

## **A CASE STUDY IN CROSS-CULTURAL LITERACY: THE EXPERIENCES OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN NEW ZEALAND.**

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This paper derives from a study of the experiences of Malaysian students at the Dunedin College of Education, New Zealand, carried out during the current year 2000. It links also with an investigation into the experiences of ethnic Chinese students at the Universities of Canterbury and Otago, New Zealand, conducted by D. Keen and H. Xiao during the year 1999. Among the Chinese students, familiarity with the English language, while constituting a significant factor, was not the only nor necessarily the key variable governing the students' processes of socialization and cultural adjustment. Ethnic Chinese students from Taiwan, while markedly less fluent in English than ethnic Chinese from Malaysia, seemingly found adjustment to life in New Zealand easier than did their Malaysian-Chinese counterparts. Questions arising from the 1999 project stimulated a case study of the dynamics of cultural interaction among cohorts of students, across the spectrum of Malaysian ethnicities, at the Dunedin College of Education. The case study sought to illuminate variables which influence the processes of adjustment and acculturation among migrant students, providing a framework for the consideration of key questions:

- With what range of agendas to migrant students come to this country?
- With what cultural luggage do they travel?
  
- What background experiences and equipment of attitude and skills do 'successful' migrant students bring to their overseas undertakings?
- What issues commonly arise for them during a period of study in a New Zealand setting?
- Which issues are generic? Which are specific to particular groups and sub-cultures within the migrant body?
- How can these issues, whether generic or group-specific, most usefully and effectively be addressed?
- What types of environment are most favourable to nurturing success, whether academic or socio-cultural, among overseas students in New Zealand?

Malaysian student groups have figured significantly in the life of the Dunedin College of Education campus since 1994. The door to a contractual educational agreement between the Dunedin College and authorities in Malaysia opened in July 1993, when the Malaysian Minister of Education visited Dunedin. Appointed to facilitate negotiations in relation to ongoing professional contact, a Dunedin College senior lecturer, Ross Notman, visited Kuala Lumpur for three weeks in January the following year, accompanied by two University of Otago academic staff. Notman found himself on his life's 'steepest learning curve'. Having contacted the Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas, or MPIK College of Education in Kuala Lumpur, and the Malaysian Ministry of Education, he found himself plunged into high powered and minutely searching contract discussions. He found the Malaysians to be tough negotiators, and he rapidly gained skill in talking 'with' rather than 'at' the Malaysian negotiating team.

The taxing processes of dialogue prepared the framework for three parallel, long-term agreements under which the Dunedin College undertook to deliver the following educational programmes:

- A certificated course of three months' duration, to be delivered at the College, to prepare Malaysian college lecturers to conduct in-country professional development programmes for teachers of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Three successive groups of Malaysian college lecturers studied at the Dunedin campus under this plan. Their course commenced with a one-week orientation programme. Its content included modules on English language teaching, principles of teaching adults, research methodology and instructional design. These modules were complemented by school and adult teaching observations.
- An in-service programme for experienced Malaysian secondary teachers, to increase their qualifications in English, music and physical education, and leading to the award of the University of Otago Bachelor of Education degree. Participants had two years of their previous teaching service credited towards the degree, requiring them to undertake two further years of study in Dunedin.
- A pre-service programme, leading to the award of the University of Otago Bachelor of Education degree, preparing students to become teachers of English in Malaysian secondary schools, and to undertake post-graduate study in education, English and linguistics. Participants opted into the scheme on leaving Form 5 in Malaysia, completing a matriculation process and foundation course before proceeding to Dunedin for two years of core B.Ed studies. The final cohort of students to participate in this plan passed through the College in the current year 2000.

Implementation of these programmes created inevitable problems of adjustment, for Malaysian visitors and Dunedin campus lecturers and students alike. Malaysians opting into the in-service plan were mature teachers, many of them married with families. They faced hard choices regarding whether or not to bring their spouses and children with them while they studied in Dunedin. Those who came with dependents faced a further issues: how far should they encourage their children to socialize into a New Zealand school culture, knowing that a reverse process of acculturation would occur after returning to Malaysia? Equally, how applicable would they find teaching techniques, successfully practised in a New Zealand classroom, when transposed to a Malaysian environment? They had to be selective about what they chose to retain and what to discard. Many of the mature students, nevertheless, developed a strong bond with Dunedin, leaving the city with genuine regret. Some expressed their feelings in verse, personifying the Otago region they had come to love:

I see you

glittering.....

a diamond in the mist.

like a lady by the sea

your seductive smile

beckons....

your curves and valleys

pools of passion

melt my soul

in the cold westerlies.

The subjects of, and respondents to, the present investigative study, comprising two cohorts of students from the pre-service programme, came from an age grouping markedly younger than that represented in the in-service courses. For these students, issues of youth compounded issues of cultural transplanting and adjustment. Ethnic variety within national unity added richness to the survey sample, and was celebrated by the young Malaysians as a strength of their community. Participants in the survey included the years 1998-2000 pre-service cohort, who have just completed their programme in Dunedin, and their immediate predecessors, the 1997-1999 cohort, who have now entered to the teaching force in Malaysia. A total of 37 students contributed to the study, supplying information through questionnaire responses and group and individual interviews. Of the respondents, 7 were male and 30 were female. There were 23 ethnic Malays among the student sample, and 14 representatives of other ethnic groups, including Chinese, Indian and Sarawaki indigenous peoples. Among the mother tongues of the Chinese were Mandarin, Cantonese and Hokkien, with Punjabi, Tamil and Malayalam being spoken by the Indians. Two of the migrants claimed English as their mother tongue. Interestingly, the questionnaire responses of these two English speakers indicted that both found the process of adjusting to life in English-speaking Dunedin to be hard, markedly more so than many of their peers. They found it difficult to make friends, and to share their culture, with seemingly unconcerned New Zealanders.

The collated questionnaire replies of all the Malaysian students fell naturally, according to the type of response which the participants made, into three distinct divisions. These related, firstly, to the students' personal goals, secondly to their appraisal of their study programme and environment and, thirdly, to their analysis of their cross-cultural contacts in Dunedin. Items, within the questionnaires, which related to the students' own goals and motivation attracted clearly the strongest levels of affirmative response. Conditioned within a disciplined culture and conscious that they bore with them the dignity of their country and their families, both the 1999 and year 2000 student cohorts were highly focused groups. They came to Dunedin with high ambitions and high expectations. The year 2000 students, recording their perceptions on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 denoting the most favourable level of reply, rated the importance which they attached to academic success at a mean level of 1.2, their desire for personal fulfilment at 1.3, and their desire to gain fresh educational perspectives at 1.6. The optimum level of reply, level 1, constituted the students' modal response under each of these three categories.

Still strongly, although rather less markedly, both the year 1999 and 2000 pre-service Malaysian student cohorts were positive about their experiences of living and studying in Dunedin. Outcomes, while not exceeding the students' initial hopes, seemingly came close, at least, to matching them. Again on a 1 to 5 scale with level 1 constituting the optimum reply, the students rated their level of personal satisfaction deriving from two years of residence in New Zealand at a mean score of 1.7. They rated professional satisfaction deriving from their courses at a mean level of 1.8. The students' modal response under both these categories was level 2, compared with the level 1 mode which had typified their appraisal of their personal ambitions and expectations. A minority of students, assessing the levels of personal and professional satisfaction which they were experiencing, chose to make neutral, level 3 responses. Only two in the aggregate sample offered unfavourable, level 4 assessments, one with reference to personal enjoyment of living in Dunedin and one with reference to the professional worth of the study programme. Evaluating the professional dimensions of their course, the great majority of students in the 1999 cohort freely praised the quality of the lectures and the pastoral support which they had received. They saw their lecturers as role models of enthusiasm and sound pedagogical practice, regarding this, after their return to Malaysia, as the most worthwhile and practically applicable aspect of their

Dunedin experience. The year 2000 cohort came to appreciate the individualised care which the best of New Zealand pedagogy directs towards children and students in the classroom, and the scope for flexibility and imagination within New Zealand curricular delivery. Both student groups very much appreciated Dunedin's range of study facilities, especially prizing the available library services and the opportunities which these afforded for reflective reading. They relished the access to a rich range of professional journals which the libraries offered. Exposed to a conceptually stimulating environment, the students believed they had developed breadth of professional insight.

From a personal perspective, the Malaysian students moved, over time, from an appreciation of the physical to the abstract and intangible in their analysis of their Dunedin experiences. On first arrival, they were struck by the beauty of Dunedin's physical environment, both architecturally and in respect of its natural assets. Frequently, in describing their perceptions, they used the slogan words 'clean' and 'green', apparently happy, in these respects, to validate New Zealand's self-image. They found Dunedin's weather cold, and would have appreciated more pre-travel information regarding suitable clothing for a southern climate. Once in residence in Dunedin, heating bills stretched the students' slender financial resources. Generally, however, the students adjusted to these problems. Many continued to miss the spiced, and ethnically varied, foods of 'home'. A minority found Dunedin to be boring in its paucity of retail choice and its lack of nightlife. More commonly, appraising their social and cultural interactions on a long-term basis, the Malaysians indicated strongly that their time in Dunedin had furnished them with opportunities for maturation. They spoke of their growing self-confidence, independence and their enhanced ability to assess situations and make informed choices. Some believed they had developed breadth of vision, tolerance and empathy. Some mentioned gains in practical skills such as budgeting.

A third category of indicators, relating to cross-cultural experiences in Dunedin, attracted the least favourable replies from the Malaysian students. Although they perceived New Zealanders as friendly and helpful, the students found difficulty in moving beyond the superficial to establish meaningful connections with local people. There were exceptions to the generalization; some Malaysians fell in love while they were in Dunedin. Commonly, however, pleasantries and smiles were exchanged, but the Malaysians did not feel welcomed into the locals' inner circles of friendship. Chinese students participating in the 1999 study made exactly the same observation, commenting in the words of one respondent: 'It's as if they [the New Zealanders] are not proud of you'. The Malaysian students echoed the words, opining that they, given the opportunity in their home context, would be 'proud' to acknowledge a New Zealand friend. They felt that some of their New Zealand peers judged them, stereotypically, as socio-economic aspirants from the Third World, a judgment which the Malaysians strongly resented. They were surprised at the factual ignorance of Malaysia current among the New Zealand student population, and somewhat disappointed at the incidence of uninterested parochialism which they encountered. The Malaysians assessed their own interest in New Zealand culture at a mean level of 2.4, and their understanding of it at 2.8. They expressed very high levels of interest in Maori culture, with the communal values of which many of them felt an affinity. They would have appreciated more opportunities to engage with Maori cultural forms during the two years of their study and residence in Dunedin. Cross-cultural bridging however, in the Malaysians' experience, tended to be a one-way activity. The year 2000 student cohort rated New Zealanders' interest in things Malaysian at a mean level of 3.2, and New Zealanders' understanding at 4.0. Over one third of the Malaysian students entered level 4 or 5 replies under these categories. They appreciated that, as sojourners 'in Rome', the onus was on them to adapt to 'Roman' values. They felt, nevertheless, a natural desire for their own culture to be acknowledged. They would have found affirmation in opportunities to share their world view with New Zealand students, and they believed that the pooling of certain

aspects of their cultural experiences would be particularly beneficial to their New Zealand colleagues. Coming as guests and learners, they felt, nevertheless, that they had worthwhile gifts to impart.

Even the majority of Malaysians who thoroughly enjoyed their time of residence in Dunedin found certain aspects of local practice, particularly certain aspects of New Zealand student sub-culture, to be repugnant. Some 'Roman' values were beyond the pale of acceptability. Binge drinking at weekends by their New Zealand peers was an unwelcome novelty for most of the Malaysians. Coming from a society wedded to Muslim standards, they were often shocked by the levels of alcohol abuse and accompanying vandalism among young New Zealanders. Some three-quarters of the Malaysian students, both from the 1999 and year 2000 groups, registered their abhorrence of such behaviour. Quite frequently also, the Malaysians, and especially young Malaysian women made conspicuous by their chador, found themselves the butts of racist insult, with about half of the survey respondents overtly commenting on this issue. Racism commonly coincided with New Zealand student drunkenness. One bemused young Malaysian woman wondered how her young neighbours, apparently decent, outgoing people for five days a week, could transmogrify into pigs each weekend, and then seemingly have no recollection, on Monday mornings, of how boorish their weekend behaviour had been.

The patterns of response noted above were pervasive among the Malaysian students in Dunedin. Within the broad patterning, however, differentiated sub-textures emerged, to a degree which suggests the need for some insightful fine-tuning of the provision made for overseas students in New Zealand tertiary programme design. Students' appraisals of their on and off-campus experiences, seemingly, were coloured by the respondents' length of residence in Dunedin, their gender, and their ethnicity within the overall parameters of Malaysian nationality. Such comparisons have to be treated with caution. The research data provided snapshots of discrete student groups; it was not longitudinal. Many variables may have come into play. It is possible, for example, that overseas students romanticize or in other ways re-process their migrant experiences after returning to their home countries, seeing things more favourably in retrospect.

With due regard for such cautions, it should be noted, nevertheless, that Malaysian students in the year 2000 cohort were less positive in their assessment of their Dunedin experiences than those who had completed their studies in 1999 and were currently teaching in Malaysia. Both groups completed evaluative questionnaires in April 2000, the 1999 cohort answering in retrospect. The year 2000 group believed they were coping adequately with study, but felt rather less well supported than had their 1999 colleagues, enjoyed Dunedin less, felt less well socialized and accepted into the local community, and found it harder to maintain their own cultural forms. They derived the same level of professional satisfaction from their courses as did Malaysian students in earlier years, but experienced less personal satisfaction. Differences were marked, between the cohorts, in mean response ratings to six key categories in the April 2000 questionnaire. The two cohorts ranked the six items in the same order but differed significantly in the assessment level which they ascribed to each, with the widest gap evident in the respective groups' appraisal of their 'enjoyment of Dunedin'.

**Mean response ratings (on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being the most favourable rating)**

**Year 2000 cohort Year 1999 cohort**

Adequacy of support provided in Dunedin 1.8 1.4

Experience in Dunedin is personally worthwhile 1.8 1.5

Enjoyment of Dunedin 2.3 1.5

Ease of adjustment to living in Dunedin 2.4 2.1

Ease of maintaining own culture while living

in Dunedin 2.4 2.0

Ease of making friends with New Zealanders 3.1 2.6

Almost certainly, however, a different patterning of outcomes would have ensued if the students in the year 2000 cohort had completed evaluative questionnaires at the close rather than the beginning of their final year of study. Oral interviews in September-October 2000 found these students talking with increasing warmth of their Dunedin experiences. They emphasised that their second year of study had turned out to be a far more enjoyable undertaking than their first. Coming to New Zealand with well-developed English language skills, they stressed, nevertheless, the length of time required for the migrant student to adjust to a range of supra-linguistic cultural determinants - determinants which, in turn impact reflexively and interactively upon the use of language. Besides alluding to obvious superficialities of regional accent, the Malaysians noted, for example, their initial misunderstanding of the 'Kiwi' sense of humour. Culture, like the iceberg, conceals seven-eighths of its mass below the surface of perception, a fact too little appreciated either by overseas visitors or by those who, domestically, make provision for the visitors' needs. Icebergs, moreover, move slowly but unpredictably and are difficult to chart. The changing patterns of perception and response evinced by the year 2000 Malaysian group underscore the importance of New Zealand institutions' providing adequate pre-travel information to their overseas intakes, and insightful and effective support systems for migrant students during the uncertain and stressful courses of their early months of residence.

Despite differences seemingly generated by diversity in length of experience, some interesting sub-patterns were common in the questionnaire responses of Malaysian students both in the year 2000 and the 1999 cohorts. Consistent differences of perception arose between female and male students. Inverse patterns of expectation and fulfilment arose between the genders. On a 1-5 scale, males rated desire for personal fulfilment more highly than did women as a reason for coming to New Zealand to study, the males' replies generating a 'perfect' mean score of 1.0 compared with 1.4 for the females. Males rather than females expressed a wish to make contact with New Zealanders and share aspects of Malaysian culture with them.

Women, on the other hand, were more likely to feel that their aspirations had actually been realised. Males, perhaps, experienced some twinges of disappointment. Female students expressed enjoyment of Dunedin life more than males did. Women students linked enjoyment to experiential gains, finding an unfamiliar and, eventually, welcome breadth of opportunity in life abroad. Females rather than males spoke of personal maturation as an outcome of their residence in Dunedin, rating this category at a mean level of 1.6, compared with a 1.9 mean among male responses. Males were more likely to acknowledge gains they had made in professional expertise. Supplementary comments, both written and oral, offered by the students on divers occasions, shed light on the dynamics of these comparisons. Muslim women, even though cautious about venturing beyond the circles of their gender and their faith, clearly enjoyed the enhanced scope for autonomy which travel had afforded them. About half of the respondents made overt reference to this aspect. Some noted their growing skill and self-confidence in public speaking, generated through practice in seminar delivery during their study courses.

The women's gains in autonomy took place within a perceivedly supportive framework. Possibly, the relatively large number of females among the Malaysian student body made it easier for the women to sustain each other with collegial encouragement. Clearly, women felt better supported than did males by the tertiary campus pastoral system in Dunedin, assessing this category at a mean response level of 1.5, compared with 2.0 among male respondents. Taking into consideration the whole gamut of culture, from ethnic foods to religious observance, males found it markedly harder than did females to maintain their own cultural forms while they were living in New Zealand, their mean response levels under this category being 3.1 and 2.0 respectively. This outcome surprised the researcher in view of the overt racist taunts which women students too often attracted because of their distinctive dress. Perhaps the challenge of insult acted reflexively to reinforce the women in their cultural resolve. Males, perhaps, were more prone to link culture to the pervasive intangibles of a social structure, even to a hierarchy, that was not portable in migration.

Some variations in perception occurred, also, between the various language groupings among the Malaysian students. Again, these differences were consistent across the year 2000 and the 1999 student cohorts. Malay-speakers, rather than non-Malays, found their study in Dunedin to be professionally worthwhile. Malay speakers, also, found it easier to make friends with New Zealanders. In spite of these seeming deficits, non-Malays enjoyed living in Dunedin markedly more than did Malays, rating their enjoyment of their experiences, on a 1-5 scale, at a mean level of 1.6, compared with a 2.5 mean level of response among Malay-speaking students. Non-Malays also found their programme of study easier than did Malay-speakers; this perception was especially marked among students of Indian ethnicity. It is unlikely that differences of mother tongue *per se* generated these variations. In deed, as noted earlier, two Malaysians who claimed English as their mother tongue found adjustment to life in Dunedin to be relatively difficult. A range of cultural factors, concomitant on but separate from language grouping, is likely to have contributed to these results.

It was appropriate, at close of year 2000 cohort's period of study in Dunedin, to seek their advice regarding programmes for future intakes of overseas students at the Dunedin College of Education. A questionnaire, compiled from suggestions put forward informally by divers members of the Malaysian student group, offered a range of strategies for the whole group's consideration and evaluation. All the listed strategies, rated on a 1-5 scale, were perceived as useful by a large majority of respondents. Of the 11 items listed, 3 stood out clearly from the rest in attracting favourable comment, viz:

1. Acknowledging the national days and significant festivals of overseas students, from all ethnic groups, within the Dunedin College programme.
2. The appointment of a lecturer-mentor whose main role would be to look after the interests of overseas students, from all ethnic groups, and coordinate their programmes.
3. Running a socialisation programme for overseas students at the start of their residence in Dunedin, during which the overseas students would have opportunities for sightseeing, playing sport or joining in cultural activities alongside New Zealand-born students.

The Malaysians felt strongly about wanting opportunities to showcase and share their cultural forms with New Zealanders. The year 2000 students, in evaluating their goals as categorised in the April 2000 questionnaire, had signalled such an outcome, rating 'desire to help New Zealanders understand Malaysia' ahead of 'desire to gain insight into New Zealand culture' as achievement targets; the students' responses under these categories generated mean scores of 2.1 and 2.4 respectively. By the end of the year, the Malaysians' wish to have their culture acknowledged had gained further momentum. In comment both written and oral, offered during the concluding survey which the researcher conducted with

the students, this wish emerged as a recurrent theme. The Malaysians warmed very much to the idea of the College's acknowledging the significant festivals of its migrant student bodies. They urged the creation of more opportunities for shared, multicultural celebration, of all types, on a regular, ongoing basis.

Reinforcing the concept of cultural sharing, the Malaysians suggested that New Zealand-born students be given access to information about the cultures of their overseas-born classmates. The Malaysians liked having opportunities to act as mentors, mediating their culture to their New Zealand-born peers and, in the process, finding both self-affirmation and opportunities for establishing cross-cultural friendships. They wished the College to facilitate this by building a diversity into its programmes which would reflect the ethnic spectrum of its student roll. At least forty per cent of the respondents suggested this diversity, to an enhanced degree, should encompass a Maori dimension; they felt, in this respect, that New Zealand under-celebrated a unique aspect of its cultural heritage. They hoped, moreover, that the College's library, Bill Robertson Library, would develop its holdings of material relating to the student body's ethnic and cultural composition. They wondered whether campus and classroom signs might reflect more fully the range of languages spoken among the students.

They felt strongly that there should be a lecturer-mentor at College whose brief would be to look after the interests and coordinate the programmes of all migrant students from all ethnic backgrounds, and facilitate lateral communication among the several migrant groupings. They suggested that the work of such a lecturer-mentor could be supplemented by the creation, on the Dunedin campus, of an Overseas Students Association, a body to be run by students for students. Such a body would provide mutual support for its members, and facilitate the sharing of experience across successive intakes of migrants. Such an association, also, might promote integrative contact. It could arrange food festivals, stage cultural displays and events and act as a resource channel. It could encourage multicultural synthesis by involving New Zealand-born students in the organization and delivery of its activities.

Such support, the Malaysians opined, would be especially valuable for overseas students during their first year of residence in Dunedin. The initial months of adjustment to living and studying abroad can be really taxing for the migrant. Help with the initial stages of socialization would be much appreciated. It takes a year, the Malaysians advised, to develop a sense of closeness with the lecturers and, especially, to come to terms with an educational culture that encourages dialogue, debate and independence of judgment. It takes time to adjust to an ethos which fosters creativity in educational planning rather than conformity with received models. The Malaysians would have appreciated more information about what to expect in Dunedin, for example regarding lecturing style, before they left Malaysia. They urged that Dunedin staff should make preliminary orientation visits, to talk with prospective migrant cohorts. They recommended that the College should make use of video, initially to provide migrant students with information about Dunedin prior to their leaving their home countries to travel to New Zealand and, subsequently, to provide migrants with an incremental record of their experiences in Dunedin which they might take home with them.

For students first arriving in Dunedin, the Malaysians recommended an introductory socialisation programme offering opportunities for sightseeing and, more importantly, playing sport or joining in cultural activities alongside New Zealand-born students. To assist with initial practicalities for students on their arrival in New Zealand, the Malaysians strongly advocated 'buddying'. In their experience a buddy, overseas-born but ready-versed in New Zealand ways, was best placed to help familiarise the migrant with the nuances of daily life in Dunedin as well as offering classroom support. The need for such support is not confined to students coping with ESOL situations. Even though fluent in English, the Malaysians, as

noted earlier, initially found the New Zealand idiom strange, and the dynamics of New Zealand humour to be bewildering. Many variables other than language impinge on the processes of cross-cultural socialization. Interaction with a buddy, the Malaysians suggested, could provide crucial, early-phase backing in both on-campus and off-campus situations, and would help to address the elusive variables attendant on acculturation.

Looking beyond the immediacy of the campus to wider issues of accommodation, the Malaysians favoured pepperpotting, a situation which they saw as offering a suitable balance between cross-cultural interaction and intra-cultural, mutual support. Some respondents would have appreciated opportunities to homestay. New Zealand-born students intending to flat with migrants would benefit, the Malaysians felt, from a familiarisation programme; induction should be a two-way process. In respect of hostel accommodation, the Malaysians posited the following qualities as desirable in a warden:

1. a concerned interest in the migrants' overall welfare, expressed for example in regular visiting;
2. an overt interest in the students' study programme and academic progress;
3. approachability, expressed in an open-door response to inquiry;
4. hospitality, both offered directly and facilitated through introductions to New Zealand-born student neighbours.

The Malaysian participants in this study were generous in their willingness to contribute, and unfailingly constructive in their desire to promote ongoing cross-cultural contact. Richly aware of the benefits accruing from their own years of study abroad, they were keen that others should enjoy similar opportunities, in a context structured to maximize benefits for all involved. Both anecdotal and formal research evidence abounds regarding the cognitive and creative benefits of additive multiculturalism. The Dunedin College's Malaysian student guests, during some five years of accumulated, cross-cultural exposure, assimilated and embodied these benefits. Bringing to Dunedin the colourful diversity embedded in their home culture, the Malaysians carried with them generic qualities of high ambition, ideals, a receptiveness to new experiences, and a constructive willingness to interact with others. They came willing to give as well as to take. They pioneered a model which the Dunedin College may continue, fruitfully, to explore and develop.

## APPENDIX 1

### ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES BY MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, YEAR 2000 COHORT, TO A QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED DURING SEMESTER ONE OF THEIR PROGRAMME AT THE DUNEDIN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Responses were made on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 = strong support or agreement)

The second-from-right column shows mean responses by Malaysian students whose mother tongue was not Malay.

the far right column shows the number of responses, made to each item, at the unfavourable levels of 4 or 5.

#### Mean Mode Female Male non-Malay 4/5

##### speakers

Importance of academic success 1.2 1 1.2 1.3 1.3 0

Desire for personal fulfilment 1.3 1 1.4 1 1.1 0

Desire to gain fresh educational 1.6 1 1.6 1.3 1.5 0

perspectives

Desire to widen circle of friendships 1.7 2 1.6 1.8 1.7 0

Experience in Dunedin is personally 1.8 1,2 (=) 1.7 2.3 1.7 0

worthwhile

Study in Dunedin is professionally 1.8 2 1.9 1.8 1.9 0

worthwhile

Adequacy of support provided in 1.8 2 1.7 2 1.8 0

Dunedin

Desire to help New Zealanders 2.1 2 2.1 1.8 2.1 0

understand Malaysia

Desire to make professional contact 2.1 2 2.1 1.8 2.1 0

with New Zealanders

Ease of study in an English-language 2.1 3 2.1 2 1.8 0

medium

Ease of academic study in Dunedin 2.2 3 2.2 2.3 1.9 0

Enjoyment of Dunedin 2.3 3 2.2 2.5 1.8 1

Ease of adjustment to living in Dunedin 2.4 2 2.5 2.3 1.9 2

Ease of maintaining own culture while 2.4 1 2.2 3.3 2.3 5

living in Dunedin

Adequacy of preparation provided 2.4 2 2.5 2 2.2 3

before coming to Dunedin

Desire to gain insight into New 2.4 2 2.4 2.5 2.4 2

Zealand culture

Level of understanding of New Zealand 2.8 3 2.8 3 2.9 2

culture

Ease of making friends with New 3.1 3 3.3 2.5 3.3 6

Zealanders

New Zealanders' level of interest in 3.2 3 3.3 2.8 3.3 4

Malaysian culture

New Zealanders' level of understanding 4 5 4.2 3.3 4.1 11

of Malaysian culture

## APPENDIX 2

### COLLATED RESPONSES, MADE BY MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, YEAR 1999 AND YEAR 2000 COHORTS AT THE DUNEDIN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, TO QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED IN A YEAR 2000 SURVEY

**Male 7 Female 30 Malay-speakers 23 Other ethnic groups 14**

**Responses were made on a 1-5 scale (1 = strong support or agreement)**

**Year Year**

**2000 1999 Male Female**

**Mean Cohort Cohort**

Adequacy of support provided in

Dunedin 1.6 1.8 1.4 2.0 1.5

Experience in Dunedin is personally

worthwhile 1.7 1.8 1.5 1.9 1.6

Study in Dunedin is professionally

worthwhile 1.8 1.8 1.8 1.7 1.9

Enjoyment of Dunedin 1.9 2.3 1.5 2.1 1.8

Ease of study in an English-language

medium 2.0 2.1 2.0 2.0 2.0

Ease of adjustment to living in Dunedin 2.2 2.4 2.1 2.1 2.3

Ease of maintaining own culture while

living in Dunedin 2.2 2.4 2.0 3.1 2.0

Adequacy of preparation provided

before coming to Dunedin 2.3 2.4 2.2 2.1 2.3

Ease of academic study in Dunedin 2.3 2.2 2.4 2.4 2.3

Level of understanding of New Zealand

culture 2.8 2.8 2.8 3.0 2.8



Ease of making friends with New

Zealanders 2.9 3.1 2.6 2.6 2.9

New Zealanders' level of interest in

Malaysian culture 2.9 3.2 2.7 3.1 2.9

New Zealanders' level of understanding

of Malaysian culture 3.7 4.0 3.4 3.6 3.7

### APPENDIX 3

#### HOW CAN THE DUNEDIN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION BEST HELP AND SUPPORT OVERSEAS STUDENTS? COLLATION OF RESPONSES TO AN END-OF-COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE OFFERED TO THE YEAR 2000 COHORT OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS.

**18 responses, framed within a 1-5 scale**

**1 = very useful strategy 5 = strategy of little use**

Acknowledging the national days and significant festivals of overseas students within the Dunedin College programme. **Mean 1.27**

The appointment of a lecturer-mentor whose main role would be to look after the interests of overseas students and coordinate their programme. **Mean 1.33**

Running a socialisation programme for overseas students at the start of their residence in Dunedin, during which the overseas students would have opportunities for sightseeing, playing sport or joining in cultural activities alongside New Zealand-born students. **Mean 1.33**

Putting each overseas student in touch with a New Zealand *buddy* who has had experience of living abroad. **Mean 1.78**

Developing a wider range of social, sporting and cultural clubs at the College, outside the framework of the College's formal programme, and encouraging the organisers of these clubs to invite overseas students to participate. **Mean 1.78**

Running a familiarisation-socialisation course for New Zealand students who will be flatting with overseas students. **Mean 1.83**

Organising academic and/or professional courses within the Dunedin College programme which give overseas students opportunities for actively sharing their language and culture with New Zealand-born students. **Mean 1.89**

Running an introductory course in aural-oral English for overseas students.

**Mean 1.89**

Setting aside scheduled times for overseas students to meet with their lecturer-mentor.

**Mean 1.89.**

Organising a weekly social programme (eg shared lunch) at which all overseas students at the College could meet together. **Mean 2.10**

Inviting New Zealand flatmates of overseas students to join in this weekly social programme. **Mean 1.94**



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