. Accreditation is the awarding of a quality label for a set period of time. Many programmes cannot be delivered if they do not have this accreditation label.

The securing of a quality label by a higher education institute provides:

- A point of differentiation between the institution and other providers;
- A guarantee that the degree a student receives is a quality one;
- The required standard a student needs to move into professional practice in employment or further higher education; and
- A way of attracting the best students. (Sanyal & Martin, 2007, p 6)

Of these the most important for a provider of higher education is accreditation.

### 3.2.2 Australian Perspective

Australia uses offshore, onshore and combined to classify the students studying transnationally with its higher education institutions. Offshore is where the students are attached to an Australian university campus outside of Australia; onshore where the students comes to Australia to study; and combined, where the student spends some time at an offshore campus and some of the time at an Australian campus. The student enrolment numbers for transnational higher education in Australia for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 are presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Students studying transnationally with Australian institutions (2005-2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shore</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2005 ⇒2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onshore</td>
<td>174,527</td>
<td>180,978</td>
<td>200,817</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offshore</td>
<td>63,827</td>
<td>68,423</td>
<td>71,003</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239,295</td>
<td>250,794</td>
<td>273,099</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: (Australian Education International, 2009)*

The figures presented in Table 3.2 indicate that in general there has been a steady increase in student numbers, with the majority of international students studying onshore. In 2007, 26.5% of students were studying transnationally either offshore or spending part of the time offshore. Of this 26.5%, 92.9% were enrolled as internal
students at an offshore campus, 4.6% were external (completing distance education) with the remaining 2.6% being multi-modal. Australian Education International (2009), does not identify the reason for the -8.2% negative growth for students studying both offshore and onshore. However, they do identify that there was a steady decline in students from Hong Kong, while student numbers from Singapore and Vietnam increased (Australian Education International, 2009). One explanation for the negative growth in combined programs could be due to the drop in the number of students from one country where the combination of offshore and onshore delivery was used.

3.3 The Institutions

This section along with the next identifies the main stakeholders in the transnational education landscape; the institutions and the students. While not the focus of the study, an understanding of the types of institutions is important as it is not just universities alone that deliver education transnationally, and the case study organisation was one of these ‘others’.

The higher education system in Australia does not classify providers of accredited higher degrees as public or private providers, although providers may be described in those terms. For the purposes of Commonwealth funding, the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Australian Government, 2003) uses three tables: Table A, Table B, and Table C to classify higher education providers who are eligible to receive Commonwealth grant funding, and/or offer financial assistance to students. The institutions listed in these Tables are Universities and Self-Accrediting Institutions (for more details refer Appendix A).

However, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) uses the following four categories to classify accredited higher education providers (MCEETYA, 2007):

1. **Australian University (self accrediting):** To operate as a university in Australia requires the institute to have been established by State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation. These organisations have the authority to accredit their own degree programs, e.g. University of the Sunshine Coast.

2. **Other Higher Education Institutes (self accrediting):** Those institutes that have been authorized by governmental accrediting authorities to self-accredit. It
is possible for a higher education institute to gain self accrediting status provided they meet the criteria set down by MCEETYA, e.g. Bond University.

3. **Non-Self Accrediting Higher Education Institutes:** These institutes must be authorized by the relevant jurisdiction (State or Territory); courses can only be accredited by the State or Territory jurisdiction. An organisation may not operate as a higher education institute without both registration and course accreditation, e.g. The Case Organisation.

4. **Overseas Higher Education Institutes:** These overseas institutes who have applied and passed through the same protocols under which Australian higher education institutes must pass and have been granted approval to operate by the relevant State or Territory jurisdiction, e.g. Carnegie Mellon University in Adelaide.

Furthermore, the Australian Qualification Framework Council Secretariat maintains the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF website ([www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)) provides details regarding higher education providers using the following classifications which are based on the MYCEETA classifications:

1. Australian Universities;
2. Self-accrediting Higher Education Providers authorised by government to accredit their own courses; and

As at 22 May 2010, there were 223 higher education providers identified on the AQF qualifications register. Some providers are registered in more than one State. The distribution and numbers of these providers registered in each State are presented in Figure 3.1. Non self-accrediting higher education providers are registered and accredited by the States.

The process for accreditation approval is outlined in the ‘Guidelines for the registration of non self-accrediting higher education institutions and the accreditation of their course/s’ (MCEETYA, 2007). This process of approval is the same for all non self-accrediting applicants whether they are setting up a campus or delivering by distance education, and takes into consideration any proposed offshore operations with those offshore campuses also requiring to meet and continue to meet the relevant Australian regulatory and reporting requirements (MCEETYA, 2007, p 6). This process could be
considered a quality assessment because it is the first step to ensuring the non self-accrediting institutions and their courses are of a high quality standard.

3.4 The Students

Globalisation has empowered individuals through the emergence and convergence of advanced technologies. This empowerment moves beyond work to include education. It is these empowered individuals, who are seeking to collaborate and compete globally, that form the cohort of students who will take advantage of opportunities available to study transnationally. This section will focus on these students, firstly through a consideration of what distinguishes transnational education to make it appealing; and second, identifying the characteristics of the students themselves.

The appeal

The characteristics that stand out as being appealing to distance education students are flexibility and location. Filcher and Miller (2000), indicate that “Distance education provides access to individuals in different geographical locations, individuals unable to
attend classes on campus, and individuals who prefer to control the timing and pace of their learning” (p 60).

The flexibility of being able to study ‘anytime and anywhere’ allows students to schedule their study around other commitments, such as work and family (Bunn, 2004; Qureshi, Morton, & Antosz, 2002; del Valle & Duffy, 2009). In particular, Bunn (2004) states “The ability to work while studying, thus simultaneously earning money and gaining relevant experience, was identified as an advantage of the distance program” (p 256). The constraints of work and family also often meant that students are unable to attend on campus, opting to study at home or other convenient places, thus reducing some of the time and financial constraints often associated with travelling to a campus (del Valle & Duffy, 2009).

The appeal of flexibility and location is also applicable to transnational education, which itself has been found to be appealing to students for the following additional reasons:

- To obtain an international education; and
- The perceived quality of an international course and/or reputation of the provider.

In a study of international education in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore, Chapman and Pyvis (2006) found that students perceived that an international education “signified quality and status, would provide international exposure and outlook, was an investment in career advancement, and was a means of personal growth and development” (2006, p 236). The perception is that the quality of an international education will be higher than studying locally (Chapman & Pyvis, 2006). It was also found that an “international education was an important investment in securing qualifications that could be used overseas” (p 237).

**The student population**

Research into the characteristics of students who undertake distance education identified that they are older, more mature, have more life experience and are generally juggling work and/or family commitments (Filcher & Miller, 2000; Qureshi, Morton, & Antosz, 2002; del Valle & Duffy, 2009) than the traditional student demographic of 18 – 22 years of age, studying full-time on-campus. However, given the accessibility of
transnational education through globalisation and the recent focus on encouraging lifelong learning, the prospective student population for transnational education would be expected to include anyone with the desire to learn and have the finances to pay.

While the student is the focus of this study, the introduction to this major stakeholder in the transnational education landscape has been brief due to the research methodology chosen. The Grounded Theory methodology asks that the researcher delay delving into the literature until the theory begins to emerge to ensure that the analysis of the data is not contaminated by concepts previously identified in the literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 37). Once the theory emerges then a comparison of similarities and differences with the existing relevant literature can be conducted.

3.5 The Technology

From the humble beginnings of the correspondence course the advances in information technology have changed the way distance education is delivered to students.

Rumble (2001) provides a succinct technological history of distance education:

- 1st wave/generation – correspondence 1840s – 2000s;
- 2nd wave/generation – broadcasting (radio & television) 1940 - 1960s;
- 3rd wave/generation – multimedia (mix of text, video, audio technologies) 1960s - 2000s; and
- 4th wave/generation – online or virtual education systems 1980s - 2000s. (p 32)

Through general reading of research literature and case studies it is possible to introduce two new waves/generations following Rumble’s:

- 5th wave/generation – mobile and social networking 2000s; and
- 6th wave/generation – virtual and augmented reality 2000s.

Many of these generations are active simultaneously (refer Figure 3.2). Thompson (2007) indicates that within a global education context all waves are still active, though in many cases the earlier waves fall out of favour as the later waves reach saturation.
Although correspondence education (1st wave) may be considered ancient, Rumble (2001) identifies it as still “the basis for much of distance education” and posits that the introduction of electronic mail would “change it beyond recognition” (p 32).

The use of broadcasting (2nd wave) to support remote classes and individuals gave way to the 3rd wave of multimedia as new audio and video technologies enabled the same materials to be delivered to students and classrooms, which could then be viewed at a time convenient to the individual or class.

Through convergence, the 3rd wave of multimedia is nearing its end as the video and audio elements become embedded in the next wave. The 4th wave of online or virtual learning environments introduced the online Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Course Management Systems found in products such as WebCT, Blackboard and Moodle. These provide a convenient central place for students to access their course materials. As these systems evolved, they were able to provide not only hypertext links to text materials, but also audio, video, discussion boards, podcasts and webcasts. This evolution from asynchronous communication to include synchronous communication provided greater opportunities for teacher and students to meet each other despite their geographic distances.

The mobile and virtual reality waves (5th and 6th waves) are in their infancy together with Smartphones, Tablet PCs and virtual applications such as SecondLife. These new waves provide avenues for educationalists to engage with a new type of student, one
that is engaging socially through these technologies on an ever increasing scale.

Despite the technologies that are now available to assist students and educators, connectivity is still an issue for much of the world (in particular Latin America, Middle East, Asia and Africa) as Internet penetration rates are below 40% of the population (refer Figure 3.3). Security, consistency of connection, and speed are still to be overcome in some countries before the promise technology holds for education and transnational education can be delivered.

**Figure 3.3 World Internet Penetration Rates (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2011)**

### 3.6 Conclusion

One of the stated aims of this study is to examine the emerging transnational higher education landscape to orientate the reader into this landscape; this has occurred in Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two concentrated on what was happening in the higher education landscape both domestically and internationally (around the globe), identifying a dynamic marketplace which is facing the challenge of ensuring all citizens have access to the skills and knowledge to face the challenges of the future.
Chapter three examined transnational higher education. Transnational higher education is not a new concept but is assuming a greater role as a mode of delivery for education. First, the chapter defined transnational education and established the definition used by the UNESCO/Council of Europe would be used for this research:

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system. (UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001)

It is generally delivered as a crossborder supply (virtual/distance) or commercial presence (franchise, twinning programs, branch campus, program articulation, corporate programs) by an of educational organisation (public, private not for profit, private for profit, corporate). This breadth and variety of delivery modes and providers identifies the importance and need for quality and accreditation (Jones, 2001, p 107).

In Australia any higher education institution, providing they are registered and accredited, can operate in the transnational higher education landscape. The self-accrediting bodies (in general, universities) are the main providers in this landscape. The growth and recognition of non-self accrediting higher education providers (e.g. private providers) by government increases the number of providers who can engage successfully in the transnational higher education landscape.

For students the appeal of transnational higher education is the same as that of distance education. The flexibility of being able to study ‘anytime and anywhere’ is combined with the distinctly transnational characteristics of obtaining an international education and the perceived quality of the course and or institution. The type of student who typically studies transnationally has also changed. In past decades it was the non-traditional student (mature aged and working) who undertook distance education. However, given the accessibility of transnational education, the prospective student population for transnational higher education would be expected to include students of all ages and backgrounds.

A brief review of the general transformation of education due to educational technology identified that the current and emerging technologies delivered by the Internet provide
important opportunities for educators to attract students from all over the world. The emergence of transnational higher education has the potential to redefine the educational landscape in several ways:

- non-self accrediting higher education providers can become more actively engage globally in the higher education landscape;
- students of all ages and backgrounds who are keen to make a difference in their own lives, communities and countries can engage in higher education through the flexibility of being able to study anytime and anywhere; and
- institutions can respond globally to the increased demand for education. Done well, this provision will add to the institution’s reputation for quality, provide increased income from non-governmental sources, and add to the country’s economy.

The potential for transnational higher education to redefine the education landscape raises the need to better understand the students who engage with education providers who deliver programs through transnational higher education. The second aim of the study sought to begin the process of understanding the students who are the key stakeholders in a changing education landscape. The rest of this thesis focuses on the research conducted to address that aim. The next chapter turns to the design of the research project which aims to discover and conceptualise transnational higher education from the students’ perspective.
CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Globalisation, with its emerging educational technologies, is providing increasing opportunities for students to be able to study anytime and anywhere. The discussion in the previous chapter, concerning transnational higher education, demonstrated how globalisation and technology is changing the face of the higher education landscape. In particular, the chapter noted the stakeholder population of students and organisations, and the variety of communication mediums students engage with in their learning by completing higher education graduate programs across the world.

This chapter is concerned with the research design and methodology of the study. First, it will consider the research aim and the research approach; second, it will consider how the theoretical perspectives of the researcher will provide a foundation for the research to be undertaken; and third, it will discuss the ethical considerations that relate to the study.

4.2 Research Design

Two aims were identified for this study. The first, examining the emerging transnational higher education landscape, has been presented in Chapters Two and Three.

Chapters Four, Five and Six are dedicated to reporting the study undertaken to achieve the second aim, to examine student perspectives on transnational higher education where information technology is used as the sole medium for all communications and learning. As identified in section 1.3 there was no explicit theory available to base the
study around and that a theory of student perspectives on transnational higher education would be developed from this study.

To achieve this aim the chosen research design needed to:

- engage participants that reside overseas in countries different to that of the researcher;
- work with any type of data;
- facilitate the development of a theory that conceptualizes transnational higher education from the student perspective; and
- provide a set of systematic procedures to guide the process.

The research designs of Ethnography, Mixed Methods, Phenomenography and Grounded Theory were considered as being possible research approaches that could achieve the second aim of this research.

*Ethnography* reports on ‘social life’ (Babbie, 2007) by describing the cultural norms, perspectives, characteristics and patterns of social life (Richards & Morse, 2007). The collection of data involves active and prolonged engagement in the research setting (Barbour, 2008, p 92). Ethnography concentrates on description rather than theory development. The feasibility and financial factors of prolonged engagement with the participants, that is implicit in the enactment of an ethnographic study, proved to be non-viable for this study.

*A mixed methods* research design is one that combines data collection and/or analysis methods to provide enhanced coverage of the research topic to overcome any perceived shortcomings from using a single stand-alone method (Barbour, 2008, p 152). A mixed methods research design is generally considered to be the combining of quantitative data collection and analysis, and qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2005, p 510). It can also be used to combine two qualitative or two quantitative research methods (Richards & Morse, 2007, p 93). Mixed methods is able to address the majority of the study’s requirements (engage overseas participants, work with any type of data and provide procedures to guide the process) and it can facilitate the development of theory; mixed methods is primarily used when “combining quantitative and qualitative data to best understand and explain a research problem” (Creswell, 2005, p 52). This current research intends to collect quantitative data, however it would not be scrutinized from a measurement perspective. Rather, it would be used to identify general themes
which were used to inform the interviews that were conducted. Both forms of data were used to develop a theory.

Phenomenography is defined as “a research approach designed to answer certain questions about thinking and learning, … particularly mapping the different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects … of the world around them” (Marton, 1986, pp 28, 31). Its purpose is to uncover the understandings people have concerning a particular phenomena, and then organise these understandings into categories which make statements regarding peoples’ conceptions of the world (Marton, 1986). The aim of the research study is to conceptualise students’ perceptions and not categorise peoples’ understandings. On this basis phenomenography was not a suitable research design for this study.

The final methodology explored for adoption for this study was Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is a research design that produces an “ever opening and evolving theory on a subject” (Glaser, 1978, p ix). It was chosen as the research design for this project as it fulfilled the criteria identified earlier; that is, to engage overseas participants, work with any type of data, facilitate the development of theory, and provide systematic procedures. Grounded Theory provides a set of systematic procedures (Creswell, 2005, p 396) to guide the research process, and is able to accommodate any form of data. Grounded Theory can use any form of data, meaning that survey questionnaires and email communications can be used to engage participants that reside overseas in countries different to the researcher. Finally, Grounded Theory facilitates the development of a theory that would conceptualise transnational higher education from the student perspective.

Creswell (2005) indicates that the primary use for Grounded Theory is to “explore common experiences of individuals to develop a theory” (Creswell, 2005, p 52) while the primary use for mixed methods is the “combining quantitative and qualitative data to best understand and explain a research problem” (p 52). Therefore, Grounded Theory was chosen because the aim of the research was to examine student perspectives on transnational higher education.

4.3 Grounded Theory Variants

The intriguing thing about Grounded Theory is the number of variants that are available for researchers to use. A disturbing aspect however is that many researchers do not
really understand the Grounded Theory methodology, as evidenced by Suddaby (2006) in an article for the Academy of Management Journal (AMJ):

I was not particularly surprised to observe that most of the articles identified as “interesting research” in a recent AMJ survey were the product of qualitative methods (Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland, 2006). New discoveries are always the result of high-risk expeditions into unknown territory. Darwin, Columbus, and Freud, each in different ways, were conducting qualitative inquiries. I am continually surprised, however, by the profound misunderstanding of what constitutes qualitative research. Such confusion is most apparent when authors claim to be using “grounded theory.”

In the manuscripts I review for AMJ I have seen the term “grounded theory” used to describe analysis via correlations, word counts, and pure introspection. I am not suggesting that these techniques cannot be used in a grounded theory study. But I note, with some concern, that “grounded theory” is often used as rhetorical sleight of hand by authors who are unfamiliar with qualitative research and who wish to avoid close description or illumination of their methods. More disturbing, perhaps, is that it becomes apparent, when one pushes them to describe their methods, that many authors hold some serious misconceptions about grounded theory. (p 633)

Having decided to use Grounded Theory as the research design it was decided that it would be appropriate for the researcher to conduct a critical analysis of its major variants (Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist). Doing so would clarify the intrigue through an understanding of the conceptual differences between each of the variants and ensure that the researcher understood the systematic procedures provided by Grounded Theory to guide the research process.

This section examines Grounded Theory by considering its history and development, and concludes with a discussion identifying which variant would provide the most appropriate systematic procedures that would be used to guide the research process. Going against the established referencing convention, the book titles are italicised in this section for two reasons: to provide an easier way to distinguish between publications by the same author/s and for general readability (see the Reference List for the full bibliographic data for the publications listed). Below is a list of the specific books and their authors which are referred to in this section.

- Glaser & Strauss (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research
- Glaser (1978) Theoretical Sensitivity
- Strauss (1987) Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists
In 1967, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* was written to begin the process of closing “the gap between theory and empirical research [by] improving social scientists’ capacity for generating theory that will be relevant to their research” (p vii). So began the journey to raise the profile of generating theory in a research world which at the time, was dominated by scientific research, i.e. the process of testing and verifying theory through empirical research.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) claim that the book is a “beginning formulation of some of the process of research for generating theory” (p 2), through the use of comparative analysis. Grounded Theory is “based on the systematic generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser, 1978, p 2). Strauss and Corbin (1990) define Grounded Theory as “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p 24). A more recent publication defines Grounded Theory as a set of “systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data to build middle range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data” (Charmaz, 2006, p 509). The task for the researcher is to “discover and conceptualize the essence of specific interactional processes” (Hutchinson, 1986, p 51) and the resulting theory or framework to “provide a way of understanding the social situations from which the theory was generated” (p 51).

*The Discovery of Grounded Theory* was followed by *Theoretical Sensitivity* by Glaser (1978) and *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientist* by Strauss (1987), which further describe and clarify the Grounded Theory process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe their book *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* as the fourth in the series of books about Grounded Theory. It was at this time that Glaser and Strauss separated and two variants of Grounded Theory emerged. Glaserian, Classic, Emergent, Traditional and Orthodox are all used to label the Glaser variant of Grounded Theory, whilst the Strauss variant is known as Straussian, Systematic Design and Evolved (Creswell, 2005; Fernandez, 2005; Gregory & Jones, 2009; McCann & Clark, 2003; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006; Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004).
4.3.1 Glaserian Grounded Theory

Glaser holds strongly to the process for developing theory as described in The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Theoretical Sensitivity was written as a supplement and an update to The Discovery of Grounded Theory detailing what was new to the process.

The Discovery of Grounded Theory describes a four stage approach to the Constant Comparative Method of analysis used in Grounded Theory:

Stage 1: Comparing incident to category.
Stage 2: Integrating categories and their properties.
Stage 3: Delimiting the theory.
Stage 4: Writing the theory. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 105)

This approach has been modified in Glaser’s Theoretical Sensitivity. Stages 1, 2 and 3 become Substantive Coding which is divided into Open Coding (Stages 1 and 2) and Selective Coding (Stage 3). An extra form of coding, Theoretical Coding, was introduced in Theoretical Sensitivity and deals with “the theoretical relating of substantive codes, and how to ground these theoretical relations as the codes are grounded” (Glaser, 1978, p 17). Table 4.1 provides a comparative view of these changes.

Table 4.1 Changes in coding between Discovery (1967) and Theoretical Sensitivity (1978)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery (1967)</th>
<th>Theoretical Sensitivity (1978)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing incident to category</td>
<td>Substantiative Coding – Open Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating categories and their properties</td>
<td>Substantiative Coding – Selective Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimiting the theory</td>
<td>Theoretical Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the theory</td>
<td>Writing the theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Substantive Coding “conceptualize[s] the empirical substance of the areas of research” (Glaser, 1978, p 55). The process begins with Open Coding “which is coding the data in everyway possible” or “running the data open” (p 56). Using line by line analysis, the analyst assigns all the codes that can be identified relating to the data. Glaser identifies several rules which govern Open Coding and “tend to insure its proper use and success” (pp 57 - 60):

1. Ask a set of questions of the data which must be kept in mind from the start:
   - What is this data a study of?
   - What category does this incident indicate?
   - What is actually happening in the data?
2. Analyze the data line by line, constantly coding each sentence.
3. The analyst must do his own coding.
4. Always interrupt coding to memo ideas.
5. Stay within the confines of his substantive area and the field of study.
6. The analyst should not assume the analytic relevance of any face sheet variable such as age, sex, social class, race, skin color, etc., until it emerges as relevant. (pp 57-60)

Selective Coding is the process of coding for a “core variable” (p 61) or core category, such as a basic social process or condition. After identifying the core variable the analyst begins to delimit the theory around the core with other categories being demoted to “a role subservient to the variable under focus” (p 61), and only to “variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory” (p 61).

Theoretical Codes “weave the fractured story back together again” (p 72). They describe “the world to us theoretically and can span all current perspectives depending on how they are chosen and combined” (p 72). Glaser, in *Theoretical Sensitivity*, initially identifies 18 coding families (see Appendix B) which could be used as a guide for thinking theoretically about the codes and phenomenon. However, later work identified additional families (Glaser, 1998) (see Appendix B), where the analyst is free to choose one of the families listed or use their own coding family.

### 4.3.2 Straussian Grounded Theory

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the purpose of *Basics of Qualitative Research* was to answer all the ‘How do I …’ questions that had been posed to the authors regarding the processes of analysing data qualitatively (p 7). The ‘analytic mode’ described involves three major phases of coding: Open Coding, Axial Coding, and Selective Coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress the importance of asking questions all the time when analysing the data.

Open Coding is the “process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (p 61). The breaking down of the data allows the analyst to make comparisons, begin to name the concepts and categories, write notes (called memos), and ask questions. These questions (why, what, how, etc) are related to what is being observed in the data.

Axial Coding is “a set of procedures whereby data is put back together in new ways, after open coding, by making connections between categories” (p 96). During this phase
the focus is on identifying the conditions that relate to a category, specifically, the context, the action/interactional strategies and consequences of the strategies. These are referred to as subcategories. Categories and subcategories are linked through the use of the ‘paradigm model’ and a tool called ‘the conditional matrix’. The model has been designed to assist analysts to think “systematically about the data and relate them in very complex ways” (p 99). Having made the relationships between categories and subcategories Strauss and Corbin (p 108) recommend that the analyst return to the data, looking for verification to support or refute the questions that arose during the process of coding. It is posited that this verification process will “add variation and depth of understanding” (p 109).

Selective Coding is the “process of selecting a core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (p 117). It is not dissimilar to Axial Coding however it is conducted at a more abstract level. The analyst needs to accomplish several steps in this phase. These steps are:

- Explicating the story line,
- Relating subsidiary categories around the core category,
- Relating categories at the dimensional level,
- Validating those relationships against the data, and
- Filling in categories that may need further refinement or development. (pp 117-118)

### 4.3.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory

Forty years after the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, one of the second generation Grounded Theorists, Kathy Charmaz, published a book “Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide to qualitative analysis” (2006), which has been identified as the third major variant of Grounded Theory. Charmaz identifies that Grounded Theory has at least two main phases: Initial Coding and Focused Coding (Charmaz, 2006, p 46).

Initial Coding is similar to Strauss and Corbin’s, and Glaser’s ‘Open Coding’. It involves “naming each word, line, or segment of data” (p 46), to mine for “analytic ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis” (p 46). During this phase the goal of the analyst is to “remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (p 46).

As with Glaser, Charmaz (2006) identifies some questions the analyst should be asking:
• What is the data a study of?
• What does the data suggest? Pronounce?
• From whose point of view?
• What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate?

(p 47)

In addition to the above questions Charmaz (2006) identifies a set of guidelines for coding:

• Remain open;
• Stay close to the data;
• Keep your codes simple and precise;
• Construct short codes;
• Preserve actions;
• Compare data with data; and
• Move quickly through the data. (p 49)

During the Focused Coding phase codes are “more directed, selective and conceptual” (p 57), permitting “you to separate, sort and synthesize large amounts of data” (p 11) with the goal of “determining the adequacy of these codes” (p 57). Focused codes “account for most of the data and categorizes them most precisely” (p 516). This stage allows the analyst to “create and try out categories for capturing data” (p 509).

Charmaz (2006) also introduces two other forms of coding which may be useful during the Focused Coding phase. The first is Axial Coding, the second Theoretical Coding. The process of Axial Coding, as identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is a formal process for developing categories and subcategories then linking them together. Although Charmaz, herself, does not follow the formal procedures identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990), she does develop categories and subcategories, and identifies how they link together. According to Charmaz (2006), the codes identified during Theoretical Coding “specify possible relationships between categories you have developed in your focused coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p 63). These codes are “integrative lending form to the focused codes that have been collected” (p 63). Throughout her discussion about this stage Charmaz constantly refers to Glaser’s theoretical coding stage.

To summarise, the coding stages, identified by the three main variants available to researchers, are similar. Each has a form of initial coding which breaks down the data, a second stage which begins to rebuild the data in a more abstract form, with only Glaser and Strauss and Corbin having a final stage aimed at consolidating the theory. Figure
4.1 provides a comparative summary of the coding stages for the three variants discussed. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glaserian</th>
<th>Straussian</th>
<th>Constructivist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantive Coding – Open.</strong> Fracture data into analytical pieces which can be raised to conceptual level &amp; identify core category.</td>
<td><strong>Open Coding</strong> Generate categories and their properties seeking to determine how categories vary dimensionally</td>
<td><strong>Initial Coding</strong> Study fragments of data – words, lines, segment, and incidents – closely for their analytic import.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical Coding</strong> Conceptualise how substantive codes relate to each other. Weave the fractured back together to achieve theoretical completeness. (often done at same time as Selective Coding)</td>
<td><strong>Axial Coding</strong> Categories are systematically developed and linked with subcategories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selective Coding</strong> Process of integrating and refining categories</td>
<td><strong>Coding for Process</strong> Purposefully looking at action/interaction and noting movement, sequence and change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write about Research</td>
<td>Write about Research</td>
<td>Write about Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.1 Grounded Theory: Comparative Summary of Coding Stages of the Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist variants.*

There is more to Grounded Theory than just the coding stages. The concepts of theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity and the place of the literature review together with the criteria for judging the worthiness of the theory also and the debates of Qualitative Data Analysis versus Grounded Theory, and emergence versus forcing all needed to be considered before a variant was chose to follow for the study presented in this thesis.

### 4.4 Grounded Theory Concepts

Vital to Grounded Theory, regardless of the variants, are the concepts of theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity, literature reviews and the criteria for judging the worthiness of the theory that emerged from the data.

#### 4.4.1 Theoretical sampling and saturation

After the first stage of coding has begun, the analyst will begin to see gaps, some categories/concepts will have a lot of support in the data and others may not. Theoretical sampling allows the analyst to go back into the field to collect more data, concentrating on categories of interest that are relevant to the emerging theory.
Strauss and Corbin (1990), describe theoretical sampling as “sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory” (p 176) with the aim being “to sample events, incidents, and so forth, that are indicative of categories, theory properties, and dimension, so that you can develop and conceptually relate them” (p 177). The description by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is similar, and Charmaz defines the process as “seeing and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory” (Charmaz, 2006, p 96).

Data collection continues until saturation is achieved (Charmaz, 2006, p 113; Glaser, 1978, p 36; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 70; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p 188). The concept of saturation is not related to sample size: (sample size is a central concept in statistical research design in that the larger the sample size the more significant the findings will be). The conceptual density of a Grounded Theory is based on the saturation of the categories. Saturation means “that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 61). Saturation occurs “when in coding and analyzing both no new properties emerge and the same properties continually emerge” (Glaser, 1978, p 53). The three criteria for determining saturation “a combination of the empirical limits of the data, the integration and density of the theory and the analyst’s theoretical sensitivity” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 62).

4.4.2 Theoretical Sensitivity
Each researcher brings to a Grounded Theory research project a body of knowledge gained through the literature and professional and personal experience, thus creating a sensitivity or closeness to the research. This theoretical sensitivity in the area of research will help the analyst to “conceptualize and formulate a theory as it emerges” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 46). Glaser encourages the researcher to enter the research setting with as few pre-determined ideas as possible (Glaser, 1978, p 3), in essence, being open minded, putting aside any pet theories (p 28) and waiting to see what emerges from the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) also acknowledge the previous knowledge a researcher brings to a project, and offer some strategies that an analyst can use to maintain the “balance between creativity and science” (p 45). Charmaz (2006) contains very little about theoretical sensitivity, only in the sense of what it means to theorize. To Charmaz theorizing involves “seeing possibilities; establishing connections, and asking
4.4.3 Literature Review
Closely related to theoretical sensitivity is the place of the literature review within a Grounded Theory study. Glaser (1992), in asking the analyst to put aside their pet theories and wait to see what emerges from the data, identifies a place for the literature during the final stages of coding, “especially during sorting and then writing, the researcher-analyst by constant comparison reconciles differences, shows similarities in concepts and patterns, and imbues his work with the data and concepts in the literature” (p 33). In later writings Glaser and Holton (2004) identify that literature can be employed as another form of data to integrate into the Constant Comparative Method analysis only after the “core categories, its properties and sub categories have been identified and the conceptual development is well under way” (para 46). Similarly Strauss and Corbin (1990) state “after a category has emerged as pertinent that we might want to go back to the technical literature to determine if this category is there and if so what other researchers have said about it” (p 50). It is difficult to identify in Strauss and Corbin’s writings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) a specific point when the literature can be employed. Their advice to researchers is by way of a warning: “the important point for the research is to remember that the literature can hinder creativity if it is allowed to stand between the researcher and the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p 42; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p 53) with its use being accepted in all aspects of the research project from research design through to write up.

Charmaz (2006) also does not provide explicit guidelines relating to the literature. A hint is given in the placement of the topic in her writing where there is a discussion about the literature and its place in the theory, in the chapter entitled ‘Writing the Draft’ (p 163) implying a preference that the literature be consulted after the analysis has been completed.

4.4.4 Criteria for judging the theory
All three major Grounded Theory variants judge the worthiness of the theory in different ways. Charmaz (2006) identifies the importance of disciplinary standards of conduct and acceptability of evidence, and lists some guiding questions which will give researchers ideas about the expectations of those judging the usefulness of the method and final product (p 182). These guiding questions have been grouped under the criteria of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. In summarizing the connections
between the criteria, Charmaz (2006) states; “a strong combination of originality and credibility increase resonance, usefulness and the subsequent value of the contribution” (p 183).

Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p 253) supplement the established criteria of validity, reliability, credibility and value with additional guiding questions or criteria specifically related to theory building research. The criteria are:

1. How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?
2. What major categories emerged?
3. What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?
4. On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?
5. What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e. among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?
6. Were there instances in which hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data? How were these discrepancies accounted for? Were hypotheses modified?
7. How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, and was it difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made? (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p 269)

Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify that a theory should provide clear categories and hypotheses that can be used for verification in present and future studies. To achieve this, the theory must “fit the situation being researched and work when put into use” (p 3). Glaser and Strauss identify three criteria: fit, relevance, and work. Glaser (1978), reiterates the importance of these criteria as well as adding another criterion of modifiability.

- **Fit** - is when the categories fit the data;
- **Work** - should explain, predict and interpret what is happening in the area of inquiry;
- **Relevance** - the need for theory and categories to be relevant to the action that happens;
- **Modifiability** - the theory must be easy to modify as new data is gathered and analysed the theory may change to maintain its ability to work in the area.
4.4.5 The Debates

Having considered the coding stages of the three major variants and the concepts of theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity, literature reviews and the criteria for judging the worthiness of the theory that emerges from the data, there remains two more things to consider to ensure that the researcher really understands Grounded Theory methodology. These things are covered in two debates, to use the term loosely. The separation of Glaser and Strauss and the subsequent development of the Straussian and Constructivist variants sparked these debates. The debates are around the topics of:

1. Qualitative Data Analysis and Grounded Theory
2. Emergence and Forcing

Addressing these debates will not affect the researcher’s ability to undertake research, however, it will provide a greater understanding of what Grounded Theory is (or is not).

Qualitative Data Analysis and Grounded Theory

Strauss, Corbin and Charmaz have not entered into this one sided debate because the fierce defence of Grounded Theory, instigated by Glaser, was directed primarily at the work of Strauss and Corbin and expanded to include Charmaz. Glaser contends that the process described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) “distorts and misconceives grounded theory” (Glaser, 1992, p 2). Glaser (1992) explains to researchers how the methodology described by Strauss and Corbin was not Grounded Theory but a “forced, full conceptual description” (p 5) or Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA).

It is relevant to include some background about qualitative research before looking closer at the QDA / Grounded Theory debate. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, pp 3-5) briefly describe seven historical moments of qualitative research which, “crossects disciplines, fields and subject matters” (p 3). Because of this complex history qualitative research has had multiple definitions. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) offer an initial generic definition:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. … At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (pp 4-5)
Taylor and Bogdan (1998) offer their perspective of what qualitative research is:

1. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meanings people attached to things in their lives;
2. Qualitative research is inductive;
3. In qualitative methodology the research looks at settings and people holistically; people, settings, or groups are not reduced to variables, but are viewed as a whole;
4. Qualitative researchers are concerned with how people think and act in their everyday lives;
5. For the qualitative researcher, all perspectives are worthy of study;
6. Qualitative researchers emphasize the meaningfulness of their research;
7. For the qualitative researcher, there is something to be learned in all settings and groups; and
8. Qualitative research is a craft. (pp 7-10)

The above definitions provide a broad picture of qualitative research. Teschs’ (1990) graphical overview (Figure 4.2) lists 27 different qualitative research types providing an overview of the number of research types available to qualitative researchers.

In the two decades since this list was compiled it may have grown with the addition of new research types. For the qualitative researcher, the landscape of qualitative research is broad, varied, and undefined allowing the researcher great flexibility. In perceiving qualitative research as a craft, Taylor and Bogdan (1998), view the researcher as a craftsperson, “The qualitative social scientist is encouraged to be his or own methodologist. There are guidelines to be followed, but never rules. The methods serve the researcher; never is the researcher a slave to procedure and technique” (p 10).

Similarly the ‘Bricoleur’ described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003), has the same flexibility to pick and choose, “The qualitative researcher as bricoleur or maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials are at hand” (p 6).

Miles and Huberman (1994, p 245), identify 13 tactics or tools that the qualitative researcher has available to them for generating meaning from qualitative data and for testing or confirming findings for validity (Table 4.2).
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Figure 4.2 Qualitative Research Types, adapted from Tesch (1990, pp 72-73).

Table 4.2 Tactics for generating meaning and testing findings as listed in Miles and Huberman (1994, p 245-246 & 263)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13 Tactics for generating meaning (Miles &amp; Huberman, p. 245-246)</th>
<th>13 Tactics for testing findings for validity. (Miles &amp; Huberman, p. 263)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(They are listed in order of descriptive and concrete to explanatory, conceptual and abstract.)</td>
<td>(Beginning with ensuring basic quality of data moving to tactics that take a skeptical approach to emerging explanations.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Noting patterns, themes</td>
<td>1. Checking for representativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seeing plausibility</td>
<td>2. Checking for research effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clustering</td>
<td>3. Triangulating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making metaphors</td>
<td>4. Weighting the evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Counting</td>
<td>5. Check the meaning of outliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Partitioning variables</td>
<td>7. Following up surprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Subsuming particulars into the general</td>
<td>8. Looking for negative evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Factoring</td>
<td>9. Making if then tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Noting relations between variables</td>
<td>10. Ruling out spurious relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Finding intervening variables</td>
<td>11. Replicating a finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The debate between QDA and Grounded Theory sparked by Glaser relates particularly to the qualitative researcher and particularly those researchers who pick and choose the tools that suit their research without considering the impact of this choice on other methodologies. Glaser has produced several publications pointing out that Grounded Theory and QDA are different (Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2004). His argument revolves around flexibility that enables qualitative researchers to choose methods that suit them and their research. This does not present a problem for Glaser; however, the using of Grounded Theory terminology, and not having followed the process properly clearly is. Glaser views this as eroding the “Grounded Theory goal of conceptual theory” (Glaser & Holton, 2004, para 5) as argued by Suddaby (2006):

But I note, with some concern, that “grounded theory” is often used as rhetorical slight of hand by authors who are unfamiliar with qualitative research and who wish to avoid close description or illumination of their methods. More disturbing, perhaps, is that it becomes apparent, when one pushes them to describe their methods, that many authors hold some serious misconceptions about grounded theory. (p 633)

This essay was motivated by a recurring problem in manuscripts I see, in which researchers claim to have performed grounded theory research, support their claims with a cursory citations to Glaser and Strauss (1967), and then offer little, if any, description of their methodology. If a revision is granted and the authors are pushed to reveal how the data were collected and analyzed, it becomes clear that the term “grounded theory” was interpreted to mean “anything goes”. (p 640)

Understanding the differences between QDA and Grounded Theory helps the researcher to assess if the research they designed is really Grounded Theory. If so, it then follows that the procedures they follow to achieve the aims of their research, must match without deviation those described by one of the variants.

**Emergence and Forcing**

Glaser describes theory produced using the Straussian variant as having been forced opposed to the emergent nature of the process identified and described in Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Glaser (1978).

The previous discussion about the respective coding stages of the Glaserian and Straussian variants identified that they are similar, however Walker and Myrick (2006, p 550) go on to identify it is in the ‘how of doing’ that significant differences emerge. Regarding the Straussian variant they report:
they [Strauss and Corbin] have taken what would appear to be a laissez-faire perspective when compared to Glaser, who has made constant comparison central within his analytic coding. Strauss and Corbin seem to have subsumed these basic procedures under the methods and techniques they advance. In a sense, they would appear to have elevated their use of tools, paradigms and matrices to a place above the constant comparative method. (p 551)

It is the use of those tools, paradigms and matrices that Glaser see as producing “forced, preconceived, full conceptual description” (Glaser, 1992, p 3) not theory grounded in the data. Glaser defines conceptual description as having the “purpose of describing the full range of behavior of what is occurring in the substantiate area irrespective of relevance and accounting for variation in behavior” (p 19). Of particular concern to Glaser were the use of the questioning techniques, the paradigm and the conditional matrix.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) use questioning as a way to “open up the data: think about potential categories, their properties and dimension” (p 77), with the aim of guiding the researcher in future data collection. The basic questions they suggest are who, when, where, what, how, how much and why. Glaser (1992) advocates the use of neutral questioning by asking:

- What is this a study of?
- What category or what property of what category does this incident indicate?
- What is actually happening in the data?
- What is the basic social psychological process or social structural process that processes the main problems that makes life viable in the action scene?

(pp 51-54)

The questions put forward by Strauss and Corbin (1990) are seen by Glaser as ‘preconceiving’ or forming ideas in advance. Asking these questions before the relevance of the categories has emerged from the data leads the researcher to “descriptions with no notion of the relevance to the subject involved and to a grounded theory about the main concern of the participants and the Basic Social Process that processes it” (Glaser, 1992, p 52).

The paradigm model is used in the Axial Coding stage as a way of relating subcategories to their categories. Strauss and Corbin (1990), indicate that use of the model will enable the researcher to “think systematically about the data and relate them
in complex ways” (1990, p 99). The model, highly simplified looks like:

(A) CAUSAL CONDITIONS → (B) PHENOMENON →
(C) CONTEXT → (D) INTERVENING CONDITIONS →
(E) ACTION/INTERACTION STRATEGIES → (F) CONSEQUENCES. (p 99)

However, Glaser (1992) argues that use of this model would be “preconception and forcing theoretical coding concepts on data to the max” (p 63). He goes on to indicate that a “grounded theorist simply codes for categories and properties and lets whatever theoretical codes emerge where they may” (p 63). The model Strauss advocates is called ‘The Six C’s’ by Glaser (1978) and is only one of many theoretical coding families (refer Appendix B) which can be used as a guide for thinking theoretically about the codes and the phenomenon.

The conditional matrix as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is:

an analytic aid, a diagram, useful for considering the wide range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon under study. The matrix enables the analyst to both distinguish and link levels of conditions and consequences. (p 158)

Therefore, the matrix is used as a “framework that summarizes and integrates all we have presented previously, while at the same time explicates how the various kinds of conditions (causal, contextual, intervening) and consequences … can be tightly woven into one's analysis” (pp 158-159).

Glaser’s (1992) response to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) conditional matrix appears to be one of exasperation.

Grounded theory has been left quite far behind by Strauss’ zeal to see all the conditions, types of conditions and consequences of any phenomenon or core variable. He has lost all sense of that relevance which comes from emergence in accounting for the continual resolving of a main concern, in favor of the relevance he presumes for full conceptual description. This chapter is a complex redundancy… And I too have lost the level of grounded theory correction with which I began this book, since much of what we will deal with here does not always appear relevant to disavow from grounded theory, it is so alien to it. (Glaser, 1992, p 96)

Walker and Myrik (2006) diplomatically end their paper by identifying that analysis is both a science and an art. “Perhaps, it is simply more a science with Strauss and more an art with Glaser.” (p 558). However for Kendall (1999)
Strauss and Corbin’s approach is a wonderful method of conceptual description and has given me an in-depth portrayal of what life was like for family members living with an ADHD child. … Description, no matter how conceptual it appears, is still description … Glaser’s approach, as difficult as it is at times, does lead to theory. (pp 755-756)

The importance of understanding this particular debate is in recognizing that there may be some subtle differences in the resulting theory, depending on which variant is used, and assessing the comfort level of the researcher between using, as Walker and Myrick (2006) propose, the science or the art.

4.5 Which Grounded Theory Approach?

Having conducted a critical analysis of the major variants (Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist), and clarified what grounded theory is or is not through a consideration of the general concepts and the debates, the decision of which variant to use was, for the researcher, fraught with indecision. Procedurally the three versions are very similar, as can be seen in Figure 4.3. Theoretical sampling and saturation, theoretical sensitivity, and the place of the literature review are similar in all three variants. However, between the three major variants there is significant difference between the criteria for judging the worthiness of the theory. The Straussian and Constructivist variants are very similar to the QDA criteria of validity, reliability, creditably (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The criterion of the Glaserian variant appears to judge the worthiness of the theory within the context of the situation being studied.

It was decided not to use the Constructivist variant as the researcher agrees with Patton’s (2002) comment about Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded Theory, “Beyond drawing on the inductive and layered emphases in grounded theory a la Strauss and Corbin, it is hard to see how what Charmaz describes is different from basic phenomenological inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p 128).
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Figure 4.3 Grounded Theory: Comparison of three variants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glaserian</th>
<th>Straussian</th>
<th>Constructivist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Substantive Coding – Open.**
Fracture data into analytical pieces which can be raised to conceptual level & identify core category.

**Theoretical Coding**
Conceptualise how substantive codes relate to each other. Weave the fractured back together to achieve theoretical completeness. (often done at same time as Selective Coding)

**Theoretical Sampling**

**Memming**

**Write about Research**

**Grounded Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glaserian</th>
<th>Straussian</th>
<th>Constructivist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Open Coding**
Generate categories and their properties seeking to determine how categories vary dimensionally

**Axial Coding**
Categories are systematically developed and linked with subcategories

**Selective Coding**
Process of integrating and refining categories

**Coding for Process**
Purposefully looking at action/interaction and noting movement, sequence and change.

**Focused Coding**
Select what seem to be the most useful initial codes and test them against extensive data. Develop subcategories of categories

**Theoretical Sampling**

**Memming**

**Write about Research**

*The review of the literature according to the seminal writings is completed after the theory has been stabilized. Although Strauss & Corbin (1998 and 2008) later indicate that, used appropriately, the literature can be used throughout the research project.*
Having compared the Straussian and Glaserian variants the decision of which one to follow came down to deciding between the Straussian ‘science’ focus or the Glaserian ‘art’ focus. The Glaserian variant was chosen for the following reasons:

- The flexibility inherent in the Glaserian variant suits the research aim of discovering and conceptualising transnational education from the students’ perspective. The freedom to allow the concerns of the students to emerge from the data is more important than following the proscriptive technique identified in the Straussian variant.

- The Glaserian variant encourages the researcher to focus on the views, values and beliefs of the individuals that emerge from the data, rather than becoming bogged down in ensuring the tools and techniques are followed as in the Straussian variant.

### 4.6 The Researcher

The author regards Grounded Theory as being epistemologically and ontologically neutral. Grounded Theory methodology provides a set of systematic procedures to guide the research process that is “independent of the kind of data used” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 18). It can be used by many disciplines and various epistemological backgrounds. The resulting theory of Grounded Theory research is the result of the researchers’ “perceptions, his [sic] personal experiences and his [sic] own hard won analysis” (p 225). Sarantakos (2005) concludes that Grounded Theory is epistemologically neutral in that “it can be used by researchers with diverse epistemological backgrounds” (p 121). Grounded Theory as a general methodology is not aligned with a particularly theoretical perspective or epistemology. The same cannot be said of the researcher as their perspective influences the research undertaken.

Crotty (1998) identifies that researchers need to “lay out the process for the scrutiny of the observer” (p 13), so that the research will be recognized as sound research. Laying out the process also includes the theoretical underpinnings of the research. The only way the observer can judge whether the interpretations of the research have been soundly arrived at and are plausible (Crotty, 1998) is if they first gain an understanding of how the researcher makes sense of the reality around them. This section will consider

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3 Also more resources are available for the Glaserian variant, in terms of mentors, seminars and forums through the www.groundedtheoryreview.com website.
a topic which researchers at one time or another have to turn from implicit to explicit, that topic being to “explain how we know what we know, and to determine the status to be ascribed to the understanding we reach” (Crotty, 1998, p 18) or in one word epistemology.

To each of us the world is very real. Berger and Luckman (1966) put it this way:

The social stock of knowledge differentiates reality by degrees of familiarity. It provides complex and detailed information concerning those sectors of everyday life with which I must frequently deal. It provides much more general and imprecise information on remoter sectors. Thus my knowledge of my own occupation and its world is very rich and specific, while I have only a sketchy knowledge of the occupational worlds of others. (pp 57-58)

This holds true for all human beings in all areas of their lives and it is not something they philosophise about. It is only within the walls of academia and its related research that epistemology and to a lesser sense, ontology become important to researchers and the readers of their literary works. There are academics and researchers who study ontology and debate whether reality is external or internal to the individual. In this debate there are those who say that reality is out there in the world or is of an objective nature. At the opposite end of the extreme is the subjective nature of reality where what is considered real is the product of one’s own mind (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Within these two extremes are many shades of grey, to which academics and researchers align themselves. Epistemology is closely related to ontology in that knowledge could be considered to be objective, it is out there to be acquired, or subjective, needing to be personally experienced (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Crotty (1998) places ontology alongside epistemology, as both tend to merge together to underlie the way a researcher makes sense of their world and what they know. He suggests that there are three main epistemological positions, objectivism, subjectivism and constructionism.

The epistemological position taken for this research is constructionism, because it is the view that

all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p 42)

Or alternatively “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p 43).
The three epistemologies if drawn along a continuum (Figure 4.4) would position constructionism in the middle and extending to either extreme. Some researchers may lean more to the objectivist perspectives, and some to the opposite extreme depending on their view of reality. Constructionism brings together the objective and subjective.

![Figure 4.4 Epistemology Continuum](image)

The author of this study takes the middle ground agreeing with Crotty’s (1998) statement that:

> the social world and the natural world are not to be seen, then as distinct worlds existing side by side. They are one human world. We are born, each of us, in an already interpreted world that is at once natural and social. (p 57)

This view fits well with the author’s own educational philosophy and understandings of the world.

### 4.7 Ethical considerations

Human beings live in social worlds, and living successfully in these societies involves adherence to the society’s standards of conduct (Babbie, 2005). Researchers seeking to better understand how humans interact in their society are not above the requirement for a code of conduct. *The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007) is Australia’s code of conduct for researchers whose participants are human. Research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect form the core principles of this code of conduct. This section will discuss these ethical principles in respect to the current research study.

#### Research merit and integrity

The National Statement (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007) works on the principle that unless the proposed research has merit and the researchers have

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4 This study obtained approval (No: S/08/163) on the 7th October 2008 through the University of the Sunshine Coast’s Human Research Ethics Committee.
integrity, then ethically it is not worth doing the research. This research project has been judged for its research merit through a peer review process as is permissible under guideline 1.2 of the National Statement (p 12). Therefore, the research project was submitted to the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) Human Research Ethics Committee where it received approval.

**Justice**

The research does not focus on humans of a particular ethnic background, religion, age or intellectual/mental/physical impairment. The targeted participants may use a primary language other than English, though they would have an operational command of English due to the enrolment criteria of having attained a 6.5 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, therefore they would have sufficient English for understanding the questions asked. A student’s participation was totally voluntary. A more detailed description of the data collection stages occurs in section 5.4.

As the participants of the research reside overseas their individual cultural sensitivities needed to be taken into account. Therefore, the online delivery method for the survey and request for participation in Stage Two allowed participants to decide for themselves, based upon their respective cultures, whether they would participate in the research or not. In this way the researcher is unable to disregard the beliefs, customs and cultural heritage of the participants. Henceforth, the survey (Appendix C), and electronic interview questions (Appendix D), were designed to elicit data without impinging on the cultural values of the participants.

**Beneficence**

Beneficence refers specifically to the risks of harm or discomfort to participants and the possible benefits of the research. Therefore, it is important to balance these risk factors to minimise the risk of harm or discomfort to the participants.

It was expected that there would be no significant risk or burden placed on the participants. The online survey took approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete and the respondents were not identifiable, however once completed these responses could not be withdrawn because of their anonymous nature. The electronic interviews allowed participants to respond to questions at a time convenient to them which did not impact upon their other day to day activities in which they participate. The data was coded and de-identified. All care has been taken in the research design as to not interfere with the
dignity or well-being of the participants. Participation was voluntary and the participants had the right to withdraw free of penalty at any time during the course of Stage Two of the project.

**Respect**

Respect acknowledges that participants are human beings, and have the capacity to make their own decisions and determine their own lives. As mentioned previously all care has been taken in the research design as to not interfere with the dignity or well-being of the participants. The participants had access to an information sheet (Appendix E), informing them of the reason for the research, what their participation involves including risks and benefits. The study is low-impact, and consent is implied through the participants’ willingness to participate. The National Statement section 2.3.6 (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007, p 24) allows for a waiver of consent on the basis that the research is low risk to the participants. This decision is made by the relevant Ethics Committee upon application. Participation in this research was on an 'opt-in' basis. The use of the online survey instrument (Stage One) enabled potential participants not to participate if they do not want to. Those that decided to complete the instrument did so because they wanted to, implying consent to participate. The same applied for Stage Two; contacting the researcher implies consent to participate. During this stage, withdrawal by the participant from the research, was available and their data withdrawn if requested.

**4.8 Summary**

This chapter has critically analysed the three major variants of Grounded Theory; Glaserian, Straussian, and Constructivist. The chapter began with the core principle of Constant Comparative Method and then moving onto the other Grounded Theory concepts of theoretical sampling and saturation, theoretical sensitivity, the place of the literature review and the criterion for judging the worthiness of the theory. In addition, the chapter considered the debates of qualitative data analysis and Grounded Theory, and emergence versus forcing. This section concluded by justifying the choice of the Glaserian variant which would be adopted for the current study.

The next section identified the researcher’s view of the world. The only way the observer can judge whether the interpretations of the research have been soundly arrived at and are plausible is if they first gain an understanding of how the researcher makes
Chapter 4. The Methodology

sense of the reality around them (Crotty, 1998, p 41).

Finally, the chapter discussed the application of the ethical principles of respect, research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence in respect to the current research study.

The next chapter will outline the methodology of Grounded Theory adopted for the study. This will include identifying the methodological approach and framework for data collection and data analysis by describing the Case Organisation, the selection of the participants and the data collection methods. In addition, it will provide a summary of the data analysis process, describing the emergent theory, and assessing the worthiness of the theory that emerged.

The next chapter discusses the research undertaken during the study. It introduces the Case Organisation and participants, describes the data collection methods and the process of analysis. The emergent theory is described, and finally the worthiness of the theory is discussed.
CHAPTER 5 UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction
The aim of the study is to examine student perspectives on transnational higher education where information technology is used as the sole medium for all communications and learning. To undertake this study the Glaserian Grounded Theory has been adopted as the research design. This chapter will continue the task of “lay[ing] out the process for the scrutiny of the observer” (Crotty, 1998, p 13) through identifying the Case Organisation, the participants, data collection methods, data analysis, a description of the emergent theory, and concluding with a consideration of the theory against the criteria of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability. The next chapter will detail the refinement of the theory through the lens of learning theories.

5.2 Case Organisation
The Case Organisation, established in 2005, is a non-self accrediting provider (refer Section 3.3) of higher education, registered and accredited with the Queensland Office of Higher Education to deliver their programs via distance. It delivers programs in Business and Information Technology (refer Table 5.1). It is also a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and has gained accreditation (see Section 3.2.1) and recognition for its programs in Malaysia, Ghana, Fiji, Singapore and Kenya.

The Organisation’s stated mission is to “to contribute to social justice through the provision of quality Australian higher education that is accessible to students worldwide” (Case Organisation, 2008). Having seen a worldwide demand for quality
Table 5.1 Case Organisation Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Programs</th>
<th>Information Technology Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Business (24 Units)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Information Technology (24 Units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early exit pathway points:</td>
<td>• Early exit pathway points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Diploma of Business (8 Units)</td>
<td>o Diploma of Information Technology (8 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Associate Degree of Business (16 Units)</td>
<td>o Associate Degree of Information Technology (16 Units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Business Administration (12 Units)</td>
<td>Master of Information Systems (12 Units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early exit pathway points:</td>
<td>• Early exit pathway points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Graduate Certificate of Business (4 Units)</td>
<td>o Graduate Certificate in Information Systems (4 Units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (8 Units)</td>
<td>o Graduate Diploma in Information Systems (8 Units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of International Business (12 Units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early exit pathway points:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Graduate Certificate of Business (4 Units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Graduate Diploma in International Business (8 Units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian degrees and a need for equitable access, both geographic and financial, for those seeking to obtain a degree, the Case Organisation makes use of technology to address this demand and need. The students study in their home regions such as Africa, Asia and the Middle East, using the Internet as the delivery platform for their interactions with the learning materials and Unit Coordinators. The Case Organisation uses Moodle as its delivery platform, and support is provided for the students through Study Support Centres. These centres provide the students with access to the Internet, workspace, library, and people resources. The people resources are available to provide an individual student additional private tutoring if needed. Permission was granted by the Case Organisation for the researcher to access students through the student Intranet.

5.3 The Participants

The targeted participant population were current students of the Case Organisation. The total student population was targeted because of the diversity of the population in age, family/work commitments and nationality. English is the teaching medium which requires the students to have an operational command of English. Therefore, it is a requirement for enrolment that students have attained a 6.5 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test.

There were 59 responses to the web survey (see Section 5.4.1 for details) of which 45
were fully completed. Survey responses were received from students in Australia\(^5\), Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Singapore; with 61% being from Fiji and Kenya. The majority of these countries are considered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be ‘Emerging and Developing’ countries, with the exception of Australia (Advanced Economy) and Singapore (Newly Industrialized Asian Economy) (International Monetary Fund, 2010).

There were slightly more responses from part-time students over full-time, with more male respondents than female respondents. The majority of responses were from students within the first 1 – 2 years of beginning their study. The demographic data obtained is summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Summary of demographic data collected in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>Business (57.39%)</th>
<th>Information Technology (42.57%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time/Part-Time Study</td>
<td>Full-time (45.61%)</td>
<td>Part-time (54.39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male (64.41%)</td>
<td>Female (35.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimesters Studied</td>
<td>Majority of respondents had completed a limited number of units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trimesters</td>
<td>Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – 9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Study</td>
<td>The respondents represent 7 countries:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Respondents (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>52.54</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>The majority of respondents were in the 18 – 29 and the 30 - 42 age ranges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Respondents (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 29</td>
<td>52.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 42</td>
<td>44.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-54</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 + over</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: \( n \) = number of responses.

\(^5\) It may seem unusual in a study about transnational education to include the responses of the one student who was studying in Australia. Whether this student is a citizen of Australia or not, despite their being in the same country as the Case Organisation the student voice deserves to be heard.
There were nine students who indicated that they would be willing to participate in the interviews. One of these withdrew their support before the interviews began. The majority of the student interview participants were from Fiji while the remaining were from Ghana. Half of these participants were working whilst studying.

Additionally, the managers of two of the Study Support Centres were interviewed; one from Fiji and the other from Kenya.

### 5.4 Data Collection Methods

Before it was possible to decide what data collection method/s would be used, the target population needed to be identified. When considering the targeted population, the commonalities between the geographically divided participants were identified. The participants all:

1. Resided overseas in countries different to the researcher;
2. Were students of the Case Organisation; and
3. Used electronic means to access and complete their study.

The first commonality, residing overseas, limited the choice of data collection methods. Financial constraints inhibited the ability of the researcher to go to the students’ home countries where they were studying. Commonalities two and three provide an option for a delivery medium for the chosen method, namely, accessing students electronically through the Case Organisation. Figure 5.1 summarises the approach taken to collect the data. One method for collecting data electronically is a survey. The advances in technology allowed the survey to be administered online using the Case Organisation’s student Intranet as the portal through which participants could access the survey instrument.

The data sought for this study relates to the participants’ perspectives of transnational higher education through their interactions with the Case Organisation. This interaction can be divided into four key areas:

1. The Case Organisation itself;
2. Unit Coordinators;
3. Study Support Centres; and
4. Learning Materials and their Delivery.
**Research Aim:**
*Discover and conceptualise students’ perspectives of Transnational Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to collect data?</th>
<th>Participant Characteristics?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Electronically</td>
<td>1. Reside overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Make use of student intranet</td>
<td>2. Use electronic means to complete their studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Are all students of the Case Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What methods are feasible?</th>
<th>Why Survey?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Online Survey</td>
<td>1. Demographic data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Electronic Conversations/ interviews</td>
<td>2. Starting point from which to build and obtain perspective/experience rich data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Conversations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collect rich perspective/experience data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One or both?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both – data collection broken into two stages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why both?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making use of both provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Starting points for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demographic data about the participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Online survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administered via student intranet using Opinio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Voluntary, anonymous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Electronic contact via Skype, MSN, email or the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Voluntary, de-identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.1 Summary of approach taken to collect data.*

As the research is studying participants’ experiences and perspectives, a survey
Chapter 5. Undertaking the Study

provided some descriptive data about each of the key interaction areas. However, a survey alone would not gather the rich data required to identify participants’ perspectives. Therefore, an additional collection method was needed. Interviews and focus groups are the traditional ways in Grounded Theory to gather rich data about participants’ perspectives. Face-to-face interviews or focus groups were not possible since the participants reside in a country different to the researcher; however since the participants use the Internet to access their learning material, electronic interviews using email, MSN, or the like was feasible.

5.4.1 The Survey

Participation in the survey was on an 'opt-in' basis; the participants clicked the link to gain access to the online survey instrument. The survey employed in Stage One asked several demographic questions (age range, degree, country, gender, how long have studied and enrolment status), then considered each of the four interaction areas (the Case Organisation, Unit Coordinators, Study Support Centres and Learning Materials). Interaction with the Case Organisation happens through Student Administration where enrolment, fee payment, and Intranet login setup are organised.

The Unit Coordinators are the academics who liaise with the student whilst they undertake a unit of study. A full time study load is four units, so students could interact with up to four Unit Coordinators in any one trimester of study.

Study Support Centres, in the student’s country of study, provide access to resources such as computers, library, general work areas for individuals or groups and tutors with whom students can liaise if they are having trouble with their study.

Finally, the Learning Materials are delivered online through the student Intranet. These materials include the weekly session, learning journal, and focus task activities.

The structure of the survey was similar to the ‘student experience feedback surveys’ used in Australian universities, as these appeared to the researcher to be a good starting point to obtain the students’ perspectives of the Case Organisation and associated interaction areas. Samples of these types of surveys are available online (e.g. University of Technology Sydney) and provided a guide for structuring the questions relating to each of the interaction areas the students were asked to rate. The bank of questions that was chosen to guide the survey development was from the University of Technology Sydney, 2008 because the sample questions were categorised according to interaction
areas that were similar to those of this research project. In general, the rating scale used by universities is the five point Likert scale: a disagree/agree continuum. A six point Likert scale plus an additional not applicable selection was used for the survey as this would enable a clearer identification of patterns and themes from the survey data collected.

The survey had five sections which concentrated on collecting data about the different interaction points:

- Section 1 – Demographic data;
- Section 2 – Case Organisation;
- Section 3 – Unit Coordinators;
- Section 4 – Learning Materials;
- Section 5 – Study Support Centres.

The survey provided mainly quantitative data, however as the research sought to identify student perspectives on transnational education, open ended questions were included to gain greater understanding and begin the process of collecting the rich detailed data needed to allow the student perspectives about transnational education emerge. Therefore, in addition to the Likert scale questions in sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 two open ended questions were included asking the participants to describe a good experience and a bad experience with the interaction area (Refer Appendix C for the full instrument).

Both the quantitative data and open ended questions were used during the analysis. See Section 5.5 for the process used to analyse the data.

5.4.2 The Interviews
Stage Two, the interviews, used the themes identified in Stage One as the starting point to discuss participants’ experiences, perspectives on, intentions about, and strategies for dealing with problems and outcomes they expected in relation to transnational higher education. The participants were invited to participate in the interviews after they had completed the survey, or emailed directly if a Study Centre Manager. The participants emailed the researcher to register their interest in being interviewed. The researcher initiated and conducted all the interviews. Interviews were conducted using multiple two way email conversations. All emails from the participants were responded to within 24 hours. The electronic nature of the interviews with the participants afforded a valuable time buffer for the researcher. The 24 hour timeframe was sufficient to allow for the data collected to be coded and analysed, and decisions made about which
questions would be asked next in order to develop the emerging theory or theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p 45).

The interviews began with the asking of three questions designed to put the participant at ease.

1. Getting to know a little about you, such as where you work, what you do, etc.
2. Finding out why you decided to complete a Degree?
3. Finding out why you chose to study with [Case Organisation]?

Once familiarity was established, further questions were asked. These questions were guided but were also generated from responses. Following is a full list of the interview questions that were asked as the study progressed.

**Questions asked of student participants:**

1. How do you cope with all the commitment, what strategies do you use? (only asked of those who indicated that they had family and work commitments as well as study)
2. What are your expectations of [Case Organisation], how can they help you be a successful student?
3. In your opinion what makes a successful student?
4. What sort of assistance do you get from the tutors?
5. Is there anything that they don’t do that you think would be helpful?
6. What do tutors expect of students?
7. What sort of assistance do you get from the Unit Coordinators?
8. Is there anything that they don’t do that you think would be helpful?
9. What do Unit Coordinators expect of students?

**Questions asked of Study Centre Manager participants:**

1. What are some of the reasons why students decide to study/complete a degree?
2. What are some of the reasons why students decide to study with [Case Organisation]?
3. What are students’ expectations of [Case Organisation]?
4. What are some of the characteristics that make a successful student?
5. Are many students working and studying at the same time?
6. What do students think about how the online sessions are structured?
7. As someone who manages tutors, what do you expect from the tutors in relation to how they interact with students?
8. As a tutor what do you expect from students?
9. In what ways can you assist student with their studies?

Data are collected generally until saturation occurs; i.e. when new data does not add anything new to the emerging theory (see section 4.4.1). Guest, Bunce and Johnson
(2006) conclude that saturation can be achieved after twelve interviews particularly where “the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals” (p 79). Although the total number of interview participants was less than the twelve suggested by Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006). Between the survey responses, the eight interviews with the students and the two interviews with managers of Study Support Centres it was felt that saturation was achieved. Due to the similarity of the responses and repetitive nature of their responses it was deemed that additional interviews would not highlight anything new.

5.5 Data Analysis

Grounded Theory is a process of discovery; of generating theory through constant comparative analysis of the data. The writing of a Grounded Theory thesis is one of helping the reader to understand the thought processes of the researcher and therefore leading the reader through the process of discovery. This section will endeavour to describe the thought processes that led to the discovery and development of the emergent theory. Figure 5.2 (a section of Figure 4.3) provides a graphical summary of the Glaserian variant of Grounded Theory which was chosen to guide the data analysis process. A detailed summary of Glaserian Grounded Theory is found in section 4.3.1.

![Figure 5.2 Glaserian Variant of Grounded Theory](image-url)
In endeavouring to describe the process this section will not focus on how the data was obtained, rather it will focus on the data itself. Data, “whether soft or hard it is just grist for the mill of constant comparison and analyzing” (Glaser, 1992, p 11).

The legend used for participant identification coding is displayed in the following ways:

- Opinio 27507 – is the identifying code for the survey responses. The program used to capture the survey data was Opinio; each response was automatically given a five digit number.
- Participant 1 – is a pseudonym for a student who participated in the interview.
- IKM & IFGM – are pseudonyms for the managers of the Study Support Centres that participated in the interview.
- Any quotes used have been inserted as exact quotes including any spelling, grammar and / or emphasis errors.

All survey responses were collected before the analysis began. First to be analysed was the demographic data, the results of which can be found in Table 5.2. Then the responses were coded for as many categories as could fit the data including categories which may not have been obviously stated (Glaser, 1978, p 56). Overall 25 categories were identified, a list of these are displayed in Table 5.3. These categories did not reveal anything unusual or out of the ordinary, neither did the demographic data.

Table 5.3 Codes identified from the Survey responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Student Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Student Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Study Support Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Technology Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenience</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Materials</td>
<td>Unfairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liasing</td>
<td>Unit Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Qualities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was only when some frequency statistics on the Likert scale question were analysed that a pattern began to appear. A six point Likert scale was used to collect data, however,
the Likert points of 1, 2 and 3 were recoded to ‘Disagree’, and 4, 5 and 6 to ‘Agree’ so that it would be possible to see if any patterns would emerge. For a summary of the recoded survey responses to the Likert scale questions refer to Appendix F.

The frequencies, for individual questions, revealed that students were mostly happy with their interactions with the Case Organisation. A closer analysis exposed an intriguing pattern.

The interactions with the learning materials/technology were rated exceptionally well, with the Agree frequencies between 81% – 95%.

Comparatively, the Agree frequencies for interactions with people varied greatly and generally lower than the interactions with the learning materials/technology:

- Student Administration 61% – 83%
- Unit Coordinators 66% – 82%
- Study Support Centres 64% – 84%

This pattern raised the question:

What do students expect from these people?

This question became the main underlying question for the interviews (Stage Two) even though it was not specifically asked of the interview participants.

The interviews were conducted via email. The first email sent to the participants contained three questions with which to begin the conversations.

1. Getting to know a little about you, such as where you work, what your do, etc.
2. Finding out why you decided to complete a Degree?
3. Finding out why you chose to study with [Case Organisation]?

As the comparisons between the participant responses to the above questions progressed, new interview questions were posed to the participants. For example, one of the survey respondents (Opinio 27595) made the comment “…helped me out and made me a successful student”, which raised two questions:

1. What does it take to make a successful student?
2. What does a successful student look like?

The current study concentrated on the student perspective. During the comparison of responses a self-reflective question by the researcher was asked: ‘Would any new insights be revealed if I asked the Study Support Centre Managers the same questions as I have asked the students?’ The answer was maybe; therefore permission was sought from and granted by the Case Organisation to directly contact the managers of two Study Support Centres. Their email interview responses were collected and coded.

Part way through the coding process a picture of a student’s perspective of transnational higher education began to emerge. From the student perspective, for the Case Organisation to be able to provide a life changing experience the learning materials needed to allow subject exploration and knowledge acquisition, be relevant, accurate, real time, and be able to be applied immediately by the students. For this to happen the stakeholders (Case Organisation, Unit Coordinators, Study Support Centres and Students) needed to be active participants in the process.

The comparison of codes between responses enabled the researcher to begin to think conceptually about what is happening in the data. Figure 5.3 provides a sample of the responses coded to support one of the codes that emerged as being significant for students. Each of the sample excerpts in Figure 5.3 gives an indication that for the student participants, the little things are very important. These little things are the tasks and attitudes which may be taken for granted as part of the service provided by the organisation and the staff.

![Figure 5.3 Open Code Data Excerpt for 'Support when needed']
Some of the codes created became Categories and others Properties of the Categories. A Category “captures the underlying patterns in the data” (Glaser, 1998, p 135) while a Property “is a concept about the category” (Glaser, 1998, p 135). At this early stage of the selective and theoretical coding it seemed appropriate to begin developing categories based on the interactions points the students have with the Case Organisation. For a sample of the early Categories and their Properties refer Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Samples of Categories and Properties identified early during Open Coding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Coordinators</th>
<th>Student Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Support Centres</td>
<td>Learning Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Relationships</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support when needed</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bolded phrases are Categories and the rest are properties.

Figure 5.4 displays the beginning of conceptualising or “weave[ing] the fractured story back together” (Glaser, 1978, p 72). This ‘re-weaving’ describes “the world theoretically and can span all current perspectives depending upon how they are chosen and combined” (p 72), and conceptualises how the core category and other related categories “may relate to each other as hypothesis to be integrated into a theory” (p 72).
However a review of the Grounded Theory methodology identified that the early attempts would not “sum up a pattern of behavior” (Glaser, 1978, p 94). Selective Coding involves identifying the main theme or “what is the main concern or problem for the people in the setting, for what sums up in a pattern of behavior the substance of what is going on in the data” (p 94) otherwise known as “coding for the Core” (p 61). The core category will account “for most of the variation in a pattern of behavior” (p 93).

As the analysis moved through several iterations of selective and theoretical coding, the conceptualization process continued and categories were combined in different ways seeking what might be considered a “pattern of behavior” (Glaser, 1978, p 94). For example the categories of Study Support Centre, Case Organisation and Unit Coordinators, due to the duplication of properties, were combined into the broad category of Human Support, which became one element in the emergent theory. Figure 5.5 provides a sample of the conceptual links leading to the formation of the Human Support category. A full list of codes and quotes that formed the basis for the Human Support element of the theory is provided in Appendix G.
As the analysis of the data progressed, several main concerns emerged - Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing. These all arose as being important to students in the setting of transnational higher education. It was however much harder to select a core category. Returning back to the Grounded Theory literature, it became evident that the relationships between the main concerns were of equal importance and were interactive. Glaser (1978) initially identifies 18 theoretical coding families, one of which is the:

Interactive Family: Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependence, interdependence, interaction of effects covariance. This code is an effort to capture the interacting pattern of two or more variables when the analyst cannot say which comes first. (p 76)

From the data it became evident that there is a balance needed between the three main concerns of Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing if the student is to achieve their aims. An imbalance of one or more can account for a variation in the pattern of behaviour by the student, which in-turn can affect their interactions with the Case Organisation and consequently, their education as a transnational student. Therefore it is legitimate to claim that there is not one core category but three interactively related cores: Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing.

The resulting theory (see section 5.6) portrays the importance of the interactivity between the main concerns. The students recognized that they need to be self managing through being dedicated, committed, and employing coping strategies that will assist them not only with the learning, but also with family, work, and other activities that all vie for attention in a student’s life. Students appreciate the relevance of learning materials that relate to real world workplaces, and the ability to apply their learning in their current and prospective workplaces. Students revealed not only an expectation of traditional academic support (constructive feedback, preparedness, timeliness), but also

Figure 5.5 Conceptualisation of Codes relating to the Human Support Element
that there is a caring concerned person available who is understanding, supportive and responsive to student needs. Of these three, it is the provision of human support that is perceived as the most critical. However, as stated previously, a balance between the three elements needs to be maintained to provide an optimal learning environment for the student.

5.6 The Theory of Student Perspectives on Transnational Education

Having described the methodological process, this section will introduce the theory that emerged after close analysis of the data together with the related literature. The theory has been named: Student Perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE). SPoTNE has three interrelated concerns or elements: Self Managing, Real World Learning and Human Support (refer Figure 5.6), which the students revealed as critical to their learning.

![Figure 5.6 The Theory of Student Perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE)](image)

Though somewhat distinct from each other, there appeared to be a symbiotic relationship between the elements. The analysis of the data identified all three elements as being necessary for the participants to succeed in their studies, thus wheel cogs rather than circles have been used in Figure 5.6. At an individual student level there may not be a need for equal proportions of the elements in the interactive relationship. Individual students will balance the elements in proportions that meet their needs and may change.
in combination during the course of their studies.

5.6.1 Self Managing

Two particular facets that emerged from the data concerning students were ‘Motivation’ and ‘Coping’. Transnational higher education is a purposeful activity for students. For many, it is a means to achieving a desired goal and a life-changing activity that ultimately would allow them to change their current situation for a better one. Student goals became the driving force that motivates them to complete their program. The students recognise that they need to be dedicated, committed and employ coping strategies that will assist them, not only with their learning, but also with family, work, and other activities that all vie for attention in a student’s life. Self Managing in this context encompasses the student motivations or reasons for studying and the coping mechanisms (methods, skills and strategies) which they use to overcome the challenges that arise whilst studying.

Motivation is what drives a person to take a particular action to achieve a desired goal. The motivating goals students identified are varied. They included:

- Change jobs;
- Get a job;
- Job security;
- Promotion;
- Enhanced performance;
- Staying up to date with trends in industry;
- Gain knowledge for further study e.g. PhD;
- Obtain migration points; and
- “My whole life depends on it”. (Participant 2)

The goal to ‘Obtain migration points’ identifies another window into the lives of some students who choose to study transnational higher education. These goals are not unique to this study as they have also been reported in work conducted by MacBrayne (1995), Qureshi, Mortan & and Antosz (2002) and Bunn (2004), however, they show that this goal is unchanged after over nearly two decades, and thus still provides an insight into why people study or return to study and study via distance.
While all these goals can be said to be life changing, for some of these students the goals have greater significance than just moving onto the next phase in life. Comments such as those below portray a sense of urgency and importance; almost a grand vision of their future:

My expectation I guess would be that since its an Australian based qualification it will enable me to reach great places and good jobs. I expect myself to be at a better job after completion of my degree. (Participant 4)

The learning material especially in regards to development and rebuilding a country. I have now have knowledge in my fingertips of what I can do to develop [Country Name]- the materials are relevant to todays [Country Name] and that is important to me. (Opinio27827)

I know of a student who is studying with a final goal of migrating to a first world country (Participant IKM).

The researcher was unable to follow up on the significance of ‘life-changing’ for these students, and thus it is a topic which needs further study especially given that ‘Obtain migration points’ is also listed among the motivations of students and is one of the areas in which Ziguras and Hoare (2009) identify as needing further research so as to obtain the student voice.

Students employ a variety of strategies that help them to cope (coping) with their study and assist them in achieving their goals. Several personal characteristics emerged from the data that highlighted student perceptions and their ability to cope with transnational education; these were found to be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Support Strategies</th>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get in and do</td>
<td>Be prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare routine/timetable</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-arrange with family</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise resources</td>
<td>Focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work hard</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourceful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The identified personal characteristics and the coping strategies suggest that these students recognise that they themselves play an important role in achieving their goals. This recognition implies that students need to be ‘self managing’ if they are to be
successful in achieving their goals as can be seen in the quotes below.

working and schooling is not easy. On my part, I have a supportive family. My family understands I must be left alone to study. After close of work, I drive straight home, enter my study room to follow the schedule I prepared for myself. (Participant 2)

I try my best to allocate different time for different things to maintain a balance of my life, basically proper time management but to be honest even that proves to be a little tough at moment when to many commitments come up, especially when we have assignments due, friend get together and family commitments. but with time management and proper planning I manage through. I try to do my school work whenever I free time that way when its due I don't have to rush, can just submit and allocate that time to work or being with friends. (Participant 4)

In my opinion, hard work makes a student successful. (Participant 6)

Commitment. If a student is committed, he will come to classes do all assessments on time. And if any student does this they can easily pass any unit and attain knowledge to be successful in real world. (Participant IFGM)

Motivation and coping strategies as components of Self-Managing are seen as critical avenues for success for students studying transnationally.

5.6.2 Real World Learning

The students of the Case Organisation interact with the learning materials online. Although there are tutors available to support the student with their learning, all the materials and submission of assessments (except final exam) are online. Overall, the students’ perceptions of the learning materials were positive. The results of the survey, summarised in Table 5.5, identified that the current design of the learning materials were considered by the students to be appropriate for their learning.
Table 5.5 Summary of Responses to Learning Materials survey questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about the learning materials</th>
<th>As Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. The course materials are easy to access</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My learning experience with the units has been interesting and thought provoking</td>
<td>8.16, 91.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The unit outlines help me to understand the course requirements</td>
<td>2.04, 94.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I found the units relevant to my career</td>
<td>6.12, 93.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The units cover topics at an appropriate depth</td>
<td>8.16, 91.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. It was clear how we were expected to use the student intranet</td>
<td>12.24, 87.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The sessions are easy to understand</td>
<td>6.12, 93.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I have the flexibility to design my study time around my other commitments</td>
<td>18.36, 81.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sample of the comments collected from the survey and during the email interviews, further highlight the suitability of the learning materials in assisting students to achieve their goals.

[Case Organisation]'s study content is rich and full of quite accurate and real time information which is applicable in a technological age such as this and this makes it more interesting and fun at the same time for those who are willing to learn something new. (Participant 1)

My recent attachment to the project team at my office is as a result of the wealth of knowledge I have gained from my studies with [Case Organisation]. I am applying the session notes directly to my job. (Participant 2)

I used the learning materials to solve problems related to my job at the office. (Opinio 27483)

The learning material especially in regards to development an rebuilding a country. I have now have knowledge in my fingertips of what I can do to develop [country name] - the materials are relevant to todays [country name] and that is important to me. (Opinio 27827)

for instance if we major in Information Technology and the practical classes teach students how to do networking, programing and I have personally seen people praise students of [Case Organisation] for their IT skills. same goes for business administration. their assessments enhance my skills that will be needed in work field. for instance skills such as database management, business plans, and other relevent assessments. (Participant 4)

My studies teach me how business environment works and the way a bout to dealing with key issues. how to make business plans, projects, analyzing reports, interpreting data, making management decisions and other relevant concepts that allows me to gain the skills required in getting them done. (Participant 4)
the courses of [Case Organisation] are industry relevant studies, meaning
that the focus task we do on a weekly basis are based on the real world. So
this benefits in our work places. (Participant 6)

What stands out from the students’ comments is that the learning materials need to be
‘real world’, relevant to what they perceive real world workplaces are looking for in
their employees, and/or are able to apply their learning directly in their current
workplace.

5.6.3 Human Support

The students’ main concern when studying is ‘support’, particularly human support. In this study there were three
human interaction points for students; Student Administration, the Unit Coordinators and the Study Support Centres. Student
comments revealed not only an expectation of the traditional academic support (such as constructive feedback, preparedness, timeliness), but also
that there be a caring concerned person at the ‘other end’, who is understanding and supports students when needed.

We had Political problems in my country and they understood and gave us good Grace period to catch up. (Opinio27507)

Always have been helpful. When I did not get any text books, I was advised by one of the Unit Coordinator on websites that was very helpful for my reading. (Opinio 27474)

The [Case Organisation] team and the support centre staff has been extremely very helpful in making sure I continue with studies despite unique work environment. (Opinio 28098)

I did an assignment I felt my answer was right. Thus we indulge with my coordinator until we came to an agreement. It felt nice and a good educative experience. (Opinio 27827)

…the tutors are very caring and they take their time out and help any way they can. especially since they are part time tutors and have their other day job. we ask for any assistance they will help instantly. they don't make us fill intimidated in any way and ensure we understand everything.
( Participant 4)

I WAS TO GET MY FUNDS A DAY AFTER THE LAST DAY ON ENROLMENT . I PLEADED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE
There is a balance that is needed between the three main concerns of Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing if the student is to achieve their aims. An imbalance of one or more can account for a variation in the pattern of behaviour by the student, which affects their interactions with the Case Organisation and consequently, their education as a transnational student.

### 5.7 Judging the Worthiness of the SPoTNE Theory

This research has used Glaser’s variant of Grounded Theory to develop the theory, therefore, any discussion about the worthiness of the resulting theory should be considered using Glaser’s four criteria of fit, work, relevance and modifiability.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified that a theory should provide clear categories and hypotheses that can be used for verification in present and future studies. To achieve this, the theory must “fit the situation being researched and work when put into use” (p 3). Three criteria were identified as: fit, relevance and work. Glaser (1978) reiterated the importance of these criteria as well as adding another criterion that of modifiability.

**Fit** is when the categories fit the data. According to Glaser (1998), a category “captures the underlying patterns in the data” (p 135). Fit is achieved when the category name adequately expresses “the pattern in the data which it purports to conceptualize” (p 18). According to Glaser (1978), this criteria is automatically met as categories are generated from the data (p 4).

The next criterion is **work**. Glaser (1978) provided a succinct definition of this criterion.

> By work, we meant that a theory should be able to explain what happened, predict what will happen and interpret what is happening in an area of substantiative or formal inquiry… For the theory to work, its categories must fit, to be sure, but also it must “work” the core of what is going on; it must be relevant to the actions of the area (pp 4-5).

The criteria of ‘work’ means that the theory should explain, predict, and interpret what is happening in the area of inquiry. The SPoTNE Theory portrays the importance of interactivity between Self Managing, Real World Learning and Human Support. Self Managing encompasses the student’s motivations or reasons for studying and the coping mechanisms (methods, skills and strategies) which they use to overcome the challenges...
that arise whilst studying. The students recognized that they need to be self managing through being dedicated, committed and employing coping strategies that will assist them, not only with the learning, but also with family, work, and other activities that all vie for attention in a student’s life. Students appreciate the relevance of learning material that relates to real world workplaces and the ability to apply their learning in their current and prospective workplaces. The interactivity between Self Managing and Real World Learning happens because it appears that one feeds the other; the skills they are learning are applicable to real world situations aids motivation.

The element of Human Support also feeds into interactivity identified Self Management and Real World Learning, as students revealed not only an expectation of the traditional academic support (constructive feedback, preparedness, timeliness), but also that there be a caring concerned person at the other end who is understanding and supports students when needed. This includes both academic and administrative staff. It appears that although family and friends provide a level of support, the support of an organisation’s academic and administrative staff is appreciated. Particularly when staff understand that unexpected challenges arise and they display that they care about the students and listen to them and go out of their way, within reason, to assist the students. Acts of understanding and compassion have great positive meaning to students studying transnationally.

Of the three elements (Self Management, Real World Learning and Human Support) it is the provision of Human Support that is the most critical. An interpretation of the data indicates that a perceived lack in any of the interactive elements could impact on the students’ ability to successfully negotiate their way to achieving their goals and enjoying the overall educational experience.

The third criterion is relevance. Glaser (1998) identifies that it is relevance that makes the research important “because it deals with the main concerns of the participants involved. To study something that interests no one really or just a few academics or funders is probably to focus on non-relevance or even trivia for the participants. Relevance, like good concepts, evoke instant grab” (p 18).

Ziguras and Hoare (2009) identify that there is limited literature in the public domain, which focuses on the student voice in relation to transnational education. Any research into student perspectives on transnational higher education that helps to build a more complete picture of the transnational higher education landscape is relevant. The
SPoTNE Theory identifies the main concerns of students by identifying the elements that students perceive as important and critical to their success.

Finally the theory must be easy to modify (modifiability). The theory is the end result of this study, however as further research is conducted by the current and other researchers, and new data is gathered and analysed it is expected that the theory may change to maintain its currency and ability to work in the area. Glaser (1998) states:

> Modifiability is very significant. The theory is not being verified as in verification studies, and thus never right or wrong… it just gets modified by new data to compare it to (p 19).

The emerging landscape of transnational higher education as outlined in Chapter Three, highlights the implications for students and organisations. It is expected that the emergent theory will be modified through refinement and addition as further research is conducted which focuses on the student voice in the transnational higher education arena.

### 5.8 Summary

This chapter has endeavoured to “lay out the process for the scrutiny of the observer” (Crotty, 1998, p 13), in order for the research to be recognized as sound research. It described the research process outlining the Case Organisation, the participants, data collection methods, data analysis, the emergent theory and concluding with a consideration of the theory against the criteria of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability. The end result of this process is a theory. This theory should in a parsimonious way, explain transnational higher education from the student’s perspective.

The Student Perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE) Theory identifies that for the students who participated in the study, transnational higher education is perceived as a means to an end and can be a life changing activity. The motivations that propelled students to undertake study were many and varied. In addition, students recognized that to be successful they had to be dedicated and committed. Students appreciated that the learning materials were ‘real world’, were relevant to what they perceive real world workplaces to be looking for in their employees, and/or were able to apply their learning directly in their current workplace. However, one of their main concerns when studying is obtaining ‘support’. Student support is provided in two ways: first, through the learning materials, and second, human support. Of these two
interaction points human support is the more critical for these students. There is a balance that is needed between the three main concerns of Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing if the student is to achieve their aims. An imbalance of one or more can account for a variation in the pattern of behaviour by the student, which affects their interactions with the Case Organisation and consequently, their education as a transnational student. Therefore there is not one core category but three interactively related cores: Human Support, Real World Learning and Self Managing.

Glaser and Holton (2004) identify that the place for weaving in the literature as another form of data, is after the “core categories, its properties and sub categories have been identified and the conceptual development is well under way” (para 46) as it only at this point the relevant literature becomes known (Glaser, 1998, p 68). The areas of literature identified as being relevant in relation to the emergent theory are Andragogy, Transactional Distance Theory, and Learning Strategy Systems. Chapter Six considers how these theories further enrich the SPoTNE theory. It will consider theory relevance and provide further insight into the landscape of transnational higher education.
CHAPTER 6 ASSOCIATED THEORIES

6.1 Introduction
The theory that emerged from the data, the Student Perspectives on Transnational Education (SPoTNE), as described in the previous chapter, identifies that, for the students who participated in the study transnational higher education is seen as a means to achieving the desired goal and a life-changing activity that ultimately would allow them to change their current situation for a better one. Students recognized that to be successful, they had to be dedicated and committed. Students appreciated that the learning materials needed to be ‘real world’. Finally human support in the form a caring concerned person was identified as the third main concern for students.

This chapter will consider three relevant theories to further enrich the SPoTNE Theory, and provide further insight into the landscape of transnational higher education. The main areas within the body of knowledge that have been identified as being associated with elements of the SPoTNE theory are adult education, learning strategies and distance education. Respectively Knowles’s Andragogy, Learning Strategy Systems and Moore’s Transactional Distance theory with be considered and analysed for their relevance to the SPoTNE Theory.

6.2 Andragogy
Students who undertake distance education are generally adults who have life experience and are juggling work and/or family commitments, (refer to discussion in Section 3.4). However, given the accessibility of transnational higher education this will expand to include anyone with the desire to learn and has the finances to support themselves. Andragogy Theory provides theoretical support for two elements within the SPoTNE Theory.
Andragogy is generally defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p 84; Merriam, 2001, p 5; Reischmann, 2004, p 3) or “the art and science of facilitating adult learning” (Choy & Delahaye, 2002, p 1).

Andragogy has undergone several reinventions (Reischmann, 2004). The most well known began in the late 1960s when Malcolm Knowles introduced Andragogy to the English speaking world, particularly the USA, with the article ‘Andragogy, not Pedagogy’ (Reischmann, 2004, p 3).

Knowles’ Andragogy is based on two central tenets; 1) learners are seen as self directed and autonomous; and 2) the role of the teacher is a facilitator of learning not presenter of content. These tenets can be seen to be diametrically opposed to pedagogy, which is the art of helping children learn (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005, p 61; Merriam, 2001, p 5). Pedagogy is perceived to be generally teacher directed education where it is the responsibility of the teacher to decide what will be learnt, when it will be learnt and the how it will be learnt in a given learning situation (p 61). A central principle of Andragogy is that the learner directs their learning by deciding the what, when and how. Table 6.1 outlines the differences between Pedagogy and Andragogy according to the six assumptions, regarding the learner, as identified by Knowles. These assumptions concerning adult learners have grown from four to six over the years as Knowles refined the concept. Assumptions 2, 3, 4 and 5 are the original ones, with Assumption 6 being added in 1984 and Assumption 1 being added around 1989 (Knowles et al. 2005, pp 68-69).

Table 6.1 Assumptions about Learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Pedagogy (p. 62–63)</th>
<th>Andragogy (p. 65–68)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Need to know</td>
<td>Learners know they must learn and not how it will apply in their lives</td>
<td>Need to know why they have to learn something and how it will apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learner self-concept</td>
<td>Dependent personality</td>
<td>Responsible for their own decisions and lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Role of experience</td>
<td>Learners own experiences are of little worth</td>
<td>Experience of others can be rich source for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Readiness to learn</td>
<td>If they want to pass they will learn</td>
<td>Ready to learn what they need to be able to cope in their real-life situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Orientation to learn</td>
<td>Subject oriented</td>
<td>Life-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Motivation</td>
<td>External motivators</td>
<td>Internal and external motivators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Knowles et al, 2005, pp 62-68)

Assumption 1 – the need to know posits that the adult learner will want to know why
they have to learn something before undertaking the learning. Identifying the gap between their current skills, knowledge and the desired skills and, knowledge or ‘how can I use what I learn in my work/life/situation?’

Assumption 2 – Knowles (1970, p 39) discusses self-concept as moving along a continuum of dependency as a child to autonomy as an adult. As a human being moves along the continuum they develop their capacities for decision making, self direction, and self image or self concept. A human being’s self image contains three attributes “identities (who we are), attributes (what we are), and some form of evaluation of these identities and attributes (self-esteem)” (Gigliotti & Gigliotti, 1998, p 296). As adult learners, a human being’s learning interests “are embedded in their personal histories, in their visions of who they are in the world and in what they can do and want to do” (Cross, Tough and Weathersby in R. Gigliotti & C. Gigliotti, 1998, p. 298). The identifying of self as an independent autonomous person who is capable of decision making and self direction, implies a sense of status that is equal to other adults, with a sense of mutual respect for the status and a persons’ ability to direct their own learning.

Assumption 3 – leading on from the concept that learning experiences are embedded in a learner’s personal history, an adult human being identifies themselves according to their experiences, “an adult is what he has done” (Knowles, 1970, p 44), and has a strong attachment to this experiential investment. Knowles posits that when a person is unable to draw on this experience a sense of personal rejection ensues. The richness of a learner’s experience is a potential learning resource for both the individual and other learners.

Assumption 4 – From birth a human being grows and develops physically and psychologically throughout the rest of their lives. This growth and development is most visible in young children (crawling/walking, speech, teeth, etc) and the aged (loss of mobility, memory, etc). For adults the growth is more psychological in nature as a human being moves from adolescence to early adulthood to middle age and beyond. Each phase/stage of development brings new challenges. Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007), speaking about Levinson and his colleagues, report that they “suggest people evolve through an orderly sequence of stable and transitional periods that correlate to chronological ages” (p 307).

From an educational perspective it is during the times of transition that the ‘teachable moment’ identified by Havighurst arises (in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 308). Examples of
transition points include: marriage, finding a job, changing jobs, rearing children and retirement. It is at these transition points that “adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real life situations” (Knowles et al. 2005, p 67).

Assumption 5 – Based on Assumption 4, being ready to learn what they need to know or be able to do Assumption 5 assumes that adults approach learning looking for solutions to a problem.

Assumption 6 – Knowles’ final assumption about adult learners is motivation and stems from the belief that an adult’s motivation to learn can come from both external and/or internal sources. External sources identified by Knowles et al. (2005, p 69) are “better jobs, promotion, higher salaries and the like” while the internal sources cited are “the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life and the like” (Knowles, et al. 2005, p 69).

6.2.1 The SPoTNE Theory and Andragogy
Several assumptions from Andragogy provide insight into two of the interactive elements of the developed theory. Assumptions 2 (learner self concept) and 6 (motivation) correspond with the Self Managing interactive element of the SPoTNE Theory. Assumptions 4 (readiness to learn) and 5 (orientation to learn) provide theoretical support for the relevance to the real world aspects identified by students as being important in the Real World Learning element (refer section 5.6.2) and coping and motivation aspects of the Self Managing element (refer section 5.6.1). These relationships are represented diagrammatically in Figure 6.1.

Assumptions 2 and 6 can be identified within the Self Management element. The students identified several reasons or goals for why they were studying. Overall, this revealed that for these students, transnational higher education is a purposeful activity that was a means to an end. Assumption 6 (motivation) posits that for adults, motivation to do something, particularly learning, can come from external and internal sources. The goals identified by the students, listed below, can be classed as either internal and/or external sources of motivation.
However it would be difficult to categorise them; for example ‘obtain migration points’ may be internal to the student or may be external, being influenced by family members.

- Change jobs
- Get a job
- Promotion
- Job security

- Staying up to date with trends in industry
- Enhanced performance
- Obtain migration points
- Gain knowledge for further study e.g. PhD
- “My whole life depends on it”. (Participant 2)

These comments mirror the findings of other research that looks at goals of learning:

- Life changing (Bird & Morgan, 2003);

- Means to an end (Barker, 1997; Newstead, Hoskins, Franklyn-Stokes, & Dennis, 1997);

- Enhance career prospects, gain professional qualification (Bunn, 2004);

- Better job future, enhance current job, desire self improvement (MacBrayne, 1995); and

- Means of a better future (MacBrayne, 1995).
The participants of this study also revealed traits related to being self directed (Assumption 2). Considering the personal characteristics of the participants, the variety of strategies used to cope with study reflects a group of people who are motivated about their studies. Furthermore, they demonstrate a positive outlook on the effect, and the successful completion of their studies will have on their lives.

The participants identified that the current structure of the learning materials was appropriate for their learning, that the materials are ‘real world’, and they are able to apply what they have learnt. In addition, the participants displayed a readiness to learn (Assumption 4). Knowles et al. (2005) state, “adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real life situations” (p 67). The students’ comments relating to their ability to apply what they have learnt reveal their readiness to learn as they develop the skills to cope with their current and future everyday lives. This receptiveness to learning materials corresponds with Assumption 5 (orientation to learn) which posits adults come to education wanting to find solutions to problems. These participants can see that what they are learning can help them to solve problems.

6.3 Learning Strategy System

Learning strategies are many and varied and need to be discussed in relation to the developed theory. To the students who participated in the study these strategies are one of the elements that make a difference between success or failure in their studies. When asked what it takes to make a successful student, participants identified several traits which can be grouped under a heading of learning strategies. The common traits identified were motivation, commitment, hard work and time management.

I try my best to to allocate different time for different things to maintain a balance of my life, basically proper time management (Participant 4).

In my opinion, hard work makes a student successful. (Participant 6)

A successful student will be always manage time and have its work done on time. Even if a student doesn't attend classes but allocates time at home and studies in its own time and has its work done they can be successful as well. (Participant 4)
In my opinion the characteristics that could make a student successful include:
1. Ability to study, research, and find meanings to difficult situations on his/her own
2. Ability to stick to a planned scheduled
3. Ability to stay awake a little longer when everybody else are gone to sleep. (Participant 2)

Commitment. If a student is committed, he will come to classes do all assessments on time. (Participant IFGM)

Disciplined
Motivated - must have ‘drive’
Time conscious - tardiness can be very expensive when doing an [Case Organisation] staffers degree. The administration nowadays can put a student in a serious fix.
Committed - I have a student in the army. He is so committed that he says he can study under a tree in the hot sun or look up a point under a hail of bullets.’ (Participant IKM)

Gu (2005) noted there is a lack of consensus in the definition of learning strategies. After collating several definitions from prominent research in educational psychology, Gu (2005) identified that for most researchers learning strategies are “something used by students to accomplish learning” (p 3).

In earlier years McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin and Smith (1986) conducted a review of the then current literature and developed a taxonomy of learning strategies. This taxonomy grouped the differing strategies into three broad categories; Cognitive Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies and Resource Management Strategies. The full taxonomy is reproduced in Table 6.2.

The Resource Management Strategies emerged from the data as being strategies used by the students who participated in the study (refer section 5.6.1). Pintrich (1988) described the Resource Management Strategies as those that “help students control the available resources (time, effort, outside help) for performing various academic tasks” (Pintrich, 1988, p 70). These strategies include strategies for managing the environment and the resources available, and “the time available for study, the actual study environment and others such as teachers and peers as well as the learner themselves (in terms of effort, mood, and persistence)” (McKeachie et al. 1986, p 28). Similarly, Cottrell (2008) identifies effective study as depending “on having your state of mind, space, time and materials organised in the ways that best suit your learning” (p 67), encompassing the time management, student environment management and effort management elements.
of the McKeachie et al. (1986) taxonomy of learning strategies.

Table 6.2 Taxonomy of Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Basic Tasks (e.g. memory for lists)</th>
<th>Complex Tasks (e.g. test learning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal Strategies</td>
<td>Reciting list</td>
<td>Shadowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Copy material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Verbatim note taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Underlining text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration Strategies</td>
<td>Keyword method</td>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>Summarizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Method of loci</td>
<td>Creating analogies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Generative note taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question answering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Strategies</td>
<td>Clustering</td>
<td>Selecting main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mnemonics</td>
<td>Outlining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diagramming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Metacognitive strategies</th>
<th>All Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
<td>Setting goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generating questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Self-testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attention-focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test-taking strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating Strategies</td>
<td>Adjusting reading rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test-taking strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. Resource Management Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Environment Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced from McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin and Smith, 1986, p. 26

Time management is described as being “an important self-management activity in studying” (McKeachie, et al. 1986, p 28), whether on a monthly, weekly or daily basis. McKeachie et al. (1986) indicate that it is important that the time scheduled for study be used efficiently through the setting of realistic goals.

McKeachie, et al. 1986 (1986), identify the student’s study environment as an “important aspect of their studying” (pp 28-29). In addition, they propose it is useful for students to have a defined area for study and argue it is not the nature of the setting that is important, but that the location is set aside specifically for the purpose of study. This
location should be organised, quiet and free from distractions. Cottrell (2008) agrees, encouraging students to “create a separate space for study where you can leave things and come back to them” (p 69). Cottrell (2008) emphasises the use of a ‘trigger’ to signify the start of a study session can help to overcome the little distractions and delaying tactics that students employ to avoid study.

Grouped under the strategy of Effort Management are student’s attributions to effort, mood, self-talk, persistence and self-reinforcement. These relate to the student’s own motivational patterns and ability to self manage. McKeachie, et al. (1986) state; “a good student knows when to increase efforts and persist on a task as well as when maximal effort is not required for success” (p 29). A student’s persistence to continue studying when struggling is related to the student’s motivation and ultimately their commitment to achieving their goals (Cottrell, 2008).

Mood is described by Dansereau (1985) as relating to the student’s ability to “developing and maintaining an internal state conducive to effective implementation of the primary strategies” (p 219); which encompasses self-talk and self-reinforcement. It is through these strategies that a student is “able to detect when their behavior is not sufficient to meet task demands so that they can make appropriate adjustments” (p 224). Cottrell (2008) identifies that a successful student will “benefit from being able to work out for yourself, through a process of analysis and reflection, what you do well, what you need to improve and your priorities” (p 61).

A student’s attribution of effort will impact on how they utilize the strategies discussed. If a student attributes success to the effort they have expended, then failure is linked to a lack of effort on the part of the student, who will need to modify their behaviour to improve their effort in studying. However, if a student attributes success to an external sources (for example: teacher, textbook, work) then failure will be attributed to these external factors and the student will see no reason to change their own study habits and strategies.

McKeachie, et al’s (1986) final element of Resource Management relates to the student learning to manage the support of others. The student dilemma is knowing “when and how to seek and obtain help” (p 29). This help generally comes from teachers and/or peers.
6.3.1 The SPoTNE Theory and Learning Strategy System

The Resource Management Strategies that have been discussed identify with the ‘coping’ aspects within the Self Managing element of the SPoTNE Theory. This relationship is represented diagrammatically in Figure 6.2.

![Taxonomy of Learning Strategies](image)

**Figure 6.2 The SPoTNE Theory’s relationship with Learning Strategies**

Section 5.6.1 identified the ‘coping’ strategies and personal characteristics employed by the students in the study to achieve their goals and these are repeated below for convenience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Support Strategies</th>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>get in and do</td>
<td>Be prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepare routine/timetable</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-arrange with family</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise resources</td>
<td>Focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work hard</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourceful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data identified study support strategies and personal characteristics as mechanisms students use to cope with life, work and study. These strategies are reflected in the taxonomy of learning strategies developed by of McKeachie, et al. (1986) particularly the category of Resource Management. The coping mechanisms of prepare routine/timetable, pre-arrange with family and organise resources relate to the Time Management category. The coping mechanisms of ‘hard work’ and ‘get in and do’ attitude, fall into the Effort Management category along with the personal characteristics of being prepared, committed, enthusiastic, focused, timeliness and resourceful.

When the student’s coping mechanisms and personal characteristics are considered in relation to Cottrell’s (2008) C.R.E.A.M. (Creative, Reflective, Effective, Active, Motivated) Strategy of Learning Effectiveness, the coping mechanisms identified in the developed theory relate to the Effective category and the personal characteristics to the Active category. Within the C.R.E.A.M. strategy the ‘E’ relates to organizing the “space, time, priorities, state of mind and resources (information technology, IT) to the maximum benefit” (p 55). This strategy encompasses the student’s coping mechanism of prepare routine/timetable, pre-arrange with family and organise resources, while Active is defined as “being personally involved and doing things, physically and mentally in order to make sense of what you learn” (p 55). All this can be achieved when the student is prepared, committed, enthused, focused, resourceful, timely, hard working and gets in and does what is needed.

The use of the McKeachie, et al. (1986) taxonomy of learning strategy to describe the Resource Management Strategies that are embedded in the various and many learning strategy systems, provides a condensed overview of the Resource Management Strategies. Literature related to the resource management strategies is sparse and in the main these strategies emerge as part of larger studies. A study by Bird and Morgan (2003) into the issues, themes and concerns of adults in distance learning resulted in six themes being identified; fears, motivation, support from home, academic preparedness, suitability of programs and identity change. Of particular interest for this element of the SPoTNE Theory is the theme ‘support from home’. According to Bird and Morgan (2003), failure to anticipate and negotiate changes to the family routine through gaining family involvement and support will create discord within the family and impair the student’s ability to study effectively. In addition, Bunn (2004) identified the importance of family as a key support of student persistence in distance education. Furthermore,
fellow students, family and co-workers were found to be important support mechanisms helping students to persist with their study.

The personal characteristics of drive and determination were also found to be of considerable importance to students (Bunn, 2004). These characteristics encompass those identified in this current study as being important for success.

Moreover, Bunn (2004) identified the ability to manage the study workload as being important to students. In another study, Albaill (1997) found that “high-achieving students appear to accept responsibility and put considerable effort into performing the specific tasks related to college success than low-achieving students” (p 176).

Although the major focus of the studies considered is broadly related to the Resource Management Strategy, the findings identified also provide support for the Self Managing element of the SPoTNE Theory as the theory identified the importance of coping strategies, not only with their learning, but also with family, work, and social life, which all vie for attention in a student’s life.

### 6.4 Transactional Distance Theory

Moore (1993) states that the

> universe of relationships [in distance education] can be ordered into a typology that is shaped around the most elementary constructs of the field – namely, the structure of the instructional programmes, the interaction between learners and teachers, and the nature and degree of self-directedness of the learner (p 22).

Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory is based on the principle that the interactions between learner and teacher take the form of a transaction or “the interplay among the environment, the individuals and the patterns of behaviors in a situation” (Boyd & Apps in Moore, 1993, p. 22). In particular, the transaction that is distance education is characterized by the separation of the teachers and learners by space and/or time. This transactional distance becomes a “space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of the instructor and those of the learner” (Moore, 1993, p 22). In addition, Moore’s Theory identifies three clusters of variables: dialogue, structure and learner autonomy. Following is a brief discussion of each.
Chapter 6. Associated Theories

During the course of the interactions between teacher and learner dialogue is developed; “Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener; each is a contributor; and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties” (p 24). The term dialogue is used to denote the interactions as positive, purposeful, constructive and valued, with the purpose of working towards “the improved understanding of the student” (p 24). Gorsky and Caspi (2005) identified that “dialogue and transactional distance are inversely proportional, as one increased the other decreases” (p 3). Hypothetically, the more dialogue between teacher and learner, the greater the learner’s understanding, lessening the effect of the separation of space and/or time may have on the educational relationship. A critical analysis of Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory found that it was possible to reduce the theory to a tautology: “As understanding increases, misunderstanding decreases” (p 8).

The key to increasing student understanding depends on the dialogue between the learner and teacher. Moore (1989) identifies the aims of the teacher:

- Seek to stimulate/maintain student interest in the topic;
- Motivate the student to learn;
- Enhance/maintain learner interest including self-direction and self-motivation;
- “Organise students application of what is being learned
- Provide counsel, support and encouragement to each learner” (para 5).

The dialogue between teacher and learner, according to Moore (1989), that is most valuable for students, is through feedback and reality testing, in relation to correct application of the principles and concepts taught, and making students aware of the potential areas for application.

6.4.1 The SPoTNE Theory and Transactional Distance Theory

The final and most important element of the SPoTNE Theory is Human Support. From the data, it emerged that students were not only seeking academic support, but supportive guidance and mentoring. This was highly regarded, reflecting the aims for teachers identified by Moore (1989). The relationship between Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory and SPoTNE Theory are represented diagrammatically in Figure 6.3.
Moore (1989) identified three types of interactions that the teacher needs to aim towards when developing material, irrespective of the media type; Learner – Content; Learner – Instructor; and Learner – Learner, and discusses the importance of planning for all three types.

The discussion about interaction appears to have been refined and renamed as ‘dialogue’ in the Transactional Distance Theory (Moore, 1993), with the focus more on reducing the perceived space/time distance when teaching using any type of media. For the purpose of this current research, Transactional Distance Theory was included as a starting point for the discussion about the Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory, which within the concept of dialogue is critical in any learning space.

Rogers (1969), as a result of his experiences in the learning space, and those of other teachers, distilled ten guidelines for facilitating learning (refer Appendix H). Through these experience Rogers (1969) came to the realization that “I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered; self-appropriated learning” (p 153). Furthermore, “such self-discovered learning, truth that has been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience, cannot be directly communicated to another” (p 153). Rogers’ realization can be seen using today’s terminology, to be akin to lifelong learning, student centred learning, and learner autonomy. McLoughlin (2000) posits that the rise of online learning requires a new
mindset for organisations and teachers stating: “The new mindset for teaching staff is to support independent learning and offer multiple perspectives on the learning process” (p 145), as opposed to the perception that teaching is about delivering content and assessing learners.

The multiplicity of perspectives can be seen in the research on effective teachers and student perspectives on effective teachers (Chitsika, 2001; Helterbran, 2008; Menchaca & Bekele, 2008; Miliszewska & Sztendur, 2010; Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, & Moore, 2007; Shannon, 1998).

Table 6.4 summarises the results of these studies

It is to be noticed that some of the keywords from the literature presented in Table 6.4 are similar to the keywords that emerged during the current study on transnational higher education (refer Table 6.3). The last five keywords listed in column 2 of Table 6.3 while not new in the grand scheme of things highlight that communication with a person is very important to students who participated in this study.

Table 6.3  Keyword comparison between literature review and the current study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words in common from research</th>
<th>Keywords from current study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation/organisation</td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely feedback</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject knowledge</td>
<td>Constant contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Support when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthused</td>
<td>Develop good relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words and phrases in column 2,

Table 6.4 mirror many of those concepts identified by students participating in this current research as being characteristics they expect to see in their interactions with the Case Organisation as a whole. This ‘whole’ includes all human interaction points: unit coordinators, tutors and student administration. The studies into teacher effectiveness, referred to in

Table 6.4, specifically relate to the teaching and learning staff within an organisation.
### Table 6.4 Survey of the literature on effective teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Surveyed (author, year, title)</th>
<th>Salient Points from the findings of the literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Clarity and understandableness  
Knowledge of subject matter  
Preparation and organisation  
Enthusiasm for subject matter  
Teacher’s sensitivity to and concern with all levels and progress  
Encouragement of independent thought  
Setting high standards |
| Chitsika (2001) “And What About the Student?” *Incorporating Student Expectations into the delivery and Evaluation of Transnational Education.* | Friendliness  
Approachability  
Cheerfulness  
Ability to motivate  
Knows subject  
Tolerant & helpful  
Timely feedback  
Punctual  
Respects adult learners  
Gives detailed notes  
Prepares adequately |
Enthusiast  
Student centered  
Professional  
Expert  
Connector  
Transmitter  
Ethical  
Director |
| Helterbran (2008) *The Ideal Professor: Student Perceptions of Effective Instructor Practices.* | Knowledge and presentation (enthusiasm, motivated, willing to go above and beyond)  
Personal Qualities  
Professional/instructional qualities |
| Menchaca & Bekele (2008) *Learner and Instructor Identified Success Factors in Distance Education.* | Providing prompt and reflective feedback  
Support from instructors |
| Miliszewska & Szendur (2010) *Australian TNE Programmes in Southeast Asia: The Student Perspective.* | Understands programme requirements and student characteristics and needs  
Uses effective communication skills  
Demonstrated dedication to programme, teaching and students  
Is well prepared  
Timely feedback on assignments and projects |
An ongoing Australia Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) funded project (Willcoxson, Cotter, & Joy, 2011) into student attrition and retention provides support for the Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory. SPoTNE Theory identifies the characteristics of administrative staff are as important as characteristics of academic staff when interacting with students. The ALTC project identifies the sensitivity of administrative staff to student needs is important to student success.

The teaching and learning process as a whole has moved from purely transmission of knowledge and assessment of that knowledge, to a process that focuses on supporting students through guidance and mentoring, irrespective of the delivery platform (face-to-face, distance, transnational education).

6.5 Pulling it together

The thesis began by considering the global higher education landscape and then targeted transnational higher education which has emerged as an additional avenue for providing education to those keen to learn. The emergent theory describes transnational education from the students’ perspectives. This current chapter has introduced three associated theories in the body of knowledge which further underpin the relevance of the emergent theory. These theories, Andragogy, Transactional Distance Theory and Learning Strategies (in particular those strategies that promote student self management) display the elements identified in the emergent theory. The study found these strategies to be as relevant in the transnational higher education landscape as they were when they were originally developed. Each of the associated theories was introduced separately; however it is appropriate to pull it all together. Figure 6.4 displays the emergent SPoTNE Theory and its links with the three associated theories.

Moore (1993) states that the

universe of relationships [in distance education] can be ordered into a typology that is shaped around the most elementary constructs of the field – namely, the structure of the instructional programmes, the interaction between learners and teachers, and the nature and degree of self-directedness of the learner (p 22).
The elementary constructs of education remain the same irrespective of the delivery mode (face-to-face, distance or transnational). However for students of transnational higher education these elementary constructs of instructional programme structure, interaction between learners and teachers, and the self-directedness of the learner form the core of their learning experiences.
Chapter 6. Associated Theories

Figure 6.4 SPoTNE and Associated Theories

The SPoTNE Theory is a dynamic one with constant interplay between Real World Learning, Self Managing and Human Support. Human Support is the main concern for students. Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (2007) CARE-RESPECTED model (refer Appendix I) succinctly condenses what is the main concern for students. This model represents the teacher characteristics that students considered reflect effective teaching. CARE is the acronym for the identified meta-themes of communicator, advocate, responsible and empathetic. The SPoTNE Theory is the main concern for students. 

Andragogy: Core Adult Learning Principles (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2005, p. 4)

1. Learner’s Need to Know
   - Why
   - What
   - How

2. Self Concept of the Learner
   - Autonomous
   - Self-directing

3. Prior Experience of the Learner
   - Resource
   - Mental models

4. Readiness to Learn
   - Life-related
   - Developmental task

5. Orientation to Learning
   - Problem-centered
   - Contextual

6. Motivations to Learn
   - Intrinsically
   - Personal payoff

Taxonomy of Learning Strategies (McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin and Smith, 1988, p. 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Rehearsal Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Strategies</td>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management Strategies</td>
<td>Monitoring Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regulating Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transactional Distance Theory (Moore, 1993)

Learner autonomy is the extent to which in the teaching-learning relationship, it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme (p. 31).

A dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener, each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties. The direction of a dialogue in an educational relationship is toward the improved understanding of the student (p. 24).

Structure expresses the rigidity or flexibility of the programme’s educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. It describes the extent to which an educational programme can accommodate or responsive to each learner’s individual needs (p. 26).
empowering. RESPECTED, also an acronym, comprises the nine themes of responsive, enthusiast, student centered, professional, expert, connector, transmitter, ethical and director.

The participants of this research acknowledge that to be successful requires dedication, commitment and focus. Within these characteristics lie the importance of self management strategies, timetables, routines and hard work, all identified to be of importance. Without such characteristics they may not be successful in achieving their goal.

The motivation to undertake transnational higher education study for these students was varied, however, study was seen as a purposeful activity and a means to an end, so long as the subject content is real world and relevant to what the students perceived that workplaces are looking for in their employees.

6.6 Summary
This chapter has considered some of the literature and theories within three main areas of the related body of knowledge; adult education, learning strategies and distance education, each of which are related to one or more of the elements in the SPoTNE Theory. In particular, the existing theories of Knowles’s Andragogy, Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory, and Learning Strategy Systems, provided further insight into the landscape of transnational higher education.

From Andragogy, the core principles of self-concept of the learner, and motivation to learn support the SPoTNE Theory element of Self Managing, as the Andragogy principles are identified by the participants of this study as being an important part of success. The core principles of Readiness to Learn and Orientation to Learning encourage view that learning materials should be relevant to what is happening in the real world, matching what emerged in the SPoTNE Theory element of Real World Learning.

Individual Learning Strategy Systems tend to concentrate on the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that students can employ to assist their learning. Often the resource management strategies of time management, study environment and support of others are not emphasised. It is these strategies that the participants identified as being most helpful for their success and are therefore embodied in the SPoTNE Theory element of
Self Managing.

Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory concentrates on the concept of dialogue; the positive communication between teacher and student that reduces misunderstandings. The SPoTNE Theory element of Human Support expands this to identify that a more interactive relationship, with not only teachers but also administrative personnel, is sought by the participants of the study.

This comparative exercise with some of the existing body of literature has provided further insight and support for the SPoTNE Theory.
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

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7.1 Introduction

Higher education activity around the globe has been identified as a dynamic market place, with each geographical region undergoing different processes to give their citizens the skills and knowledge to face the challenges of the future. Globalisation has reduced geographical distances and with favourable financial and economic conditions, students are taking advantage of the mobility offered to study in other countries. Australia has benefited from this trend. However, the recent changes to student study and work visa rules have placed higher education providers in a challenging position. Their services are needed to skill the future workforce, but they also need the income from international students. The mobility of students between countries for education is only one of several modes available for the provision of education into the international market or transnational education. For students, the flexibility of being able to study ‘anytime and anywhere’ due to the advances in technology and the convergence of technology, makes the virtual/distance mode of transnational education appealing for gaining the skills needed for better employment. Higher education providers who can respond to the growing demand for ‘for anytime and anywhere’ education need to ensure that their programs offer a level of quality that will attract students. Understanding what their perspectives are can be of great assistance to higher education providers.

This study began with the desire to find out how the students of the Case Organisation were coping with their studies. To be able to do this two aims were identified:

1. Examine the emerging transnational higher education landscape, and

2. Examine students’ perspectives of transnational higher education where information technology is used as the sole medium for all communications and
Chapters Two and Three have provided the information needed to understand the emerging transnational higher education landscape, first through a consideration of the current state of higher education globally. Second through consideration of what is known about transnational higher education, its stakeholders and communication medium. The research design chosen to help achieve the second aim, examining student perspectives on transnational higher education, was the Glaserian variant of Grounded Theory as it was flexible, allowing the freedom for the concerns of the students to emerge from the data. All students enrolled with the Case Organisation, at the time of data collection, were invited to participate in the study. The data was collected using two methods; first, an online survey to obtain initial themes, and second, electronic interviews to further develop the identified themes. The Case Organisation, established in 2005, is a non-self accrediting provider of higher education, registered and accredited with the Queensland Office of Higher Education to deliver their programs via a distance mode.

The result of the study is a substantive theory: The Student Perspective of Transnational Education (SPoTNE) Theory. The substantive theory identified that for students who participated in the study, transnational higher education is seen as a means to achieving their goal to change their current situation for a better one which would in turn be a life-changing activity. The motivations that moved students to undertake study were many and varied. Students recognized that to be successful they had to be dedicated and committed to their study. The students have definite expectations in regard to learning materials; however, their main concern throughout their study program was the level of ‘support’. As students learn, support is provided in two ways: first, through the learning materials, and second, human support. The study found that of these two interaction points, human support was more critical for these students. It was shown that the balancing of these interaction points would affect the student’s learning and their perceived movement forward to obtain their goals.

The SPoTNE Theory was nested back into the body of knowledge through a consideration of three relevant associated theories, Knowles Andragogy theory, Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory, and Learning Support Strategies. The SPoTNE Theory and its links with the associated theories is displayed in Figure 7.1. This concluding chapter will consider the contributions made to the body of knowledge, the implications
Chapter 7. Conclusion

for practice, and finally, future research.

Figure 7.1 SPoTNE and Associated Theories (repeat of Figure 6.3).

**Taxonomy of Learning Strategies**
(McKeachie, Finnie, Lin and Smith, 1986, p. 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Rehearsal Strategies</th>
<th>Elaboration Strategies</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Strategies</td>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
<td>Monitoring Strategies</td>
<td>Regulating Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resource Management Strategies**
- Time Management
- Study Environment
- Effort Management
- Support of Others

**Andragogy: Core Adult Learning Principles**
(Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2005, p. 4)

1. Learner's Need to Know
   - Why
   - What
   - How

2. Self-Concept of the Learner
   - Autonomously
   - Self-directing

3. Prior Experience of the Learner
   - Resource
   - Mental models

4. Readiness to Learn
   - Life related
   - Developmental task

5. Orientation to Learning
   - Problem-centered
   - Contextual

6. Motivation to Learn
   - Intrinsic value
   - Personal payoff

**Transactional Distance Theory**
(Moore, 1993)

- Learner autonomy is the extent to which in the teaching/learning relationship, it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme (p. 31)

- A dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener, each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties... The direction of a dialogue in an educational relationship is toward the improved understanding of the student. (p. 24)

- Structure expresses the rigidity or flexibility of the programme's educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. It describes the extent to which an educational programme can accommodate or be responsive to each learner's individual needs. (p. 26)
7.2 Contributions to Knowledge

The aim of the research was to discover and conceptualise transnational education from a student perspective. In achieving this aim, the research has yielded a substantive theory and several other contributions to knowledge. The substantive theory presented in Section 5.6 provides an insight into transnational students and what they perceive transnational education to be. It is this substantive theory that is the main contribution to knowledge.

Ziguras and Hoare (2009) identified that there is little literature in the public domain which focuses on the student voice in relation to transnational higher education, in particular, in five key areas of:

- Reasons for choosing to study in foreign programs at home rather than domestic or overseas alternatives;
- Perceptions of quality and relevance of transnational programs;
- Engagement with awarding institution;
- Cultural interaction; and
- Employment and migration outcomes

Therefore, any research into student perspectives on transnational higher education helps to build a more complete picture of the transnational higher education landscape. The SPoTNE Theory contributes to the process of understanding the landscape, by concentrating on the first three key areas listed by Ziguras and Hoare (2009): that is, reasons for studying, perceptions of quality, and engagement with the institution. The substantive theory can also be used as a starting point for the development of a hypothesis for testing and further refining the substantive theory.

Other contributions to knowledge can be grouped in the following ways:

- Theoretical literature,
- Academic literature, and
- Method.

Apart from adding to the body of knowledge, contributions made can also support, add to, and challenge the current body of literature. Table 7.1 presents a summary of the types of contributions that have been made to the body of knowledge which are discussed in detail in the following sections.
### Table 7.1. Contributions to knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Added</th>
<th>Challenged</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Literature</td>
<td>Knowles’ Andragogy</td>
<td>Support from home and the personal characteristics of drive and determination</td>
<td>Students Perspectives of Transnational Education (SPoTNE) Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In particular core principles 2, 4, 5 and 6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Strategy Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moore’s Transactional Distance</td>
<td>In particular dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In particular Resource Management Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Literature</td>
<td>Onwuegbuzie, et al. (2007) CARE-RESPECTED Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willecoxson, et al. (in press) The importance of Administrative support to students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bird &amp; Morgan (2003) ‘support from home’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>To literature – critical analysis of three major variants of GT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.2.1 Theoretical Literature

Students who undertake distance education are generally adults who have life experience and are juggling work and or family commitments. Andragogy is generally defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Merriam et al. 2007, p 84; Merriam, 2001, p 5; Reischmann, 2004, p 3) or “the art and science of facilitating adult learning” (Choy & Delahaye, 2002, p 1).

Knowles’ Andragogy is based on two central tenets; 1) learners are seen as self directed and autonomous, and 2) the role of the teacher is a facilitator of learning, not a presenter of content.
From these tenets Knowles identifies six assumptions regarding adult learners:

- Assumption 1 – Learners’ Need to Know;
- Assumption 2 – Self Concept of the Learner;
- Assumption 3 – Prior Experience of the Learner;
- Assumption 4 – Readiness to Learn;
- Assumption 5 – Orientation to Learning; and
- Assumption 6 – Motivation to Learn.

This research offers support for four of these assumptions, 2, 4, 5 and 6. Assumptions 1 and 3 are not included as support for them did not emerge from the data.

The elements of Self Managing and Real World Learning, in the SPoTNE Theory, mirror these assumptions, identifying them as relevant to transnational higher education and indicative of the students that study transnationally.

The second basic tenet of Teacher as facilitator is echoed in the Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory. Students need to know that the people they liaise with, either academically or administratively, are caring concerned people who are understanding and supportive of students.

**Learning Strategy Systems** is a large area of research that tends to focus on cognitive and metacognitive strategies for learning. There is little focus given to the Resource Management Strategies identified by McKeachie, et al. (1986) Taxonomy of Learning Strategies. However, it is the Resource Management Strategies that students identified as the strategies they use to manage study, work, and life. This research adds to the Research Management Strategies with two important considerations; ‘support from home’ and the personal characteristics of drive and determination. Times have changed since 1986, when McKeachie, et al. (1986) developed their Taxonomy of Learning Strategies to today. Many students are juggling family life with work and study. The ability to negotiate changes to family routines and obtain family support has been identified by Bunn (2004) as a concern of students. This same theme was expressed by students in the current research. Drive and determination were also identified by Bunn (2004) as being important student characteristics which were also evidenced in this research as being important for success.
Moore’s (1989) **Transactional Distance Theory** was included as a starting point for discussion, as the concept of dialogue was found to be a critical element in any learning space. However, the use of the word ‘dialogue’ to encapsulate the interaction between teacher and learner reduces the interaction to a conversation or exchange of ideas, instead of a human activity, where people interact together whether that be socialising, communicating or reaching out. Moore’s (1989) ‘dialogue’ appears to be leached of any emotion and/or feeling which is still present in the word ‘interaction’. The current research challenges the use of the term ‘dialogue’. The Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory identifies the importance of the presence of emotion and feeling to the students, when interacting with others, be it academically or administratively.

### 7.2.2 Academic Literature

Onwuegbuzie, et al. (2007) completed a validity study of teaching evaluation forms. What emerged was the CARE-RESPECTED model of teaching evaluation. This model represents the teacher characteristics that students considered to reflect effective teaching. CARE is the acronym for the identified meta-themes of communicator, advocate, responsible and empowering. RESPECTED, also an acronym, comprises the nine themes of responsive, enthusiast, student centered, professional, expert, connector, transmitter, ethical and director. The current research supports this model as it succinctly encapsulates all that is in the Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory. The meta-themes and themes identified support the student desire to know that the people they are liaising with, either academically or administratively, are caring and attentive to the student needs.

One study into student attrition and retention identified sensitivity of administrative staff is just as important as academic staff when interacting with students (Willcoxson, Cotter, & Joy, 2011). The Human Support element of the SPoTNE Theory also highlights the importance of sensitivity of administrative staff, confirming the findings of Willcoxson, et al. (2011). The context of Willcoxson, et al. (2011) study is not related to transnational education, but the principles governing support mechanisms for students extends across all delivery platforms.

Bird and Morgan (2003) identified six themes that concern adults in distance learning; fears, motivation, support from home, academic preparedness, suitability of programs and identity change. In relation to the ‘support from home’ theme, they found that failure to anticipate and negotiate changes to the family routine through gaining family
involvement and support will create discord within the family and impair the students’ ability to study effectively. This ‘support from home’ theme is mirrored in the Self Managing element of the SPoTNE Theory. Strategies that participants used to support their studies included ‘pre-arranging with family’ to establish routines that would allow the student time and environment to study effectively.

7.2.3 Method
Grounded Theory is a research design that “produces an ever opening and evolving theory on a subject” (Glaser, 1978, p ix). However, it has been noted that Grounded Theory is seen to be equivalent to “anything goes” (Suddaby, 2006, p 640). This study conducted a critical analysis of the three major variants (Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist), first, through a comparison of the coding stages; second, considering the other vital concepts of theoretical sampling and saturation, theoretical sensitivity, literature and criteria for judging the theory; and third, a consideration of two debates surrounding Grounded Theory, emergence and forcing, and Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA).

This critical analysis adds to the Grounded Theory body of knowledge by providing a starting point for researchers who are considering using the Glaserian variant of Grounded Theory for their research design.

7.3 Implications for practice
Globalisation and technology have reduced geographical distance while at the same time enlarging the higher education landscape. In a world where there is economic uncertainty and shortages of skilled workers, higher education is both dynamic and filled with opportunities. As more higher education providers move into the transnational education landscape, the importance of ‘getting it right’ from the students’ perspectives, becomes increasingly important.

In providing a service to students the SPoTNE Theory identifies the importance of real world learning to the students, ensuring that relevance and applicability of the learning materials is achievable. However, of greater concern to the student is the human support they receive, and it is in this area that this research identifies implications for practice. The implications focus on two key players in the provision of higher education services; the staff and the institution.
In many cases, academics are employed by institutions because they are experts in their disciplinary fields. However, the SPoTNE Theory shows that there is a need for these disciplinary experts to become education experts. The implication for individuals is the need to move out of comfort zones to effectively communicate, engage with, and support transnational learners who are seeking people who are caring, concerned, understanding, and supportive of students. Some academics naturally display these characteristics; for others not so inclined, self-reflection and pro-active self development are required if they are in positions which involve interaction with transnational students. However, it is not only the academic’s responsibility alone to be caring, concerned, understanding and supportive. Students expect these same qualities to be displayed by all staff of the institution, including administrative staff. Administrative staff provide the first point of contact for students when difficulties with timetabling and finances occur, and as such it is just as important for administrative staff to be self-reflective and pro-active in seeking self development as it is for academic staff.

The administrative and academic staff are the institution’s representatives. It is through these interaction points that students make judgments about the institution and its reputation for quality and service. The need for administrative and academic staff professional development should be supported by institutions through the provision of personal development opportunities in the fields of effective communication and/or pedagogy.

The other institutional implication occurs when planning transnational education programs. Not only should staff have the skills the students require, the SPoTNE Theory highlights that the learning materials also need to be developed in a way which highlights relevance and applicability of the subjects to the students current and/or future workplaces.

### 7.4 Future research

The lack of literature that focuses on student perspectives on transnational higher education, and the suggested key areas identified by Ziguras and Hoare (2009), establish the need for future research. Globalisation and the dynamic nature of higher education around the globe reinforce and intensify this need, if the higher education providers are to thrive. The SPoTNE Theory can be used as the starting point for the development of
hypotheses to test:

- The relevance of the substantive theory, in the transnational higher education landscape and its possible application in other educational areas such as distance and face-to-face.

- The perceptions of quality; what do the students understand quality to be and how it is displayed within their interactions with academics, administrative staff, and learning materials.

Also identified as an area of future research is the student goal of ‘Obtaining Migration Points’, along with the significance of transnational education being ‘life-changing’. Ziguras and Hoare (2009) identified student migration goals as needing research to obtain the students’ voice. The current research was unable to follow up on the significance of ‘life-changing’ however comments made by students portray a sense of urgency and importance, almost a grand vision of their future. Research into the implications of these goals will provide further insight into the students as well as assisting organisations and educators who interact with these students.

### 7.5 Limitations and Challenges

A theory endeavours to explain a phenomenon and how it works. Chapters 5 and 6 report the development of the SPoTNE Theory and how it works. It would be remiss not to reflect on the process and consider some of the limitations and challenges that emerged.

Despite a slight technical hitch, the survey was well received with responses coming in from participants in Australia, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Singapore. The majority came from Fiji and Kenya which are developing countries. The online, interviews once they commenced, went well. Initially, there was only three participants. Permission from the Case Organisation to contact the managers of the Study Support Centres provided the opportunity to canvas more participants. All the participants in this stage of data collection came from either Fiji, Ghana or Kenya. The resulting substantive theory may portray a developing country flavour, although, the author sees the substantive theory as being relevant across all countries despite their development status.

Whilst the electronic interviews were taking place it became difficult to maintain
contact with some participants. The interviews were happening about the same time as political upheaval was happening in Fiji, and the author suspects the loss of contact may have been connected to what was happening in the country. Although technology allows greater flexibility for the researcher, this same technology and politics can also pose unforeseeable challenges for researchers.

7.6 Conclusion

The aim of the research was to discover and conceptualise students’ perspectives of transnational higher education. This thesis provides a written report that describes how this aim was achieved. Chapters Two and Three described the research landscapes of higher education and transnational higher education by providing a background into the substantiative area of research. Chapter Four detailed the design of the research project identifying the chosen methodology. Chapter Five described the process used for data collection and analysis and introduced the SPoTNE Theory that was developed from conceptualising the students perspectives. In addition, the chapter considered the worthiness of the theory. Chapter Six discussed how the substantive theory nests back into the literature, in particular, Knowles Andragogy Theory, Moore’s Transactional Distance Theory and Learning Support Strategies. This chapter considered the contributions to knowledge and practice before making suggestions for future research.

The research and resulting substantive theory is timely given the impacts, in Australia, of the global financial crisis, the 2008 review of higher education, and the changes to the visa application process for international students. The Australian Higher Education sector has been coping with the reduction of federal government funding through increasing the number of full fee paying international students. Furthermore, the recent visa restrictions have effectively reduced this profitable revenue stream for universities and other higher education providers. Another revenue stream must be sourced if providers are to survive and expand. Transnational higher education, to this point in time, has been a minor revenue stream, but potentially may grow over time. Recent changes to the higher education landscape have moved transnational higher education further into the spotlight as a viable option for delivering education. Any moves in this direction require an understanding of the potential students. The current research provides a picture of the transnational higher education student that is critically important if institutions are to effectively, and successfully engage in the transnational higher education landscape.
REFERENCES


References


# APPENDIX A HESA 2003 Tables A, B and C

Table A, B and C Providers as Identified in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Act No. 149 of 2003 as amended. This compilation of the Act was prepared on 1 January 2008 taking into account amendments up to Act No. 170 of 2007)

## 16-15 Table A providers
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Darwin University
- Charles Sturt University
- Curtin University of Technology
- Deakin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Griffith University
- James Cook University
- La Trobe University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- Queensland University of Technology
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
- Southern Cross University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- The Australian National University
- The Flinders University of South Australia
- The University of Adelaide
- The University of Melbourne
- The University of Queensland
- The University of Sydney
- The University of Western Australia
- University of Ballarat
- University of Canberra
- University of Newcastle
- University of New England
- University of New South Wales
- University of South Australia
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of Tasmania
- University of Technology, Sydney
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- University of Western Sydney
- University of Wollongong
- Victoria University
- Australian Catholic University
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

(2) However, a body is not a Table A provider if its approval as a higher education provider is revoked or suspended.

## 16-20 Table B providers
- Bond University
- The University of Notre Dame Australia
- Melbourne College of Divinity

(2) However, a body is not a Table B provider if its approval as a higher education provider is revoked or suspended.

## 16-22 Table C providers
- Carnegie Mellon University, a non-profit organisation established under Pennsylvania law

(2) However, a body is not a Table C provider if its approval as a higher education provider is revoked or suspended.
## APPENDIX B Theoretical Coding Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Examples of Family members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Six C’s</td>
<td>Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances and Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Stages, staging, phases, progressions, passages, gradations, transitions, steps, ranks, careers, orderings, trajectories, chains sequencings, temporaling, shaping and cycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, polarity, extreme, boundary, rank, grades, continuum, probability, possibility, level, cutting points, critical juncture, statistical average, deviation, standard deviation, exemplar, modicum, full, partial, almost, half and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Dimensions, elements, division, piece of, properties of, facet, slice, sector, portion, segment, part, aspect, section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Type, form, kinds, styles classes, genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Strategies, tactics, mechanisms, managed, way, manipulations, maneuverings, dealing with, handling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependence, interdependence, interaction of effects covariance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Point</td>
<td>Boundary, critical juncture, cutting point, turning point, breaking point, benchmark, division, cleavage, scales, in-out, intra-extra, tolerance levels, dichotomy, trichotomy, polychotomy, deviance, point of no return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means-goal</td>
<td>End, purpose, goal, anticipated consequence, products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Social norms, social values, social beliefs, social sentiments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Clusters, agreements, contracts, definitions of the situation, uniformities, opinions, conflict, discensus, differential perceptions, cooperation, homogenitety-heterogeniety, conformity, non conformity, mutual expectation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainline</th>
<th>Social control, recruitment, Socialization, Stratification, Status passage, Social organization, Social order, Social Institutions, Social interactions, Social Worlds, Social mobility, etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Parsimony, scope, integration, density, conceptual level, relationship to data, relationship to other theory, clarity, fit, relevance, modifiability, utility, condensibility, inductive-deductive balance and inter-feeding, degree of, multivariate structure, use of theoretical codes, interpretive, explanatory and predictive power, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering and Elaboration</td>
<td>Structural, temporal, generality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Collective, group, nation, organization, aggregate, situation, context, arena, social world, behavioral pattern, territorial units, society, family, etc. and positional units: status, role, role relationship, status-set, role-set, person-set, role partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Concepts, problems and hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models</td>
<td>Drawing the theory pictorially.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Condensed from Glaser 1978, pp. 72-82

### Additional Families
Brief list of additional families identified by Glaser (1998):
- Basics Family
  - Basic Social Structural process
  - Basic Social Structural Condition
  - Basic Social Psychological Process
  - Basic Psychological Process
- Interactive Family Supplement
  - Traffic Interaction
  - Distant and delayed Interactions
  - Face to back Interactions
  - A symmetrical Interaction
- Paired Opposite Family
- Representation Family
- Scale Family
- Boundary Family
- Unit Identity Family
- The Average Family
APPENDIX C Survey Instrument

Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project.

Your participation in this project is voluntary and you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty however the data already collected will be used in aggregation with the other data collected and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with [Case Organisation] (for example your grades).

Your participation in the first stage will involve completing an anonymous online survey. The survey has 41 questions and should take between 15-20 minutes to complete. Please note that it will not be possible to withdraw from this stage, once you have submitted the initial online survey. The submission of the completed survey is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project. If you would like to continue your involvement in the study contact the Researcher on the email address included at the end of the survey. Stage 2 will investigate the themes identified from the survey.

The research team would like to thank you and the University of the Sunshine Coast for the assistance provided to successfully complete the research project.

For more details about the project please read the Participant Information Sheet.

Again, thank you for your assistance it is greatly appreciated.

Sherre Roy
Ethics Approval no: S/08/163

Start
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

General Information

1. What Course are you studying?
   - Dip. Business
   - B. Business Administration
   - Grad Dip Business Administration
   - M. Business Administration
   - Dip Information Technology
   - B. Information Technology
   - Grad. Dip. Information Systems
   - Assoc. Deg. Business
   - Grad Cert Business
   - Grad Dip International Business
   - M. International Business
   - Assoc. Deg. Information Technology
   - Grad.Cert. Information Systems
   - M. Information Systems

2. Are you studying:
   - Full Time (3 Trimesters/year)
   - Part Time (1-2 Trimesters/year)

3. How many trimesters have you studied with IOTA? [ ]

4. What country are you studying in?
   - Australia
   - Ghana
   - Kenya
   - Nepal
   - Saudi Arabia
   - United Kingdom
   - Fiji
   - India
   - Malaysia
   - Nigeria
   - Singapore
   - Vietnam

5. Gender:
   - Male
   - Female
6. Age Range:
- 18 - 29
- 30 - 42
- 43 - 54
- 55 and over
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Questions about your interactions with [Case Organisation]

7. [Case Organisation] Student Administration provides good support.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree ● ● ● ● ● ● Agree ●

8. The Staff are helpful and polite.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree ● ● ● ● ● ● Agree ●

9. My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree ● ● ● ● ● ● Agree ●

10. I can log-on to the student intranet easily.

    1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
    Disagree ● ● ● ● ● ● Agree ●

11. Unit results are released in a timely manner

    1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
    Disagree ● ● ● ● ● ● Agree ●

12. Describe an instance where you had a bad experience with Student Administration.
13. Describe an instance where you had a good experience with Student Administration.
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Questions about your interactions with Unit Coordinators

14. The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

15. I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

16. The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

17. The Coordinators provided timely responses to my questions.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

18. Students are given an appropriate amount of guidance.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

19. The Coordinators develop a good rapport with students.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree

20. The Coordinators communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  N/A
   Disagree  Agree
21. Describe an instance where you had a **bad** experience with a Unit Coordinator.

22. Describe an instance where you had a **good** experience with a Unit Coordinator.
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Questions about the learning materials

23. The course materials are easy to access.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

24. My learning experiences with the units has been interesting and thought provoking.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

25. The Unit Outlines help me to understand the Unit requirements.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

26. I found the units relevant to my (potential) career.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

27. The Units cover topics at an appropriate depth.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

28. It was clear how we were expected to use the Student Intranet.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

29. The Sessions are easy to understand.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●

30. I have the flexibility to design my study time around my other commitments.
   1 2 3 4 5 6   N/A
   Disagree  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  ●  Agree  ●
31. Describe an instance where you had a bad experience with the learning materials.

32. Describe an instance where you had a good experience with the learning materials.
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Questions about the Study Support Centre

33. Having access to a Study Support Centre is helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

34. Tutors at the Study Support Centre develop a good rapport with the students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

35. I was able to meet with the Tutor easily.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

36. The Tutors seemed to know their subject matter well.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

37. The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

38. The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree

39. I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
Disagree Agree
40. Describe an instance where you had a **bad** experience with the Study Support Centre.

41. Describe an instance where you had a **good** experience with the Study Support Centre.

Remember once you submit your responses you will not be able to withdraw from this stage of the research.
Student Experiences of Transnational Education Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey, it is greatly appreciated.

Participation in Stage 2

We are looking for students who would be willing to participate in Stage 2 of the research. This would involve having a online interview/conversation with the researcher to find out more about your experiences with Transnational Education by exploring the themes identified in the Survey.

If you would like to participate in Stage 2, please contact Sherre on the following email address: smr014@student.usc.edu.au using the subject line "Research Project".
APPENDIX D Interview Questions

Beginning Questions:
1. Getting to know a little about you, such as where you work, what you do, etc.
2. Finding out why you did decide to complete a degree?
3. Finding out why you chose to study with [Case Organisation]?

Following Questions:

4. How do you cope with all the commitment, what strategies do you use? (only asked of those who indicated that they had family and work commitments as well as study)
5. What are your expectations of [Case Organisation], how can they help you be a successful student?
6. In your opinion what makes a successful student?
7. What sort of assistance do you get from the tutors?
8. Is there anything that they don’t do that you think would be helpful?
9. What do tutors expect of students?
10. What sort of assistance do you get from the Unit Coordinators?
11. Is there anything that they don’t do that you think would be helpful?
12. What do Unit Coordinators expect of students?

Questions asked of Study Centre Managers:

1. What are some of the reasons why student decide to study/complete a degree?
2. What are some of the reasons why student decide to study with [Case Organisation]?
3. What are students’ expectations of [Case Organisation]?
4. What are some of the characteristics that make a successful student?
5. Are many students working and studying at the same time?
6. What do students think about how the online sessions are structured?
7. As someone who manages tutors, what do you expect from the tutors in relation to how they interact with students?
8. As a tutor what do you expect from students?
9. In what ways can you assist student with their studies?
APPENDIX E Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Information Sheet

“Student Experiences of Transnational Education: Learning mediated through Information Technology”
Ethics Approval No: S/08/163

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. It is being undertaken as part of a PhD project for Sherre Roy at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia.

The research team requests your assistance because globalization has provided an alternative avenue through which education providers can assist those keen to learn. It is important that your feedback is captured to help IOTA as it strives for continual betterment (quality improvement) in regards to quality which will flow on to provide a level of service that meets your and future students expectations not just in your country but around the globe as they “seek to contribute to social justice through the provision of quality Australian higher education that is accessible to students worldwide”

The purpose of this project is to examine student experiences of transnational higher education mediated by Information Technology. The project will investigate what students’ feel about the structure and delivery of programs through their experiences with the content, study centres and support people.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participating at any time during the project without comment or penalty however the data already collected will be used in aggregation with the other data collected and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with IOTA (for example your grades).

Your participation in the first stage will involve completing an anonymous online survey. Please note that it will not be possible to withdraw from this stage, once you have submitted the initial online survey. The submission of the completed survey is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project. If you would like to continue your involvement in the study contact the Researcher on the email address included at the end of the survey. Stage 2 will investigate the themes identified from the survey.

It is expected that this project may or may not benefit you in person, depending on how far through your degree you are. However, it is hoped that the outcomes obtained as a result of your participation will benefit students who commence studying with IOTA in the future. There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project and all comments and responses are anonymous and will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses.

Please contact the Supervisors below to have any questions answered or if you require further information about the project.

The research team would like to thank you and the University of the Sunshine Coast for the assistance provided to successfully complete the research project.

Many thanks The Research Team.

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Faculty of Science, Health and Education
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DipTeach Sd., BEd N.Territory, GradDipEd S Aust., GradDipBus
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If you have any complaints about the way this research project is being conducted you can contact the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast: (c/- The Research Ethics Officer, Teaching and Research Services, University of the Sunshine Coast, Maroochydore DC 4558; telephone (161 7) 5459 4574; facsimile (161 7) 5430 1177; e-mail humanethics@usc.edu.au)
## APPENDIX F Summary of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about students interactions with the Case Organisation</th>
<th>As Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Student Administration provides good support</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The staff are helpful and polite</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I could log-on to the student intranet easily</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Unit results are released in a timely manner</td>
<td>16.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about students interactions with Unit Coordinators</th>
<th>As Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Disagree (1 – 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments</td>
<td>7.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I found the feedback I was given was helpful in improving my work</td>
<td>9.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The coordinators were approachable and helpful</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The coordinators provided timely responses to my questions</td>
<td>7.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Students are given an appropriate amount of guidance</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The coordinators develop a good rapport with students</td>
<td>7.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The coordinators communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about the learning materials</th>
<th>As Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Disagree (1 – 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The course materials are easy to access</td>
<td>8.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My learning experience with the units has been interesting and thought provoking</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The unit outlines help me to understand the course requirements</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I found the units relevant to my career</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The units cover topics at an appropriate depth</td>
<td>8.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. It was clear how we were expected to use the student intranet</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The sessions are easy to understand</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I have the flexibility to design my study time around my other commitments</td>
<td>18.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about the student interactions with Study Support Centres</th>
<th>As Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Disagree (1 – 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Having access to a learning support centre is helpful</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Tutors at the learning support centre develop a good rapport with the students</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I was able to meet with the tutor easily</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The tutor seemed to know their subject matter well</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. The learning support centre provides adequate access to the resources. (ie. Computer labs, tutors, etc)</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The missing question numbers relate to the demographic or the open ended questions*
APPENDIX G Human Support Codes and Quotes

Codes (59): [Access] [Access-helpful-SSC-bad] [access-helpful-SSC-good] [approachable-UC-bad] [approachable-UC-good] [Caring] [Communications] [Customer Service] [develop-rapport-UC-bad] [develop-rapport-UC-good] [Effective] [feedback-UC-bad] [feedback-UC-good] [Flexible-HS] [Good interactions-UC] [Grace] [guidance-UC-bad] [guidance-UC-good] [Helpful] [Inconvenience-Student] [Liasing] [Neglect] [Open] [Org - fair assessment] [Organisation] [Personal Qualities] [Personalised support - SSC] [Professional] [resource-access-SSC-bad] [resource-access-SSC-good] [Resources] [SSC - limited contact with] [SSC - personal relationships] [student-interaction-SSC-bad] [Student-interaction-SSC-good] [Student Interaction] [Subject-Enthusiasm-HS] [support-Org-bad] [Support-Org-Good] [Support available when needed-SSC] [Support when needed] [Timeliness] [timeliness-SSC-bad] [timely-Org-bad] [timely-Org good] [timely-SSC-bad] [timely-UC-bad] [timely-UC-good] [Timely feedback-UC] [Trust] [tutor-access-SSC-bad] [tutor-access-SSC-good] [tutor-develop-rapport-SSC-bad] [tutor-develop-rapport-SSC-good] [Tutor-good interactions-SSC] [tutor-subject-knowledge-SSC-good] [UC - no timely feedback - sense of neglect/isolation] [Understanding-HS] [Unfairness]

Quotation(s): 345

---

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:3 [due to the lesser number of st..] (8:8)
Codes: [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support]

due to the lesser number of students facilitators created a personal relationship with the students themselves

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:6 [friendly staff] (8:8) (Super)
Codes: [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support]

friendly staff

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:7 [but what mattered most were th..] (8:8)
Codes: [Org - Quality Education content - Family: TDHE] [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support]

but what mattered most were the people and quality education that they provide

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:8 [he available and appropriate b..] (11:11) (Super)
Codes: [Resources - Family: Human Support]

he available and appropriate book for the specified unit that

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:9 [but there are people who are m..] (11:11)
Codes: [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support]

but there are people who are more than willing to help out which is great

P 1: Participant_1_Communication_1.doc - 1:12 [I mean if it were a unit which..] (11:11)
Codes: [Support available when needed-SSC - Family: Human Support]

I mean if it were a unit which was available on campus than I would have been over the moon knowing I do not really need to focus on the hard parts because I know the facilitator is there to do the hard work of understanding and analyzing the notes for us and teach us in the most simple and effective way and if there were any queries regarding anything I would be more than happy to stress my facilitator out and see how much he really knows about the unit

P 3: Participant_1_Communication_3.doc - 3:3 [study centres] (6:6)
Codes: [SSC - limited contact with - Family: Human Support]

study centres
great interaction with my unit co-ordinators both locally and the ones in australia

because i keep constant contact with my unit co-ordinators

because i keep constant contact with my unit co-ordinators in australia and i tend to get extensions on assignments and so forth

I mean if you do not explain your situation to them than they really would not know what is going on and so forth. I mean each and every individual out there has different personalities and commitments as well and it is good that you be in constant contact with you unit co-ordinators so they understand your situation and I am a very talktive and out spoken person.

To be honest, I do not have any expectation from [Case Organisation] student Admin nor the study centre coz i guess i really do not have tym for that.

Also if you wanting to knw what i expect from the Unit co-ordinators than ill just say the "Understanding Bit", thats all i can say

So i mean i do not expect anything from unit co-ordinators except for their understanding and thats about it and the rest is what the student must achive and that is get into the good books of the facilitator them selves.

UT what i always say is in order to get extensions on assignments and being a talkative person, one must create good relations with their facilitator's and be in good terms with them.

Students here in Fiji are of shy nature, you will hardly have any student communicate with their facilitator's even if they do not know a particular aspect of their unit
[Case Organisation] offers the exact alternative (online) with supporting study centers that meet my requirements. I can study and work at the same time!

Gain enough knowledge to empower me to study for my PhD and beyond. Receive a fair assessment from [Case Organisation] upon completion.

Feedbacks form my unit coordinators that I can incorporate into my learning activities to build my capacity.

And I can say for a fact that if you do not receive feedback on time, you feel neglected.

Course details and resource requirements were given on the day the trimester started. Ideally this information should be communicated earlier to enable students to arrange for text books etc.

Students were given a bit of a grace period to submit their weekly tasks.

The study notes are quite effective and summarises the sessions well.
The response time from the [Case Organisation] Fiji support centre is not good. They need to improve or if they have resource constraints then this should be looked at.

[Case Organisation] Fiji has helpful staff and they are flexible in their approach.

Course details and resource requirements were given on the day the trimester started. Ideally this information should be communicated earlier to enable students to arrange for text books etc.

The Staff are helpful and polite.

My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.

Unit results are released in a timely manner.

Students were given a bit of a grace period to submit their weekly tasks.

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.
15. I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

The Coordinators provided timely responses to my questions.

Students are given an appropriate amount of guidance.

The Coordinators develop a good rapport with students

The Coordinators communicated their enthusiasm for the subject

Having access to a Study Support Centre is helpful

Tutors at the Study Support Centre develop a good rapport with the students.

I was able to meet with the Tutor easily

The Tutors seemed to know their subject matter well.

The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.
Describe an instance where you had a good experience with the Sudy Support Centre.

[Case Organisation] Fiji has helpful staff and they are flexible in their approach.

Information on text books was relayed properly to me and I only found out about the books 3 weeks into the course.

Always have been helpful. When I did not get any text books, I was advised by one of the Unit Coordinator on websites that was very helpful for my reading.

My learning material excess was only given 2 weeks into the course.

students are able to liaise with each other via chat/emails easily.

Unit Coordinators have been good in advising websites for learning materials.

students are able to liaise with each other via chat/emails easily.

[Case Organisation] Student Administration provides good support.

The Staff are helpful and polite.
My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.

Unit results are released in a timely manner.

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.

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The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

Yesterday, the first person I asked doesn't know what I'm talking about while I got an email about it.

Student Administration provides good support.

The Staff are helpful and polite.

My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

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Unit results are released in a timely manner.

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

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Having access to a Study Support Centre is helpful.

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I was able to meet with the Tutor easily.

The Tutors seemed to know their subject matter well.
The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

I had a problem with my learning journal which was resolved quickly.

After comments were passed by my coordinator on my assignment, I called back for further explanation which was quickly replied.

I was able to borrow a textbook I could not find on the Ghanaian market from the center.

I got there to write a mid semester exam and had to wait for more than 30 minutes before someone showed up.

[Case Organisation] Student Administration provides good support.

The Staff are helpful and polite.

My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.
The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.

The Coordinators provided timely responses to my questions.

Students are given an appropriate amount of guidance.

The Coordinators develop a good rapport with students.

The Coordinators communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

I have the flexibility to design my study time around my other commitments.

Having access to a Study Support Centre is helpful.

Tutors at the Study Support Centre develop a good rapport with the students.

I was able to meet with the Tutor easily.

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc.).
I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

Well they are helpful

Well good thing is when a student/facilitator trust is established, that way the facilitator is very flexible and both student and facilitator are happy at the end of the day

No not really. Just that when we do it online and when we have to encounter hard units such as programming (Since I am doing IT) than indeed it becomes a problem because the unit notes or materials do not entirely help us understand what the topic is about as it would if it was taught by a facilitator.

Well to start of with, I am a full time online student because the courses I am doing are not available on campus. Never the less, Some of the facilitators do not understand the pressure us students go through

Easy units have a lot of reference for us to consider

not not really because i dont really use it

[Case Organisation] Student Administration provides good support.

The Staff are helpful and polite.

My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.
Unit results are released in a timely manner

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.

The Coordinators provided timely responses to my questions.

Students are given an appropriate amount of guidance.

The Coordinators develop a good rapport with students.

The Coordinators communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

The Sessions are easy to understand.

Tutors at the Study Support Centre develop a good rapport with the students.

Having access to a Study Support Centre is helpful.

I was able to meet with the Tutor easily.
The Tutors seemed to know their subject matter well.

The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

when i couldn't uploaded my focus task for some reason, i was given more time.

when i couldn't open some session notes.

a good experience was when i had instructions in details

i always had a good experience.

Student Administration provides good support.

The Staff are helpful and polite.

My enrolment application was processed in a timely manner.
Unit results are released in a timely manner.

The Coordinators provide adequate feedback on my assessments.

I found the feedback I was given helpful in improving my work.

The Coordinators were approachable and helpful.

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The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.

I have issues why Fiji students get previous trimester results in 6-7 weeks.

They have been very helpful with moodle & timing either its with exam request or timetable.
utors are very helpful and usually allow time with assignments and focus tasks.

Only concern i have is that [Case Organisation] (Fiji) doesn't always have unit book.

The session notes are very helpful.

We really need a library with relevant reference books and material badly in Fiji. I have been a student since 2006 and i have been suggest on and on about a library and resources available.

Tutors at the Study Support Centre develop a good rapport with the students.

I was able to meet with the Tutor easily

The Tutors seemed to know their subject matter well.

The Tutors communicated their enthusiasm for the subject.

The Study Support Centre provides adequate access to resources (i.e. computer labs, tutors, etc).

I found it helpful to be able to talk with other students.
Some Unit Quiz were not working and was not corrected despite my request

I commented on how to improve some services on [Case Organisation] and it was taken positively

I once received a zero on an assignment. I thought this was cruel descision.

We had Political problems in my country and they understood and gave us good Grace period to catch up

I once purchased books that were 1 version behind and had difficulties doing some Focus Tasks In another incident, a book came with a CD that was installable but I could not register and use the software coz it was no longer supported by the vendors.

my itc106 unit which was web design was updated after almost a week on moodle

when i am unable to understand a problem or anything regarding my studies, the fascilitators really get busy with my problems until i fully understand...it makesme feel great...they're always there for students.

I had to wait for long for my transcripts. I am stilling waiting. Since I had 10 units cross credit I did not receive any transcript for it. Upon asking they always tells me to come the next day and when I go there they make another excuse. I also have problem getting units this Trimester because non are offered. I wanted to graduate in December 2009 but it is impossible now

Not much information are given in Session notes to comlete assignments. This is not in all units but in some units.
Appendix G

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:1 When the results were delayed...
Codes: [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support]

When the results were delayed and so the final certificate.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:2 When I was out of the country...
Codes: [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

When I was out of the country and got a week late to forward my work to the institution and I was subjected to the penalties.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:3 When I was downloading for my...
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Personal Qualities - Family: Human Support] [Relevant - Family: Content] [student responsibility - Family: Student] [subject exploration and knowledge acquisition-LM - Family: Content] [timeliness - student characteristic dependent - Family: Student] [Useful - Family: Content]

When I was downloading for my notes and the interactive access program that had deadlines for every piece of work. This encouraged study discipline and professionalism.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:4 When coordinator could not understand...
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Org - fair assessment - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

When coordinator could not understand my situation on being out of the country and went on to penalize me.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:5 Transcripts failed to indicate...
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Open - Family: Human Support] [Relevant - Family: Content] [Useful - Family: Content]

Transcripts failed to indicate grades rather wrote RPL which raises questions by the employer or when qualifying for next level.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:6 Responded to queries instantly...
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Good interactions-UC - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support] [Timely feedback-UC - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

Responded to queries instantly.

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:8 I was able to download the pho...
Codes: [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Technology Challenge - Family: Content] [Useful - Family: Content]

I was able to download the photos and diagrams

P27: Opinio27525.pdf - 27:9 Accepted me to study without f...
Codes: [Effective - Family: Human Support] [Grace - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

Accepted me to study without fees untill I got the same and paid.

P28: Opinio27526.pdf - 28:1 Results released on time
Codes: [Organisation - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support]

Results released on time
Appendix G

Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support]

Good marking

Codes: [Timeliness - Family: Human Support] [Timely feedback-UC - Family: Human Support]

Timely feedback from Coordinator helps a lot in answering learning journals.

P32: Opinio27552.pdf - 32:1 [once i by mistake uploaded a w..] (2:305-2:518)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support]

once i by mistake uploaded a wrong page on my assessment page and i was very nervous because i was for 20% marks but Libby helped me so much in cancelling that page and answered me every time i mailed her.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:1 [I have tried to contact the te..] (2:202-2:460)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

I have tried to contact the teachers to check my focus tasks and guide me but have never received a message, just received from one of them. Also, they do not tell me anything, what i could have done to improve it, no checking of home work and no guidance.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:2 [I was also told that since I a..] (2:461-2:621)
Codes: [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

I was also told that since i am the only student in Kumasi- Ghana for ITC100, they cannot employ a teacher to teach me. Hence, its very very difficult for me.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:3 [I have been with Mr. Asvin ..] (2:712-2:825)
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

I have been with Mr. Asvin and he is cooperative towards me. I really appreciate his efforts towards me.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:4 [My unit coordinater has never ..] (3:4-3:318)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Resources - Family: Human Support] [UC - no timely feedback - sense of neglect/isolation - Family: Human Support]

My unit coordinator has never even sent me a message, what more to talk about assignments. I was told that since I am the only student, they cannot employ a teacher for me. None of the teachers ever responded to me except Mr. Asvin who has told me to email him, just recently. My third week is almost done.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:5 [Mr. Asvin Singh, who has told ..] (3:408-3:556)
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

Mr. Asvin who has told me to email him, just recently. My third week is almost done and none of the coordinators has ever responded to me.

P33: Opinio27554.pdf - 33:6 [The learning materials are ver..] (4:3-4:159)
Codes: [clarity-LM - Family: Content] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Useful - Family: Content]

The learning materials are very good as a guide and help even more than the book itself. I first read them and then use the book. Hence its a good thing.
Only the secretary is polite and good. Rest, only God can judge.

There is no teacher to handle me and I think its not fair, I have paid the fees and yet nothing. I was planning to even quit, but decided to still continue with the course because the is no guidance, and no communication with students and not even a teacher. I have also never been given a lecture. But when I was registering, I was told all sort of things like there will be classes and it will be worth it to pursue as a career.

in the final exam week i was told that one units final exam paper is not yet prepared.so i did 2 exam for 2 units and waited 2 weeks for last paper but after 2 weeks i was told that [Case Organisation] have not developed the final paper for this particular unit so i have to redo it next semester.and i then took it next semester and got pass.

good experinece was always, staffs of [Case Organisation] were very very supportive to me

exams of [Case Organisation] units are developed in such a way that it really gauges what the unit objectives are and students do learn it and they do well in exams..thats very very good part of [Case Organisation]

when i faild my unit when i didn't submit my LG's for one particular unit....cordinator said fail means fail no matter iam also a [Case Organisation] facilitator..i was really upset by paying such a high fees.

when i submitted my draft copy of assignmnets before due date..they really help me out by telling what i should add on and what i need to take out and how to submit the final copy...iam tellig all my MBA unit coordinator's were so nice and good in terms of providing information

Mr. Asvin the manager [Case Organisation] is the perfect person who really helped me out in all ways..if i had any problems i shared with him and he helped me out and made me a successful student.
Unable to purchase prescribed text book

sent me an academic transcript which helped me find employment

no response to a question!

good response to a question

Sometimes weekly tasks contain mistakes

I have no study support centre, only distance

results coming late but i think this is due to AQF guidelines

very help General Manager. Assistance with enrollment and marks.

I was trying to get [Case Organisation] Admin to get our required text books from Australia (which was not found in Fiji) to order it and that we could buy it off them from [Case Organisation] Fiji. They tried and argued back that it was my responsibility to find the text book, but in this i did not see any better option but thru the [Case Organisation] Admin. Well I went thru the whole course without the required text book and manage to pass but not with ood marks because i did not have the material to learn what i was suppose to. Chrz.
Appendix G

Codes: [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support] [Grace - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [student responsibility - Family: Student] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

I WAS TO GET MY FUNDS A DAY AFTER THE LAST DAY ON ENROLMENT. I PLEADED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE AN EXTRA DAY TO REMIT THE FUNDS AND THEY AGREED. I honoured my side of the bargain too.

Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support] [Good interactions-UC - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Timely feedback-UC - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

I did an assignment I felt my answer was right. Thus we indulge with my coordinator until we came to an agreement. It felt nice and a good educative experience.

P40: Opinio27827.pdf - 40:4 [When they enrolled me for a su..] (4:784-4:847)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Organisation - Family: Human Support]

When they enrolled me for a subjects which I had not approved

P40: Opinio27827.pdf - 40:5 [Listening and corrected the ab..] (4:936-4:1026)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Organisation - Family: Human Support]

Listening and corrected the above mistake and advised to a new centre which I can work with

Codes: [Access - Family: Human Support] [Technology Challenge - Family: Content]

My usernames for the moodle and lab were incorrect

P41: Opinio27830.pdf - 41:2 [All the practicals are helpful..] (2:343-2:372)
Codes: [Access - Family: Human Support] [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Resources - Family: Human Support]

All the practicals are helpful

P41: Opinio27830.pdf - 41:3 [their not bad. down to earth c..] (3:88-3:132)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Good interactions-UC - Family: Human Support]

their not bad. down to earth conversations

P41: Opinio27830.pdf - 41:4 [I wasn't information before ha..] (3:975-3:1037)
Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Resources - Family: Human Support]

I wasn't information before hand that text books were required.

P41: Opinio27830.pdf - 41:5 [the online notes are easy to a..] (3:1128-3:1166)
Codes: [Access - Family: Human Support]

the online notes are easy to access.

P43: Opinio27961.pdf - 43:1 [when they handled the issues a..] (2:290-2:362)
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Organisation - Family: Human Support]

when they handled the issues affecting my registration for this trimester
when my marketing teacher commended me on my learning journal entries

in the supply of library books

There is none I can think off, because all my queries were handled professionally with quality customer service.

Excessing the text books were not a farce at all.

they were all professional and supportive.

sending out a reminder on a revised assignment that was due in a week, which I forgotten and made changes in time.

bookin of text books made it easy for me.

managed to clarify assignment issues and discuss journal questions

all facilitators are polite and very helpful I haven't been across such a situation where I have had to complain

Without proper consultation with me in failing me in a unit.
I had bad experience in one of coordinator when he gave me zero in the exam without any evidence.

when they mark assignments on time and provide proper feedback

when they dont test the exam from the text which is not availiable in the library.

The administration does not provide proper service. The staffs are not available at most of the time.

ey are not punctual...tutors are not available most of the times.

they provide us course related books on time.

When they had an issue the local support college. There was little information on Course and that increased my course time

When addressing issues and refunds/deference

when i got into the country late from a trip and i had missed enrollment, it was actually closed and so I wrote to the student administrator and fixed everything

The second assignment for ITC100 was a group assignment and on the last minute my member decided to join other groups with out telling me about it. so I asked my facilitator for an extensin and he gave me two weeks..
I have always learned something from a Unit Coordinator. I had a very good experience during some project's final report with Mr. David my Unit Coordinator, and I learned a lot, so it was a very good experience :)  

The learning materials provided by [Case Organisation] are very helpful and easy to understand. So again, every experience is a good experience for me.

The [Case Organisation] team and the support centre staff has been extremely very helpful in making sure I continue with studies despite unique work environment

The unit coordinator was instrumental in ensuring that the difficulties experienced during the course are sorted out quickly.

The previous centres in Kenya had different perspective about the value of students in achieving their intended goals and collapsed midway by not forwarding stuents inquiries of exams and or fees

The current centre which is linked directly to [Case Organisation], [Case Organisation] (k)Support centre in kenya, has the attributes which value the student needs at all times.

I am an on-line student an so initially I did not follow most of the work and procedures. New on-line students should be given much more attention

Almost everything has been O K but the assignments which I couldn’t find easy uploading up till now even though I have done all on paper Drafts
they r helpful

do respond on time

When my result was delay and units result was released indicating I failed because sit for the final examination. Whilst I sit for the exams. It was a bad experience with [Case Organisation]

When Managing People and Change unit facilitator and coordinator were always on site guiding me. Mr. Tom will mark my minutes after I submitted my work, and mark the necessary comments. I love him

When I researched and my individual assessment on managerial economics and wrongly submitted a different work. I was a little bit punished. I loss some marks

When my unit coordinator praised me for an excellent work.

When I am expected to meet weekly deadline for submission of learning journals. As a full time worker, it is not easy to meet this deadline, as I have to travel outside Region to a remote areas for national assignments.

When recommended textbooks are not easily accessible. Prices of study materials too expensive.

When text books finally arrived in Ghana.

i had to focus tasks weekly and submit them by the week ending sunday but at times i can not understand the question and had to wait for the class co i am actually behind in mt 2 sessions
helping me at the beginning of the course

supporting me with all my tutorial when I need their guidance

had been able to get all the relevant notes for respective units

during preparation for my learning journal

did not respond up to this day on my enquiry as to why certain units are not made available in a particular semester. [Case Organisation] Fiji Manager at times does not respond to our email queries at all.

They have otherwise provided other inform requested

Aust coordinators hardly respond to your queries in a timely manner. They have not given any feedback to nay of the Focus Tasks that we upload weekly basis. The results for mid semester assessment comes out too late by when the trimester and the final exam is over

Fiji coordinators are good, they resond to queries in classroom.

It seems that the learning materials have not been proof read by whoever typed it or even the coordinators as there are mistakes that have not been corrected. It seems the same material developed years ago are still being used. I wonder if it has been even updated to latest knowledge. the proquest can hardly be accessed even I am with [Case Organisation] Fiji for nearly 2 years.

easily accessed.
Appendix G

Codes:  [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Resources - Family: Human Support]

[Case Organisation] Fiji center has lack of computers, computers are in poor state, some do not work, lack of space to do private studies or research, no library, not enough text books. Chairs are damaged, poor lighting in the classroom,

Codes:  [Helpful - Family: Human Support]

Manag tries to assist but limited resources affect the students

Codes:  [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support]

My querries to Student Administration have always received timely and satisfactory response.

P68: Opinio28284.pdf - 68:2 [Some Unit Coordinators never m..] (2:1183-2:1284)
Codes:  [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support] [Timely feedback-UC - Family: Human Support]

Some Unit Coordinators never make their comments on submitted assignments and hardly ever communicate.

P68: Opinio28284.pdf - 68:3 [When a Unit Coordinator attend..] (3:88-3:211)
Codes:  [Timely feedback-UC - Family: Human Support]

When a Unit Coordinator attended to all submitted weekly tasks on timely basis, and gave constructive comments on the same.

P68: Opinio28284.pdf - 68:4 [Navigating the library has alw..] (3:1057-3:1178)
Codes:  [Resources - Family: Human Support]

Navigating the library has always posed some challenges and it's never been easy to get materials like i would expect.

P68: Opinio28284.pdf - 68:5 [In the beginning, i attended a..] (4:726-4:821)
Codes:  [Support available when needed-SSC - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [Tutor-good interactions-SSC - Family: Human Support]

In the beginning, i attended a Study Support Centre in Nairobi and appreciated the added value.

P68: Opinio28284.pdf - 68:6 [owever, i got transfered to a ..] (4:823-4:978)
Codes:  [coping strategy - get in and do - Family: Student] [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [SSC - limited contact with - Family: Human Support]

owever, I got transfered to a different town and have since relied on full distance learning. It has been a challenge but I have taken it in my stride.

Codes:  [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support] [Student Interaction - Family: Human Support] [Support available when needed-SSC - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [Tutor-good interactions-SSC - Family: Human Support]

Overally, a Study Support Centre is good because it gives a student the real-time interaction with the tutors and fellow students.

Codes:  [Inconvenience-Student - Family: Human Support] [Organisation - Family: Human Support]

Had to submit my enrolment twice. As a result there was a delay with fe payment and received late login details
Appendix G

Codes: [Communications - Family: Human Support] [Timeliness - Family: Human Support]

Are very prompt with replies. I like that.

P70: Participant_IFGM_Communication_1.doc - 70:4 [Time is convinient] (42:42)
Codes: [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support]

Time is convinient

P72: Participant_4_Communication_1.doc - 72:2 [I chose [Case Organisation] due to its time l..] (34:34)
Codes: [Flexible-HS - Family: Human Support] [Org - 3 trimesters - Family: TDHE]

I chose [Case Organisation] due to its time limit for degree compleletion, cost, studying flexibility and the environment.

P73: Participant_4_Communication_2.doc - 73:4 [[Case Organisation]'s feedbacks, exams, assig..] (24:24)

[Case Organisation]'s feedbacks, exams, assignments, practical assessments all build us up to professional in what we do.

P78: Participant_4_Communication_3.doc - 78:1 [first of all 1st day of class ..] (6:6)
Codes: [Personalised support - SSC - Family: Human Support]

first of all 1st day of class tutors would get to know every student

P78: Participant_4_Communication_3.doc - 78:2 [they would ask how much we alr..] (6:6)
Codes: [Helpful - Family: Human Support] [Personalised support - SSC - Family: Human Support] [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [tutor-access-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [tutor-develop-rapport-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [Case Organisation] [tutor-subject-knowledge-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

they would ask how much we already know about the unit and the topics. for instance I was a science student and my 1st day at [Case Organisation] especially since i was doing business administration, they had asked me how much i know. they told me not to worry and taught me from the basics and i was able to grasp the concepts and i must say i am doing really well now. they teach from every little detail so that students aren't lost and well understand the concepts used.

P78: Participant_4_Communication_3.doc - 78:3 [the environment i must say is ..] (8:8)
Codes: [resource-access-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [Resources - Family: Human Support] [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support] [Student-interaction-SSC-good - Family: Human Support]

the environment i must say is small but its good. its not overcrowded and every student is given priority. students have there space and interaction of students is quiet good.

P78: Participant_4_Communication_3.doc - 78:4 [the tutors are very caring and..] (10:10)
Codes: [Caring - Family: Human Support] [Small Class - greater learning opportunities - Family: Content] [SSC - personal relationships - Family: Human Support] [Support available when needed-SSC - Family: Human Support] [Support when needed - Family: Human Support] [tutor-access-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [tutor-develop-rapport-SSC-good - Family: Human Support] [Tutor-good interactions-SSC - Family: Human Support] [Understanding-HS - Family: Human Support]

the tutors are very caring and they take their time out and help any way they can.
i can study what i like, when i like and where i like.

Assistance from the tutors are great, they help us anyway they can

like when we do not understand a particular concept or formula, they break it down for us in a simple way for us to understand

openness of staff

Rogers (1969), as a result of his experiences, in the learning space, and those of other teachers distilled ten guidelines for facilitating learning:

1. The facilitator has much to do with setting the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience.
2. The facilitator helps to elicit and clarify the purposes of the individuals in the class as well as the more general purposes of the group.
3. He [sic.] relies upon the desire of each student to implement those purposes which have meaning for him, as the motivational force behind significant learning.
4. He [sic.] endeavors to organize and make easily available the widest possible range of resources for learning.
5. He [sic.] regards himself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group.
6. In responding to expression in the classroom group, he accepts both the intellectual content and the emotionalized attitudes, endeavoring to give each aspect the approximate degree of emphasis which it has for the individual or the group.
7. As the acceptant classroom climate becomes established, the facilitator is able increasingly to become a participant learner, a member of the group, expressing his view as those of one individual only.
8. He [sic.] takes the initiative in sharing himself with the group – his feelings as well as his thoughts – in ways which do not demand or impose but represent simply a personal sharing which students may take or leave.
9. Throughout the classroom experience, he remains alert to the expressions indicative of deep or strong feelings.
10. In his [sic.] functioning as a facilitator of learning, the leader endeavors to recognize and accept his own limitations.

(Rogers, 1969, pp 164-166)
APPENDIX I CARE-RESPECTED Model of Teaching Evaluation.

This model represents the teacher characteristics that students considered to reflect effective teaching. CARE is the acronym for the identified meta-themes of communicator, advocate, responsible and empowering. RESPECTED, also an acronym comprises the nine themes of responsive, enthusiast, student centered, professional, expert, connector, transmitter, ethical and director. The table below provides descriptions of the themes and meta-themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Provides frequent, timely, and meaningful feedback to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiast</td>
<td>Exhibits passion in delivery of curricula, in particular, and representing the field in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student centered</td>
<td>Places students in the center of the learning process, prioritizes instruction in response to student diversity and interest, possesses strong interpersonal skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Displays behaviours and dispositions deemed exemplary for the instructor’s discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Demonstrates relevant and current content, connects students’ prior knowledge and experience with key components of curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connector</td>
<td>Provides multiple opportunities for student and professor interactions within and outside of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitter</td>
<td>Imparts critical information clearly and accurately, provides relevant examples, integrates varied communication techniques to foster knowledge acquisition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistency in enforcing classroom policies, responds to students’ concerns and behaviours, provides equitable opportunities for student interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Organizes instructional time efficiently, optimizes resources to create a safe and orderly learning environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicator</td>
<td>Serves as a reliable resource for students; effectively guides student’s acquisition of knowledge, skill, and dispositions; engages students in the curriculum and monitors their progress by providing formative and summative evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>Demonstrates behaviours and dispositions that are deemed exemplary for representing the college teaching profession, promotes active learning, and exhibits sensitivity to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Seeks to conform to the highest levels of ethical standards associated with the college teaching profession and optimizes the learning experiences of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering</td>
<td>Stimulates students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with an academic discipline or field and stimulates students to attain maximally all instructional goals and objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figure below provides a thematic structure for the meta-themes and themes.

reproduced from Onwuegbuzie et al. (2007) Figure 3 on page 135