

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF HOW BILINGUAL POLICE RECRUITS JOIN  
THE POLICE COMMUNITY DURING THEIR INITIAL TRAINING**

**BY**

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## **Abstract**

New Zealand seeks to increase the diversity of its police organisation and this research provides an insight into perspectives of bilingual police learners. Learning to become a police officer challenges any recruit to develop academic, physical and social skills. This study examined the cultural and linguistic adaptations reported by bilingual recruits as they developed the necessary repertoire of skills to join the police community.

Through a phenomenological methodology, this research considers the rich, individual perspectives provided by three recruits about their lived experience as bilingual learners during their 19 week initial police training. Data were gathered through interviews and on-going personal journals. Two major themes emerged. The first relates to learning to be a New Zealand Police officer by envisioning themselves as a member of the professional community of the police, and also identifying with the wider culture of being a New Zealander. The second theme is personal reflection, as the participants learnt about themselves and reflected on their backgrounds through undertaking a range of activities, interacting with people, and managing emotions. These themes were further analysed against dimensions from a community of practice framework.

Participants in this study valued the support of other recruits and especially of the supervising staff. However, it appears that engagement in the police community might be further enhanced if college staff were fully aware of the linguistic and cultural demands faced by bilingual recruits who must come to terms with multiple cultures while developing their police identity.

This study highlights the need for further research on the changing identity of bilingual police officers both under training at the college and immediately after starting full-time employment.

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## Chapter One – Introduction

### Statement of the problem

My thesis addresses how bilingual recruits experience initial training in the New Zealand Police. With a focus on recruiting bilingual recruits, qualitative data which provides insight into the lived experiences of these recruits will provide insights into what supports their learning and what makes their learning more difficult. There are no published empirical studies on police in New Zealand at this stage of their training.

Police authorities internationally are actively recruiting people from their domestic ethnic populations to contribute to the diverse nature of policing and to help their organisations mirror national demographics. As in many other countries, the drive to achieve ethnic diversity is a feature of the New Zealand Police (Casey, 2000; Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005; McMurray, Karim, & Fisher, 2010; New Zealand Police, 2011a). The New Zealand Police Strategic Plan 2011-2015 acknowledges that New Zealand proactively recruits particular groups into the police profession; “we will increase recruitment, retention and development of women and people from Maori, Pacific and ethnic communities, so that our workforce reflects the New Zealand population” (New Zealand Police, 2011b, p. 13). With a more diverse workforce, police will be in a stronger position to understand and attend to issues of cultural and linguistic diversity, and thus to enhance community engagement.

There are advantages to seeking bilingual recruits in the police. Studies indicate that employing bilingual police staff may lead to increased cultural understanding and trust within police organisations, but also across communities. Subsequently this can reduce barriers for members of the public seeking police help (Shah, Rahman, & Khashu, 2005).

However, literature about police primarily focuses on probationary or commissioned police officers. Research about recruit learning during initial police training is limited (Campbell, 2009), whilst the learning experiences of bilingual recruits remains to be

explored. The intention of this study was to uncover what bilingual New Zealand police students thought contributed to their success, and how they felt their home community responded to them becoming a police officer. If the New Zealand Police is aware of bilingual students' experiences, it could help police to recruit, support, train and retain a diverse workforce that enriches New Zealand policing.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore the barriers and facilitators to learning reported by New Zealand's bilingual police students during their training at The Royal New Zealand Police College (RNZPC). Specifically, this research focused on police students' perceptions of their experiences of police education and training; the influence of their first language; the influence of their families, religion or culture; and the perceived expectations of other recruits or other police.

### **Research question**

This study explored how recruits understand their learning and how they gain membership of the community of practice at The Royal New Zealand Police College by investigating this question:

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

The sub-questions were:

How do bilingual police students perceive their strengths during their initial police training?

What challenges do bilingual police students report?

How do bilingual police students report that others (family and fellow recruits) respond to their new role?



In this thesis, bilingual refers to the ability to speak languages other than English. The participants have one or more languages other than English. The participants are also bicultural because they have been born and have spent a major period of their education outside of New Zealand. They are an ethnic minority in the police as each participant is from Asia. Men and women took part in my research but to protect the identity of the participants I will refer to them all as men.

Bilingual means having the ability to communicate well in two languages – though definitions differ on the minimum level of proficiency, from competent to near fluency. Bilingual people can shift easily from one language to another, particularly when there are changes to situations or subjects, and to achieve specific functions within each language. In this study this term will cover any recruits who are able to adequately communicate in more than two languages.

### **Significance of the study**

Police officers representing the various ethnic groups within a national context are important interlocutors across communities, and there is an institutional commitment to the inclusion of ethnically diverse and bilingual police in New Zealand (State Services Commission, the Treasury, & the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2012) Learning about and adapting to the police culture can help recruits to successfully join the police community. For ethnic minority recruits, my study indicates that this may result in further acculturation into New Zealand society as well as the police.

This particular research study contributes to the understanding of the diverse workforce that the New Zealand Police is striving to attain (State Services Commission et al., 2012). It reveals students' thoughts about how they adapt to the police culture and the police community by providing an understanding of facilitators and barriers to learning of bilingual police recruits during their initial police training. This research fills a gap in the

literature by exposing what three bilingual New Zealand police recruits perceive as contributing to their success, the interconnections of social and cultural factors in their new community of practice, and an individual experience of their ethnic community's response to them becoming a police officer.

Ethnic minority officers in New Zealand have reported that immersion and adaptation to the new culture, with its associated values, can test traditional views (Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). However, what is not explicit in the literature is what initial training was like for these particular officers. It is not clear what enhanced their learning, or what was challenging about initial training as a bilingual trainee. In the workplace it is essential that the learning process of new individuals takes into account the influence of a range of interrelated elements from their social and cultural backgrounds (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009). Uncovering some of these influences may assist police staff in the future to understand what promotes success amongst bilingual students in the college environment. It may inform the kinds of education support that the New Zealand Police might maintain or implement to enhance student learning and the integration of bilingual students. Bilingual recruit learning is an important phenomenon to unearth as awareness and understanding of bilingual police student experiences may positively impact on police recruitment, training, learning support, recruit integration and retention in the police. An awareness of bilingual recruits' experiences could help police to recruit, support and retain a diverse workforce that will serve the dynamic and complex nature of New Zealand policing.

### **Overview of the thesis**

The next chapter provides a review of literature of the subject of a phenomenological exploration of how bilingual police recruits join the police community during their initial training. It explains the theoretical framework used, as well as related research that helps to position this study in the field. Chapter Three explains the methodology applied to collect and analyse the participants' data. Chapter Four outlines the main themes of

the study with participant quotes to substantiate them. Chapter Five provides detailed analysis drawn from the findings, as per the above-mentioned methodology. Chapter Six highlights implications from this research for police and for further research, then it summarises the study.

## Chapter Two – Literature Review

This review of the literature on bilingual international students and bilingual police presents the theoretical framework used for this research. It explains what the framework is about, and its relevance in this study. The literature review examines eight main areas that provide comprehensive insight into the research question, including initial challenges of police training, learning through an additional language and cultural identity.

### **Theoretical framework**

This research uses “community of practice” as its theoretical framework (Wenger, 1998). A community of practice framework is appropriate for this study because it provides a way of viewing the process of novices, in this case bilingual police recruits, becoming part of the Police community. Community of practice acknowledges that the newcomer is required to adapt to the prevalent practices in the process of learning. Individuals must participate with established members of the community to understand how the new environment or community of practice works. This participation provides an avenue for both parties to see each other’s perspectives and learn from each other. Wenger believes that “learning ... is an interplay between social competence and personal experience” (Wenger, 2000, p.227). He describes three “modes of belonging” to articulate this interplay: Engagement – which is talking together, participating and the experiences within a community that shape participants’ understanding; Imagination – where people construct honest images of themselves and their community to reflect on their situation or their possibilities; and, Alignment – which is a mutual process of ensuring that people are aligned to the overall goals of the community (Wenger, 2000).

What also shapes a community of practice is the two-way process of “the development of knowledgeable skill and identity” and how “newcomers become old-timers through a social process of increasingly centripetal participation” (Lave, 1991, p. 68). This is the

process of moving from being a peripheral member of the community to a full participating member of the community (Hara, 2009). This social participation in the community and sense of belonging permits “individuals to reshape their identity, both within the community and in their perceived role in the broader society” (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 649).

Communities of practice can be formal or informal and can be used to theorise about a range of networks, organisations and sectors. Communities of practice are bound by social membership and participation, yet “are not bound by organizational affiliations; they can span institutional structures and hierarchies” (Wenger, 1998, p. 3). People are able to be members of several different communities at the same time (Campbell et al., 2009; Machles, 2003). For example, the Australian Army can be considered a community of practice (Potter, 2009) with many other communities existing within it, like corps and trade groups that operate within a mix of Army workplaces, as well as rank groups and sport teams.

The three dimensions that define a community of practice are joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire. Joint enterprise is about members knowing and understanding what the community is about as well as contributing to it. Mutual engagement is the relationships and norms that unite members, while shared repertoire is the mix of resources and capabilities, like artefacts, vocabulary, and rules that members have developed and use (Wenger, 2000). Ultimately, “what is shared by a community of practice – what makes it a community – is its practice” (Wenger, 1997, p. 38) An example of community practice as an analytical framework is in Campbell’s study of the learning and development of individual Australian police officers within their first three years of service (Campbell, 2007; Campbell, 2012).

Campbell’s (2007) review of literature on communities, police culture and socialisation argued in favour of using a community of practice framework to understand new police officers learning and their police identity. His longitudinal qualitative study (2012), using case study methodology, was then carried out and followed six early-career police

officers transitioning from the Police College into their police work. It investigated the enthusiasm of the newcomer in a community of practice and how these officers build upon their previous experience in the new context. However, he notes that there is a strong expectation for those newcomers to conform to the norms shaped by police who are full participating members. Lave (1991) acknowledges this expectation that old-timers will continue sharing their experience within the community.

### **Ethnically diverse police recruitment**

This research specifically examines ethnically diverse recruits after they have undergone the recruiting process and as they are learning to be police officers at the Police College. It is possible that public and police perceptions of ethnic minorities may have some effect on the community of practice that the participants become part of. Many multicultural communities favour a diverse police organisation that represents the population it serves (Ben-Porat, 2007; Casey, 2000; Cashmore, 2001; Cunningham & Wagstaff, 2006; New Zealand Police, 2011b). However, ethnic minority groups' attitudes to police, police attitudes to minorities, and public attitudes may also be barriers to recruitment (Casey, 2000; McMurray et al., 2010). Some of these attitudes include perceptions of racial bias within police, different views of what policing is about based on their experiences of police activities and police careers in their home countries (McMurray et al., 2010).

Members of the public may hold different views from members of the police according to a study into the recruitment and retention of culturally and ethnically diverse people into Australia's Victoria Police (McMurray et al., 2010). Findings from five focus groups from members of the Victoria Police, plus members of Indian, Sri Lankan, and Vietnamese communities, highlighted the importance of diversity in the police, and the positive effect it had on the community. However, police participants (who were not specifically identified as belonging to ethnic minority groups) raised concerns about English as an Additional Language (EAL) police's practical English language based on work experiences with them. One Victoria Police participant indicated that police

seemed to have great difficulties with an EAL police recruit's strong, difficult to understand accent when dealing with emergencies. This was considered a potentially dangerous situation. In contrast, community groups believed that their levels of education should not be viewed as a barrier to recruitment. The focus groups believed that proactively recruiting ethnic minorities could improve the public perception and visibility of these officers, their communities, and the police as an organisation. The introduction of a capacity-building program to improve English proficiency was suggested as a way to help people transition into the police. Additionally, the non-police participants identified that a discrimination-free workplace was important, and felt that a cultural awareness program might result in better integration (McMurray et al., 2010). Participants suggested that Victoria Police respond to poor perceptions of policing by requiring their police to be culturally competent. Options for achieving this included participating in cultural awareness training programs, and undertaking on-the-job learning about different cultures at the same time as joining the Victoria Police community (McMurray et al., 2010).

The increasing diversity of the New Zealand population, like that in Victoria, highlights the importance of all police officers to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity. This is a response to the common theme of discrimination against ethnic minority groups described in police studies (Casey, 2000; Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005; Reiner, 2010). New Zealand police literature declares that the "police promotes a culture that encourages a sense of pride amongst police employees, values diversity and ensures that they feel able to challenge any inappropriate behaviour" (New Zealand Police, 2011a, p. 13). Understanding police students' experiences may provide evidence on whether such issues persist and the extent to which they may affect the transition into the police community of recruits from non-European or non-English speaking backgrounds.

## **Learning to be police students**

In this section literature from policing and professional learning as minority students in a majority culture is used to explain some of the socialisation that the participants may experience while learning their new role. It also explains some of the expectations, over and above explicit skills and knowledge, and self-help that the college may expect. Other literature provides background to the varied cultural issues that students can encounter as they learn in an additional language.

**Initial challenges of police training.** Undergoing initial training for a new career in the police, while concurrently integrating into a new organisational culture, may be a challenging experience. Previous social and cultural experiences can affect police students' participation and sense of belonging in the new police community (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009). Socialisation into police culture may require students to understand the hierarchical structures and processes while they learn to conform to new conditions (Campbell, 2009; Chan, 2003). Participants in Campbell's (2009) research understood that inclusion in discussions, meal invitations, or gaining a nickname indicated their acceptance into a new workplace. Colleagues' acceptance of recruits was strengthened by the shared experience of working together, though this did not diminish the "strong cultural sense of hierarchy, rank and position, and [that] they were the lowest of all" (Campbell, 2009, p. 25). Campbell, Verenikina & Herrington (2009) contend that recruits need to adapt their previous experiences to new experiences as their individual and community identity develop during their police training. Hence recruits' life experiences such as their education, languages and cultures are likely to interplay with individual and community identity as they experience initial police training.

New Zealand's community policing approach requires police officers who are able to respond quickly and solve issues; therefore New Zealand Police training facilitates and applies self-directed learning (New Zealand Police, 2007). Police training may include self-directed group discussions, debates and role plays, for example (Birzer, 2003). This



need for self-concept and self-directedness can be achieved through experiential learning and sharing their life experiences but may be unfamiliar to adult learners educated in other countries. In addition, new recruits need preparation for the range of demands of policing. This means that “basic police training needs to infuse relevant aspects of stress and discipline throughout the training process” (Vodde, 2011, p. 20), in a balanced manner that focuses recruits on their responsibilities in unpredictable work situations. This training focus which aims to prepare them for an unpredictable and stressful workplace may also be foreign to police recruits.

An additional layer of complexity occurs when adult learners may be learning in a way that is not necessarily aligned with their cultural understanding of learning or in their strongest language (Tait, 2010). Therefore it was relevant to review literature that relates to adult international students who are in a cultural minority, learning through an additional language and adapting to new means of study such as learning autonomy.

**Cultural minority students learning in a majority culture.** Literature indicates that minority students studying in a majority culture consider themselves to be at an intersection of a range of challenges. This is particularly pertinent for those who are required to acculturate to the majority culture as they strive to join a profession.

There are variations in the acculturation experiences of both individuals and groups, and also in the amount of stress encountered and how well adaptation occurs (Berry, 2005; Leong & Ward, 2000). Acculturation is about “changes in behaviour and cultural values ... there is an opportunity to be reflective of personal cultural beliefs and practices as well as those of the host culture” (McDermott-Levy, 2009, p. 286). According to Berry’s (2005) study acculturation can be described in terms of integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation strategies. Berry asserts that people from different cultural backgrounds who seek to become integrated into their new environment experience less stress and adapt better compared to those who marginalise themselves. McDermott-Levy (2009) points out that people “frequently maintain their original culture where they live and in their private lives ... [and] often adapt to the host culture

in their public and professional lives” (p. 282), and by understanding the effects of original and host cultures and practices, nurses, in this case, can potentially improve outcomes for patients. So, it is also possible to maintain one’s own culture while actively participating in a new one.

Attitudes and behaviours of both newcomers and hosts influence acculturation. Liu’s (2007) study used surveys to examine attitudes of multi-culturalism in 133 Asian immigrants and 108 Anglo-Australians, and what influence those attitudes had on acculturation strategies of immigrants in Brisbane. It found that both Anglo-Australians and Asians underwent adaptation as the immigrant group integrated into Australian society, with the newcomers making the most adjustments psychologically and sociologically compared to host nationals. It also found that the Asian immigrant group saw multi-culturalism as more of a benefit than the Australian group did. Additionally, in a study of New Zealand adults living in Singapore it was discovered that “personal relationship satisfaction, social difficulty, and host national contact predicted psychological distress” (Ward & Kennedy, 1992, p. 175). Where there was a greater cultural distance between the sojourner’s and the host culture more issues were apparent. The findings also revealed that “a strong identity with one’s original culture impeded the development of the complex social skills required to negotiate a new cultural environment”(Ward & Kennedy, 1992, p. 188). These studies suggest that assimilation rather than integration may be a coping mechanism for some individuals working in a new culture.

Religion may also be a factor in the intersection of issues in educational settings. Religion may determine what students wear, as well as how much and what type of social integration they might experience. Adhering to Muslim practices that are unknown or unusual in the majority culture may affect how minority students interact with their peers (McDermott-Levy, 2011), for example praying at prescribed times, practising specific eating customs, or wearing facial and head coverings. Religion is relevant to this study as comments or reactions to visible religious actions and appearances, or a lack of

confidence in wearing clothing that is not part of their everyday dress, can affect how a student learns. It also may affect how they cope with stress in this training environment.

Some ethnic minority students perceive that “fitting in” to a new learning environment is important for their studies and well-being, so they modify their behaviours as they discover new and unfamiliar educational, social or religious practices. Love’s (2010) study of African American students in a predominantly white university found that personal development as well as learning can be both demanding and have emotional implications. Additionally, negotiating student life meant that black students adapted to the dominant culture by imitating speech and consciously acting like the majority white students. Modifying behaviours to assimilate with the majority may help students to fit in and be understood and accepted by others. However, this can come at a cultural cost as it may feel like the new culture is being acquired at the expense of the individual’s cultural identity and this may feel threatening (Ackerman-Barger, 2010; Leong & Ward, 2000).

Cultural minority students, like police recruits, who are learning their new profession in a majority culture, contend with a complex array of challenges. Their instructors can potentially provide better support and reduce stress on students if they have an awareness of the scope and intricacies of students’ challenges.

**Learning through an additional language.** There are particular dynamics at work when adults undertake learning in an additional language. Language learning theories reveal that bilingual learners must balance cognitive, environmental and sociocultural influences (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Ortega, 2009). Communication in an additional language requires cognitive processing of language input, noticing and applying new linguistic features and conscious implementation of learning strategies. It also involves learners responding to environmental factors in an effort to acculturate attitude to the context of the target language. Ortega (2009, p. 80) argues that “what matters in the linguistic environment is ... what learners make of it, how they process (or not) the

linguistic data and how they live and experience that environment". In addition, Lightbown and Spada (2006) point out language theories show that "humans can acquire language within a variety of social and instructional environments" (2006, p. 49). The linguistic environment experienced by trainee police includes situations where the recruits must learn to understand and respond in their additional language in potentially life-threatening situations.

Good language learners, according to Norton and Toohey (2001), are not only those **that** learn on an individual basis, but can also use the available social networks around them to increase their interaction strategies and their linguistic competence. As part of this sociocultural perspective they followed two different English language learners who used their agency, by making the choice to take control, to actively create opportunities for language and social growth. The study also found that there is a very close link between language and identity (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Norton explains the term identity as "to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed over time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (2000, p. 5). The idea of effective or good language learners being active and self-directed in their own learning is also emphasised in learners in a Hong Kong university study (Wong & Nunan, 2011), and they emphasise that using a range of strategies provides more avenues to enhance learning outside the formal class setting. Examples included interacting with others for specific learning, observing native speakers and being reflective about their learning. Another study of Omani nurses studying in the US signalled that developing a conscious attitude to adapt made a positive impact on student learning (McDermott-Levy, 2011).

Learning through an additional language can place great pressure on learners. They must manage language, relationships, social contexts and their own sense of self.

**Adapting to study in an English language environment.** Studying through an additional language may not only complicate the process of learning but it may result in social isolation and an inability to make friends in new language environments. This may be associated with students being self-conscious about their own ability and their own accent. It may also mean that listeners struggle to understand them, and students may fear that this will result in loss of interest of listeners. Bilingual students in the US-based Omani study reported that it was easier to make friends with students from other minority cultures than with students from the majority culture (McDermott-Levy, 2011). Sawir et al (2007) reported poor socialisation of international students in Australia and recommended academic institutions encourage both group and individual social support systems in order to alleviate students' personal, social and cultural isolation. Another study of international nurses in Australia indicated that culturally and linguistically diverse nurses gained resilience, confidence and responsibility as a result of persevering to overcome their English language challenges on the way to completing their studies (Jeong et al., 2011).

The Jeong et al., 2011 case study used focus groups to explore the learning experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse nursing students attending Australian nursing programmes. Eleven nurses, three clinical facilitators, and four academic staff from an Australian university participated in the research (Jeong et al., 2011). These participants reported four key barriers to learning - limited English language competence, feelings of isolation, inadequate opportunities and time for learning, as well as insufficient university support. Specific language challenges included inability to fully understand tutorials, be understood by others because of the way they speak, and the rejection by others that may accompany the former challenges. The researchers recommended allocating dedicated mentors to individuals throughout high stress clinical placements. Other strategies to be adopted included accessing experienced role models of the same ethnicity, maintaining and affirming students' identity, and creating supportive educational settings. In short, particular challenges may exist for adult students from

linguistic and cultural minority groups, but evidence suggests that there are ways institutions can act to address these.

Specific and on-going language assistance during university study has been advocated to improve student learning (Glew, 2012; Jeong et al., 2011). Research on cultural and linguistically diverse nursing students in Australia reveals that whilst pre-registration study and meeting proficiency tests for admission can ensure an appropriate entry level of English language, embedded language assistance throughout courses can promote and develop students (Glew, 2013). The paper points to academic writing skills, group interaction, roleplay and precise practice of specific vocabulary use for various health situations, as examples of ways that can improve students' nursing studies and English communication. Similarly, an on-line survey of almost 800 international students from non-native English language backgrounds at five Australian universities echoed similar points about accessing on-going help during the academic year (Rochecouste, Oliver, Mulligan, & Davies, 2011). They also noted that attending tailored tutorial sessions that cover cultural and linguistic subtleties of the new country and which give participants the confidence to speak without being afraid of mistakes, are support strategies that may assist students to improve their English language development. What worked for these EAL learners were programmes designed to improve students' English language skills throughout the course they were doing, including learning subject specific vocabulary and practice interacting in English using the communication style and expressions most appropriate for the work setting.

The expectation to be self-directed learners and engage in student-led classroom discussions was unfamiliar to many international students in a university setting and resulted in a much greater workload (McDermott-Levy, 2011). These Omani students reported their own lack of academic preparation. They did not understand academic expectations, or know how to deal with new or unexpected teaching and learning strategies (McDermott-Levy, 2011).

Understanding barriers to learning has the potential to inform curriculum design, support services and the ways teaching staff interact with ethnic minorities (Ackerman-Barger, 2010). Other researchers examining support structures on the motivation of Native American nursing students also recommended the use of formal academic support programs and positive learning environments to ensure that both educators and the curriculum are inclusive of other cultures (Metz, Cech, Babcock, & Smith, 2011). These studies illustrate the particular challenges faced by people whose first language is not the majority language, such as poor support networks, discrimination and cultural insensitivities, and how they can negatively influence motivation, which may also extend to students from local indigenous minority groups (Metz et al., 2011; Wilson, McKinney, & Rapata-Hanning, 2011).

Theories of language learning discussed in this section suggest that language is acquired in a social context for the purposes of communication. Oral skills including pronunciation are particularly important in my study as police recruits are placed in situations where they may need to speak clearly to communicate with others in high pressure situations. Additionally, understanding work expectations and acquiring specific learning strategies can enhance the way students adapt to new learning environments.

**Learning autonomy.** The initial training in the New Zealand Police requires students to live in residential accommodation at the Police College. In this section I will use literature that relates to bilingual learners learning within a profession. Living away from family support in order to undertake higher learning may make the learning more challenging. Adult learners commonly experience stress as they learn to be independent and live away from their families. However, it is equally stressful when families do not understand the learning and cultural demands placed on students (Wilson et al., 2011). This was reported in a “non-experimental cross-sectional survey ... undertaken with undergraduate nursing students identifying as Maori” (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 59) as they found obstacles to their learning. This was also evident in Omani nurses’ experience of adapting to being alone whilst simultaneously undergoing educational, cultural and

language pressures (McDermott-Levy, 2011). Maori nurses reported a similar intersection of pressures and described obligations to their family and community, whilst commencing their nursing careers, as “walking in two worlds” (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 71).

Being away from familiar support networks whilst adapting to new environments can be exacerbated when learning in another language (Ackerman-Barger, 2010; Jeong, Hickey, Levett-Jones, Pitt, Hoffman, Norton, & Ohr, 2011). This was evident in McDermott-Levy’s (2011) phenomenological inquiry of twelve female Omani nursing students who had been living and studying in the United States for 12 months. Twelve themes were identified about their lived experience of learning through an additional language using group interviews, individual interviews and reflexive journaling. The main themes included new cultural challenges in their experience as a student studying in another language – like the higher level of comprehension, conversation, difficulty understanding American accents, Americans having difficulty with theirs, discomfort with speaking in public and huge grammar differences when writing. Other themes included separation from families, learning to be independent and learning to adapt to a variety of new situations. These highlighted the need for educators to “be aware of the multiple factors that influence students’ education” (McDermott-Levy, 2011, p. 275). It recommended international students join university activities and groups in order to support their integration. This study, like others, encouraged academic institutions to improve their services for international students to accommodate students’ religious practices and recommended class discussions to learn about diverse points of view (Ackerman-Barger, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011).

Having autonomy in an unfamiliar environment while trying to learn a new profession can affect the lived experiences of learners. These experiences and challenges are not necessarily consistent nor easily managed. Bilingual police students may experience similar cultural, religious, social, psychological, and language challenges as they navigate



through the initial training, and attempt to gain trust and respect by more experienced police (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009; Chan, 2003).

**Cultural identity and self-awareness.** When ethnic minority police recruits, who are often bilingual, complete their training and take on their day-to-day policing roles they may be exposed to further cultural challenges. Ethnic minority officers in the New Zealand Police were asked for their individual perspectives on their professional roles in a study by Jaeger and Vitalis (2005). During in-depth semi-structured interviews the participants provided some background to why some ethnicities are drawn to the police, the support structures they have, what cultural values are important to them and their identities as both police and members of an ethnic minority. Significantly they reported an increase in self-awareness of their ethnic origins after they joined the police, and could see how this could help their role in the community. This suggests that recruits don't need to leave their ethnicity and language behind in order to fit into a new culture, which contrasts with Berry's (2005) study of acculturation. These New Zealand Police officers believed their cultural and linguistic background helped them to communicate and develop trust within their community. They could see their own potential to help improve race relations, reduce ethnic stereotypes and raise their colleagues' awareness of different views (Goddard & Jaeger, 2005; Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). In common with participants in international studies of bilingual adult learners, these bilingual police officers found that the provision of individual learning support, and having police mentors or friends in the organisation helped the integration process (Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). My study inquired about similar perceptions of identity, but from recruits undergoing training, not graduated constables.

Bilingual police officer respondents in the New Zealand study by Jaeger and Vitalis (2005) noted that police generally had limited understanding and knowledge about significant ethnic minority groups. It concluded that if police officers did not understand basic cultural protocols of Maori and Pacific people, it undermined the trust, facilitation and negotiation necessary for their role (Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). Respondents suggested

that Asian police officer numbers be increased to address the isolation of Asian communities and reduce barriers arising from language and cultural differences. They believed that ethnic tensions could be reduced if there were more Asian officers.

Learning a language also contributes towards understanding oneself and one's identity. The importance of the cultural identity of those in uniform and the cross-cultural work in policing has since been acknowledged by the appointment of New Zealand Police's twelve Ethnic Liaison Officers (New Zealand Police, 2011a). Police recruits provided insights about their ethnic background and their ethnic community in this research, particularly as it related to their perspectives of their training.

### **Chapter summary**

Police officers representing various ethnic groups within a national context are important links across communities. In New Zealand there seems to be an institutional commitment to the inclusion of ethnically diverse and bilingual police. For bilingual recruits, this inclusion may also result in further acculturation into New Zealand society, although immersion and adaptation to the new culture and its associated values can test traditional views (Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). Nonetheless, learning and adapting to the police culture helps students to successfully join the New Zealand community too.

Police literature primarily focuses on probationary or fully-fledged officers. Research has not exposed what bilingual police students perceive as contributing to their success (facilitators), what obstacles they encounter (barriers), or individual experience of their ethnic community's response to them becoming a police officer. Awareness of bilingual students' experiences could help police to recruit, support and retain a diverse workforce that will serve the dynamic and complex nature of New Zealand policing.

What was not explicit in the literature was how recruits experience their initial training. It was not clear what enhances their learning, or what was challenging about a bilingual student's induction into the police community. To understand the learning process of

individuals it is necessary to take into account the influence of interrelated elements from their social and cultural backgrounds (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009). This study attempted to uncover some of these influences.

## Chapter Three – Methodology

### Methodology

The research questions demanded qualitative research methods as this investigation involved accessing and analysing people's experiences and insights. In qualitative study "the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). One of the approaches to qualitative inquiry is phenomenology.

### Phenomenology

In this study of police students I used phenomenological methodology. Phenomenology explores the idea of how people make sense of the world (Bryman, 2008) through an in-depth exploration of individual perceptions and experiences (Denscombe, 2007; Van Manen, 1984). It explores personal descriptions of individual's experiences that allow others to gain insight into how they see, understand and feel about situations (Denscombe, 2007; Finlay, 2009) which I felt gave a very personal view of an aspect of someone's life. Phenomenological research persistently asks questions about "what something is 'really' like" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 7) to get to the core or the *essence* of the experience. Phenomenology accepts that people may experience the same circumstances but justifiably describe or interpret them in different ways (Denscombe, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Van Manen, 1984), or what is termed multiple-realities.

Phenomenology was suited to this study as it helped me to explore the phenomenon of bilingual police students' perceptions of factors that affected their learning, and how they related to more complex issues like their bilingual background, culture, ethnic community and integration into the police. In addition, "phenomenological approaches are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom" (Lester, 2006, p. 1) Phenomenology has the

potential to reveal elements, in or related to, the police learning environment that may not have been explored or challenged before. Ordinary, everyday language is used in phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and, the focus is on “experiential meanings” that aim to capture “fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived” (Finlay, 2009, p. 6). This study sought to describe the essence of the bilingual police students’ learning during their initial training, with particular focus on the facilitators and barriers they reported.

Phenomenological research is carried out in different ways owing to a range of philosophical approaches and theoretical methods of phenomenology in use (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Each of these methods varies slightly in the type of research questions, methods and analysis used. In this study I used interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology that was developed by Martin Heidegger, with influence from Husserl’s original work (Smith & Osborn, 2004). This particular theoretical underpinning was better suited to my research than descriptive phenomenology as it “has a theoretical commitment to the person as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being and assumes a chain of connection between people’s talk and their thinking and emotional state” (Smith & Osborn, 2004, p. 52). This methodology helped me pay attention to police students’ broad personal experience, including the social, cultural and political contexts that they engaged in (Lopez & Willis, 2004). This contextual influence is called the *lifeworld* (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

Heidegger used the expression *situated freedom* to indicate the complex links that humans have to the world and how these can shape their lives, as well as the opportunity to make choices in their lives (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the interpretation of the information offered by participants, given the situated freedom they have. The concepts of *lifeworld* and *situated freedom* are central to the phenomenon of police students’ perceptions of facilitators and barriers to their learning because “hermeneutics focuses on interaction and language; it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants”

(Cohen et al., 2007, p. 27). The concept of *co-constitutionality* recognises that the overall account of a phenomenon is a “blend of the meanings articulated by both participant and researcher within the focus of the study” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 730) and therefore does not attempt to bracket my (the researcher’s) knowledge or ideas, unlike other forms of phenomenology. Additionally, hermeneutic phenomenology allows the use of a conceptual framework, such as community of practice, to focus the inquiry and to help interpret the data (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

### **Research Questions**

The principle question that I investigated was “What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?” This aimed to elicit data to understand how language demands of the training, community perceptions and previous life experience (the situated freedom) influence bilingual recruits during their police training. It came from my perspective as a monolingual educator trying to get a better understanding of how bilingual students actually perceive their own learning. I was seeking to gain an informed view of student’s perceptions and experience in order to identify what may have helped them that could potentially assist other bilingual students or be widened to incorporate other ways of training and educating. I was aware that perhaps some methods don’t work as well as others in different contexts, or that other “lifeworld” (Smith & Osborn, 2004) influences and pressures can happen.

From the central question other questions helped to draw out rich descriptions of the phenomenon of being a bilingual recruit:

How do bilingual police students perceive their strengths during their initial police training?

What challenges do bilingual police students report?

How do bilingual police students report that others respond to their new role?

Within these questions recruits had an opportunity to explore their perceptions of how their own cultural group responded to them becoming police officers, as well as how their new recruit peers, other police staff or anyone else reacted to their new role.

### **Research Site**

Police academies or colleges are adult education and training environments that require students to engage in a range of academic and physical activities under stressful conditions (Chappell, 2007). The setting for this study was The Royal New Zealand Police College in Porirua where all New Zealand police recruit training takes place. It is a residential college that conducts several intakes (called wings) of 40 – 80 recruits each year. Here the recruits learn police studies, defensive tactics, firearms training, driver training and computer training (New Zealand Police, 2013). Residential-based police training at The Royal New Zealand Police College may, for foreign or New Zealand-born bilingual students, provide extra challenges as well as opportunities as they engage in a range of academic and physical activities under new, unfamiliar or stressful social, learning and living conditions.

### **Gaining access**

I visited the Police College to understand more of the police trainees' environment prior to the interviews taking place. Lester (2006) points out the critical need for ascertaining rapport and empathy with the participants, and this is particularly important given the participants are police trainees learning about their new work environment. To help me gain rapport and understanding I visited the formal learning areas such as the classrooms, lecture theatre, gym and swimming pool prior to the participants' arrival at the college. I also visited more public spaces that included the dining hall and the library. I viewed the barrack rooms to get familiar with the type of environment that the participants would be in every day of their training. The visit increased my understanding of the culture and work structure of the college, as I observed recruits

and police officers going about their regular duties. This helped me to get a feel for the environment that the participants would be immersed in (Cohen et al., 2007). This observation did not involve any data collection.

## **Participants**

The participants for this study were foreign-born bilingual police students from a mix of ethnicities. As Lester (2006, p1) observes “phenomenological approaches can be applied to single cases ... or deliberately selected samples”. The sample size affects the level of analysis that is achievable, and the richness of the cases and the constraints involved in the study, but should be large enough to allow similarities and differences between participants to be explored (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Accordingly, I purposively selected three individual cases - bilingual recruits attending the same police recruit intake - as participants in this research. Anecdotally the number of bilingual recruits attending initial police training usually varies from 5 – 8, so the number of participants in this research was about half of the usual cohort number. This study was voluntary, so only recruits who fit those criteria and who were willing to share personal experience were invited to participate (Cohen et al., 2007).

Through the Police College liaison officer I gained Police College permission as per the Institution Information sheet (Appendix A) and Consent Form (Appendix B). I also provided indicative Interview questions (Appendix C) and prompts for the reflective journal (Appendix D). The liaison officer was required to complete a consent form too (Appendix G) and he helped me to set up an initial meeting in a Police College classroom with potential participants, who were New Zealand or foreign-born bilingual police students from different ethnicities. They did not expressly have to have English as an additional language. The liaison officer briefly explained the study and the New Zealand Police’s endorsement of it. He explained that they were not obliged to participate in it, but were welcome to do it, and that he was a conduit to help me with the research but was not actually involved in it. I then further explained the study to the nine potential



participants and provided them with the Participant Information Sheets (Appendix E) and Participant Consent Forms (Appendix F). They could ask questions and take the sheets away from the meeting with the purpose of deciding later whether or not to participate.

Those who completed consent forms were then asked to complete the Participant Personal Details Form (Appendix H). This form gathered information about their ethnic group, age range, whether they attended New Zealand or overseas-schools, and the languages they spoke. The liaison officer was asked separately to indicate to me whether any recruit course members from the entire wing would be unlikely to cope with the extra demands of the research whilst undergoing their training. This information was sought to ensure that students' participation did not distract them from their initial training or place added pressure on them (Creswell, 2003). This eliminated some potential participants. As the aim was to access participants from a wide range of backgrounds, as well as their potential to contribute rich and varied experiences to the study, I used information on the Participant Personal Details Form to choose a diverse mix of participants.

This study ultimately involved three participants from different Asian countries. The participants included were aged between early twenties to mid-forties, and had come to New Zealand with their families. English was not their first language, but an additional one. There was a gender mix of participants but I intend to report their findings using only masculine pronouns to protect their identity. Each participant had had exposure to multiple languages and all had studied in English at secondary or tertiary level, either in their home countries or in New Zealand. To become a police recruit they had gained New Zealand residency or citizenship, but did not easily refer to themselves as New Zealanders. Each recruit spoke at least one other language besides English, with nine languages spoken across the group.

Prior to attendance at the Police College each participant had joined the Asian Safety Patrol (ASP) Group which is an Auckland-based support group for those undergoing the

police recruitment process. Within this organisation they improved their language, physical fitness and other skills. They learned more about policing and about other cultures as they went on voluntary patrols with police and Maori wardens. The participants had met one another at least once through the ASP prior to attending the Police College.

### **Data Collection**

Phenomenological research typically uses interviews as a method of data collection (Denscombe, 2007; Lester, 2006). Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of enabling researchers to gain in-depth information from participants and allowing some control in questioning (Creswell, 2003). It also provides for latitude in participants' replies. This flexibility enabled participants to give a detailed description of their experience and the context of it. Semi-structured interviews let participants say what they thought was important and relevant, and let me ask follow up questions or change the wording of my questions (Bryman, 2008). Interviewing, as a data collection tool, was justified for this study as other methods may not have elicited the contextualised and detailed answers collected. The questions (Appendix C) were centred on participants' experiences of what they thought enhanced or detracted from their learning at the college, and what it was like being a bilingual police recruit.

**Individual Interviews.** I conducted two individual, semi-structured face-to-face interviews at least ten weeks apart in the 19 week training. This allowed time for students to undergo more training - adding further information about their on-going experiences - and greater immersion in the content. This information also imparted comments about the impact of their previous life experiences and individual coping strategies. The one hour interviews were conducted at a place and time convenient to the participants; all elected to have them conducted at the college. I audio-recorded and transcribed each interview, to capture the detail of information that was said (Flick, 2007a). This made the volume of information more manageable and easier to make

sense of. Each interview transcription was emailed to the participant to check that it had been transcribed accurately from our interview. This proved very helpful as I found that they could identify occasional utterances that were unclear to me. The transcripts were then used to emphasise key findings of the research (Flick, 2007b).

With each recruit I spent some time engaging in conversation prior to the interview – not just to get to know them, but to make them feel comfortable. The recruits were relaxed, open and spoke conversationally in the interviews. I used a set of interview questions and had the flexibility to discuss answers in more detail or ask follow up questions where relevant. Having the written questions placed in between me and the recruit encouraged a more open approach to the interviewing. In the second and final interview I asked the same or similar questions as the first, but I also probed for more depth or followed up from some of the journal entries too. This ‘rounded out’ some of the data.

**Reflective Journals.** The police students wrote reflective journals on their training experiences to provide a second source of data, including information that may have been difficult to speak about or that was remembered outside the interview process. My weekly journal prompts (Appendix D) guided the students to record their experiences in, and reactions by others to their new employment. Use of dictaphones or video notebooks as data collection methods were rejected as I thought they would be more time consuming to set up, send and analyse. Students emailed their journals weekly and were prompted in an unobtrusive way. I did this in an informal and friendly tone by email or phone. The participants wrote journal entries at times that were convenient to them. This data collection was viewed as likely to generate considered and focussed information that did not consume their time (Creswell, 2003; Janesick, 1999). The process of actually writing down their thoughts can have wider advantages, “In their journals they weave together their accounts of the private and the professional, capturing fragments of experience in attempts to sort themselves out” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 421). Reflective journals can enable the participants to be more

considered in their thinking, as well as more focussed about the organisation and accuracy of the information they write (Janesick, 1999).

Incorporating reflective journals and semi-structured interviews provides a comprehensive representation of student's experience (Denscombe, 2007) and contributes to a more complete or holistic picture of the phenomenon being studied (Denscombe, 2007; Morse, 1994). The journal serves as part of the data triangulation; which means that by using two or more data sources the information gathered can be compared or to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon being studied (Denscombe, 2007). Methodological triangulation, which is where two qualitative methods – in this case interviews and journals – were used to study a single issue to get a holistic view (Morse, 1994). Whilst triangulation should confirm data, this is not always the case, as inconsistencies in the data and participants' actions may be revealed (Flick, 2007a). These inconsistencies are useful in that they may indicate mistakes, limitations, inadequate information or suggest a new focus (Flick, 2007a). They may challenge norms, uncover new phenomena or change the focus of the research, and formal reaction to these will be dependent on whether they may be opportunities or constraints to the study.

There was an opportunity to discuss journal writing at the end of the initial interview. This allowed the recruits to ask about what they were required to do. It was also a chance to practice aloud an answer they might give to a journal prompt. This was both a chance to rehearse it, but also to understand that their journal writing is about what they say not how they say it. I emphasised that the focus was on the key ideas, not their sentence structure or grammar.

I sent an initial journal prompt by email with up to four main questions for the recruits to answer. Some of the questions were deliberately the same as the interview questions. This not only gave them familiar questions and another chance to provide an answer, but allowed them to reflect on new experiences that had occurred since the question was asked for the first time. The expectation was for recruits to type a response within

the boxed area of the journal form and send it back to me. Each set of journal prompts had similar questions for all recruits per week, but at least one question was tailored for each individual. This was to seek more specific information from recruits based on their previous answers. It also acted as another tool to communicate to them that I acknowledged their previous responses and I had read and was interested in what they had written. I wanted the recruits to know that I was focussed on the content of their answers, rather than the grammatical accuracy. Recruits supplied answers when they could, according to their schedule or priorities.

The nature of the journal prompts (Appendix D) enabled the recruits to write about their experiences as they were undertaking their police training. The recruits also recorded how other people reacted to them about their new employment. There was no requirement for students to use the journals during their day-to-day training at the college, so most of the journal writing was conducted in the student's off-duty time. The first journal email included basic suggestions about writing journals, the journal itself and the timetable for sending and receiving the journals – which provided transparency and awareness of what was coming up in their wider journal programme. The journal was an excellent way to keep in contact with the recruits throughout the training. They not only wrote the journal but also wrote messages to me about the training they were doing and how they were feeling, which provided more context to their answers.

Later in the recruit training I made a visit to the college as a way to maintain a relationship with the participants. This may have helped them know that were being valued both as people and as participants. I did clearly explain to them that this was not part of the data gathering as I did not have consent for this. Two recruits were happy to meet me and to briefly discuss how they were progressing.

## **Data Analysis**

The analysis of interview data and journal entries was conducted using an interpretive phenomenological analysis model (Smith & Osborn, 2004, pp. 66-77). The methods consist of:

1. Reading the transcripts then writing commentary on them about initial connections or interpretations or language use on the phenomenon;
2. Re-reading and documenting emerging themes;
3. Transforming notes into concise phrases;
4. Locating the participant's key statements;
5. Discovering connections between emerging themes;
6. Clustering themes and selecting a master list; then finally,
7. Translating themes into a narrative account of the phenomenon that includes explanation, illustration and nuance.

I transferred the data from recruit interviews and each journal entry to one spread-sheet that was colour coded for each recruit. This simplified the presentation of all the information and meant that each set of recruit data was able to be read easily and coded in one spread-sheet. Data was then able to be prioritised, and the number of codes further reduced, to find themes. Discovering deeper meanings behind the themes took some time as I considered the different ways that the recruits experienced police training.

## **Trustworthiness**

The credibility of this study was assured by using several methods of data collection over a four month period – two interviews and five weekly journal entries – to achieve data triangulation. By incorporating reflective journals and semi-structured interviews in this research I intended to provide a comprehensive representation of bilingual students' experience (Denscombe, 2007). Given the literature gap about bilingual police students,

the use of both methods helped to disclose a greater depth of understanding of this phenomenon.

Research journals can demonstrate self-reflection, and differentiate between the researcher's and participants' interpretations (Janesick, 1999; Ortlipp, 2008). Thick, rich description with extracts from the participant's verbatim accounts is communicated through the findings of the research. The idea that the information imparted by a participant can vary depending on the context or the researcher reinforces the idea that, according to Heideggerian philosophy, there is no 'right' interpretation (Lopez & Willis, 2004) and that multiple truths are acceptable (Smith & Osborn, 2004). My own analyses were challenged by supervisors to ensure that the themes were relevant and were a sound representation of the data collected.

An audit trail of decisions taken during data collection and the analysis process formally tracked the reliability and the dependability of the research process, to ensure that relevant information is included in the narrative (O'Donoghue, 2007). This is consistent with the research methodology in that "making preconceptions explicit and explaining how they are used in the inquiry is part of the hermeneutic tradition" (Lopez & Willis, 2004) and is included in the data analysis. As a researcher I kept a journal about the processes used and my thoughts on the study. It helped me to record what I was doing with the participants, but also my own hypotheses, reactions and questions. My electronic journal helped me to differentiate my thoughts, observations and actions from the participants'.

### **Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations**

Ethics approval was sought from the Faculty of Education at Victoria University and the New Zealand Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee. I briefed the participants orally on the study and then provided further written information. They were assured that participation was voluntary. Written consent was obtained from those who wanted to participate and participants were made aware that they may

withdraw at any time. The Royal New Zealand Police College liaison officer did not nominate potential participants for the study, but indicated several personnel from across the wing that should not be selected as their current level of work indicated they might not have been able to cope with the extra demands of the research.

Confidentiality of information was maintained throughout the research and the identity of the participants was protected. For example, some individual details of participants are masked in the thesis, particularly as participant numbers are limited. In addition to using pseudonyms, I have not included the Wing number of this class, nor the year in which this study was carried out because there is a possibility that this information would make the recruits' identities known.

This research does not discuss specific security, sensitive issues or operational matters that relate to policing. I negotiated permission to interview and communicate with the police recruits individually, taking into account their timetable of practical and theoretical assessments, practices and studies.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has stated the methodology that has been used throughout this research. It has clearly explained what phenomenology is and why it was so well suited to this particular study of bilingual police. I have justified the ways in which data was collected and analysed. I have provided credibility to this study through triangulation, and I have explained my role in the research. The ethical considerations for this research have been articulated. There were some limitations to this research and they have been touched on in the following section.

### **Limitations of the Research**

There were a number of bilingual students in the police intake, but fewer recruits who were willing to take part. However, three participants were quite adequate for my study



as it does allow perspectives between the recruits to be explored (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Another constraint was that participation ultimately depended on a recruit's individual training commitments. This may have meant that at times the rich experiences of the participants may not have been as clearly articulated as they may otherwise have been if the participant had not had training commitments. On the other hand this is part of the very lived experience that I was researching. I had easy access to the participants although I was required to conform to New Zealand Police procedures, such as selecting participants and gaining initial access to police students through their staff.

The data from their diaries was extremely useful, though as the training got busier the participants' ability to complete their diaries within the time allocated was very difficult and they required some gentle reminders. Again, time constraints were noted by the participants as a huge part of the challenge to their overall training, so it added to the context of their lived experience.

The recruits occasionally found that it was difficult to participate in this study in their additional language - English - however I believe this was unlikely to have complicated the data collection, as they were able to express themselves in writing and orally. This in itself was relevant to the study and allowed insight into their learning as bilingual students.

I had to gain trust and rapport quickly as training time was limited. Although I do not have a police background, perhaps informing them that I am in the military did provide some connection to the police students' recruitment and initial training experiences. The study focussed specifically on the bilingual participants and purposefully did not explore opinions or ideas from the New Zealand Police as an organisation, nor the RNZPC staff or recruits attending the same training.

## Chapter Four – Findings

This chapter will outline the two main areas of interest that were revealed in the participants' interviews and journals, then detail some of the themes within them. These themes will be exemplified through selected quotes from the participants.

The first area of interest was centred on learning to be a New Zealand Police officer. The themes under this category were adapting to the police training, managing the rigors of studying, developing working relationships and intercultural understanding, as well as coping with the demands of learning through an additional language. It also involved the recruits envisaging themselves as police officers as they learned about New Zealand and New Zealand culture, while developing a police identity.

The second area that emerged was personal reflection. Recruits underwent individual reflection as they learnt about themselves and reflected on their backgrounds through the processes of doing a range of activities, interacting with people, and managing emotions: they demonstrated self-efficacy behaviours, acknowledged their cultural background and the support from their ethnic communities, and became aware of their own identities.

### **Theme One: Learning to become a New Zealand Police Officer**

The recruits recognised that becoming a police officer involved learning through formal and informal means while residentially based at the Police College. This meant organising themselves and adapting to a comprehensive and demanding schedule, coping with the content and self-management of their new studies, engaging with new peers and others in the police community, recognising the need for intercultural interaction and dealing with the stresses of learning to be a police officer through their additional language (L2).

As recruits increasingly saw themselves as being part of the police community they revealed that they were continuing to understand more about New Zealand and New

Zealand culture and why this was important. Their interview and journal data showed that they were developing a police identity.

**“You have to take responsibility”:** **Adapting to police training.** Each recruit’s background, skills and knowledge had an impact on their uptake of policing expectations and tasks. A strong feature of police training was the requirement for all recruits to become responsible for their own learning by coming prepared to classes, seeking clarification of subject matter, recognising elements that required further practice or tuition, and to ‘put their hand up’ to get assistance they needed. Two recruits admitted they felt organised and able to cope with the training. Their life and academic experience had helped prepare them for this process. For example, they exploited university study skills such as planning and applying a balanced study routine:

I’ve always prided myself with my organisational skills. I’m not an obsessive-compulsive type of person but I try to have an orderly way in which I do things. ... given the experiences that I had I think I am more open-minded about things than other people. I can y’know see it from a different perspective so to speak, and in terms of studying I again organise it in a way I can learn faster. A067<sup>1</sup>

The other recruit was not used to staying on a particular schedule or preparing for upcoming tasks and had to adapt quickly. He explained that he knew the intensity of the schedule would increase as other skills were learnt concurrently:

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<sup>1</sup> The coding indicates comments selected from the transcripts of interviews and journal entries from the three participants: Recruit A, B and C.

They've given us appointments like the baton, pepper spray and all that stuff so you need to keep up with those practices as well as you need to keep up with your studies, so everything is like coming on to us altogether, so we need to sort ourselves out as to how we're gonna get through it. C014.

Having only week-by-week access to the programme was unsettling for some, but each week became a platform for the next:

The recruit training is structured in a way that they do not give you everything all at once. The instructors only gives you enough information for you to slowly understand the concept/subject they are teaching and then expand on those topics as you [the recruit] get more familiar with it and then given you scenarios which shows you how to deal with these situations. A226

Each recruit believed that within the 19 week training there was a compression of a number of learning situations. This meant that they had to learn a variety of new information and tasks quickly, then practise or study these in their own time. They also had to be prepared to demonstrate their understanding in practical and written exams which were occurring, at one stage, every two days. The recruits felt that there was limited time to gain competencies:

I've got a tremendous workload to do. Not only academically but also physical and practical... you have to pass the practical, academic and ... defensive tactics ... all of them to graduate ... you have to make yourself focus on your topic and try to understand. B032

The same recruit relieved some of the time pressures and felt he built confidence by taking advantage of his previous experience within the police environment and their expectations:

I know the police code of conduct, so that really helped me to behave myself. So I don't have to learn the police rules, code of conducts. I know that already.  
B062

Staff showed the recruits how they could prepare for upcoming assessments by writing on their weekly timetable the subjects that they should revise or practise on a day by day basis. However, one recruit indicated he was not using the weekly planning example presented by the staff because it was a new process that he felt he couldn't adapt to while he had to juggle new tasks each week. Recruits acknowledged the training schedule developed complementary skills in different subjects at the same time. An example was learning the physical elements of approaching and handcuffing people, and potentially using force, while also studying the legal and communicative elements that accompany such actions:

So, you learn something up in the fourth floor classroom and at the same time you're learning ... say to approach people, how to handcuff them after approaching them, what to do, ... how to communicate with them and then going a step further and maybe handcuffing them or, ... after that if they not compliant you seek force ... after third or fourth week ... you start to say oh yeah they are related in a way. A288

Recruits were exposed to new tasks and responsibilities in ways they did not expect:

It involves different things that we've never done before like firearms training ... I struggled with it a little bit though, because of my size ... When I was doing urgent duty driving we had to drive at ... hundred and fifty on race tracks. ... I had never even thought in my life I would do such a thing, like use a firearm ... I was actually doing that and I have passed it... C262

The onus was on recruits to ask for clarification or extra assistance if needed. This aspect of self-responsibility required recruits to disregard embarrassment and overcome low self-confidence to seek answers or check their understanding:

Now if an instructor gives me instructions ... if I don't understand a word properly I will ask two or three more questions to confirm my understanding. B376.

They regularly have classes for people who need it ... which is good, it gives everybody a chance at doing well. A434

One recruit was initially too embarrassed to ask questions but realised the professional importance of doing so:

New skills that I have developed are if you do not understand anything just put up hand up and ask; do not think that people are going to laugh at you or make fun out of you [because] at the end of the day it's you who are going to [be] in danger. C255.

All recruits described firearms training as a significant but highly challenging component of becoming a police officer. They were tested by the mental and physical concentration required, the potential danger involved, remembering weapon-specific terminology, and the limited time to master skills. This multi-tasking demanded precise responses to highly complex simulated work scenarios:

Handling firearms is about practising the safety aspects as well as marksmanship. These things take time which unfortunately we do not have the luxury of. A237

It is a great challenge to understand instructor's instructions promptly. The training is very important for my future career. It's about life and death. Therefore, it is a great challenge for me to do everything promptly and properly, simultaneously. For example, for the pre-caution checks, I felt very difficult to remember every single step of the procedure. B200

Throughout the training recruits were constantly aware of the professional need to be independent, responsible, flexible and organised. They learned that it is acceptable and in fact, it is required, that recruits and police officers ask questions in order to master a skill or increase their policing knowledge. Recruits also learned to manage the simultaneous mix of mental and physical hurdles as they completed police tasks.

**“Learning new skills in a short time frame”:** Managing the demands of study. According to the recruits, there are constant time pressures to complete physical and academic work involved in police training; this meant limited time for study, revision or a break:

Police training is very intense ... they don't give you time for revision ... of what you studied, have to find out your own time to revise your study, and, I mean driving, firearms, academic studies and practical studies. B290

We don't get enough time to study, or sometimes we don't get enough time to sleep and have a rest ... you just have to cope. C006

Another recruit took notice of other methods of taking in information and tested some of these learning approaches to find his own workable solutions:

I keep noticing people ... I'll keep noting, ok this person writes it all down and then they understand .... Some people they just listen and they understand everything, they take it all in. So I try different methods and then I see which one's better for me ... C062.

I've tried to figure out ways of learning, like how can I learn, help myself ... C286

Some recruits noticed that visualising the information presented and regular practice of new, sequenced skills helped them to gain confidence and become proficient:

Learning new skills in a short time frame is always difficult. What I tried to do was visualize the steps I needed to do in certain situations and kept practising the sequence of actions I needed to make. A246

When I was doing the practical stuff ... it's easier for me to ... follow the procedures instead of deal with the suspects right away ... like a marking guide, so you did not miss any important marks ... but for the Kiwis or European people they probably they just deal with them, talk to them and get answer ... B350.

It became the norm to practise written and practical skills outside regular work hours, and to interact, initially with other ASP recruits, then other recruits across the wing to achieve this.

During the two weeks of firearms training, we spent another hour every night and a few hours over the weekends as well as ghost drill practices at the barracks to learn the drills we needed to master. A246

Memorising verbatim information about offences was difficult for some and one recruit explained that regular practice of new skills helped him to gain mastery:

I would say I am now confident ... constantly practising the use of the appointments plus the instructor's use of scenario type simulations had given me more self-belief in my ability to use them and apply the different techniques to different circumstances. A234

Recruits found that they had to quickly find ways to deal with the time pressure to acquire skills and knowledge, and then demonstrate their learning in different types of assessment. They reflected on how they were trying to learn, became attuned to how others learn and experimented with new study methods. Success made them feel confident.

**“Gain a bit more confidence in myself”: Developing self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy is where people have expectations or beliefs that they can succeed (or not) and this affects how they face obstacles (Bandura, 1978). The recruits explained that the training required them to show initiative, discipline and professionalism by being organised, prioritise and managing their time:



Prioritising what to do first was probably what helped me most with training ... At the beginning of each week I made a schedule of the things that I needed to learn and assignments that were due and basically just made sure that I was following this programme. A268

Recruits revealed that confidence was important to them in overcoming barriers. One recruit thought confidence helped him to adapt to the police culture. Another recruit revealed that police training increased his confidence in dealing with a range of people and situations despite his gentle personality. Alternatively, a recruit's self-confidence or self-belief, particularly about language, could affect their assessment results:

Not only practical assessment, but also the firearm training and academic studies, sometimes if I didn't trust myself, or my understanding of English, it would be very hard for me to pass the assessment. B278

The participants described becoming more confident in the training:

Confidence is the most importance factor that helped my learning the most during my training. B279

The literacy advisor at our college who helps us with fixing our grammar, punctuation and all these essential writing techniques has helped me gain bit more confidence in myself and made me realise that I can do well in theory exams. L238

Recruits used various methods to overcome challenging tasks. One recruit indicated that understanding there are no shortcuts and doing more practice helped. The same recruit coped with complex tasks by dealing with safety issues first, then concentrated on training and drills:

Firearm training very intense, very tiring, so you have to concentrate on the training all the time ... and concentrate on your drills. Yep, do that properly. Not fast; slowly, properly. B471.

**“If you need help”:** **Developing working relationships.** The recruits shared very positive experiences of support from college instructors, non-instructing staff, and with other police officers. The instructors provided valuable practical and theory based lessons, shared their wealth of policing experience and were interested in them on a personal level. This was illustrated through their verbal encouragement, openness to questions and willingness to provide assistance:

If you need help and you need a clarification for anything that you don't understand ... they're more than welcome to help you. A432.

Instructors gave encouragement and alerted recruits to weaknesses. For example, one recruit required specific practice by defensive tactics instructors to build his physical fitness prior to a more physically challenging component of the course, while another had to have further, mandatory driving instruction:

After three days additional training, I feel very confident in this area. B235

Recruits reported receiving fair feedback, with one recruit commenting that instructors gave:

... straightforward feedback, they're ... not there to pamper you, or y'know baby you. It's just straight. If you do well they'll tell you, if you did crap they'll say you can do better by doing this, this, and this. A462.

For one recruit, the age difference between him and other recruits meant he felt that he needed to deliberately take time to try to understand their perspectives. Nonetheless, he appreciated that his age could be an asset in policing:

I can deal with certain situations better than some of the younger recruits ... probably gives me, I don't know, some sort of mana with dealing with other people ... You could say that's an advantage for me. A326.

One recruit initially found it difficult to approach some staff members because of their strict manner and habit of yelling at recruits to put recruits under simulated work pressure. However, with encouragement from the wing sergeant and a general reminder to seek help early, the recruit dealt with the challenge by asking for help from the specialist staff. The participants reported that the instructors were mostly patient or supportive, though one recruit made a significant observation when he explained that instructors should try to understand bilingual recruits' cultural background:

It is important for them to know that because ... they should have a clear idea of what kind of person I am so that they'll help them teach me in a better way and me to understand in a better manner. C447

The same recruit found that in one practical task his repetition of the instruction, in order to process and confirm the task, irritated the instructor and that de-motivated the recruit:

So I do not repeat stuff that she says ... which doesn't help me much as I make a lot of mistakes while driving now. C178.

Police students on other courses at the college shared their experiences with them and one recruit was advised by a police officer from the same home country to learn Kiwi culture, get involved with his section, communicate well and use his wing Sergeant.

Overall the instructors and wider staff encouraged self-responsibility, ensured recruits knew how to access help, were approachable, supportive and available to help. Instructors gave explanations, clarification, compliments, asked recruits if they needed help, gave examples of policing in practice, and explained driving techniques or policing terminology in more simple words, and got to know recruits. Recruits felt supported and

trusted the college community. They in turn were required to plan well, participate, be honest about their strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements. This demonstrated examples of mutual engagement and the expert-novice relationship in this community of practice (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009). Recruits' comments indicated they understood that seeking help was a mature and necessary action of a police officer.

**“Coming from a different ethnicity”: Developing intercultural understanding.** Recruits became aware of the personal and professional need to engage in intercultural understanding. This included making and sustaining peer relationships across the police wing and as an essential part of their police role – with other police and with the public. The recruits acknowledged relying on and partnering easily with fellow members of the ASP group. This was for general support, practice assessments, providing feedback on each other's work, and studying different scenarios together. This support and engagement (Wenger, 1998) was both on-going and organised, such as regular study nights together:

I can always rely on them or they can rely on me to explain it a little better. It's easier for us ... coming from a different ethnicity to ask another person rather than asking say a Kiwi. A131

The participants made friends beyond the ASP too. Recruit peer support helped participants with study, the practical aspects of the training, the specific police terminology, New Zealand slang and life in general:

Everybody is ... very supportive of each other, especially the sections a little bit more ... we requested our wing mates - everybody's very supportive of each other ... if somebody needs anything they will put up their hand and help you out in whatever way they can. A111

Through partner, group or social activities the participants learned to distinguish others they could trust and rely on for work, emotional or cultural support. Participants experienced difficulties with other recruits in the residential training resulting from age differences, others who underestimated their abilities, or feelings of self-doubt. One recruit found that interaction between recruits who are different can be a good opportunity for learning:

Coming from a different age group is also another challenging aspect of working with other recruits. The majority of my fellow recruits are a lot younger than myself. I try to hang out with them and talk about things that interest them which gives me a better perspective of what makes them tick. A233.

One of the recruits pointed out the important occupational links between teamwork, friendship and clear communication:

I found that it is really important to make some friends ... Police job is very different from other job, team work plays a very important role. B269

In my firearm training, my colleagues were using very short sentences and body languages to communicate with me. Sometimes I felt very difficult [to] obtain their main point. In doing so, my teamwork performance ... dropped due to the inefficient communication. B234

The recruit then used short, simple sentences to regain his own confidence and the understanding of his partners. Friendships within the recruit cohort boosted the confidence and self-belief of participants. This helped them to feel part of a team, and to gain a better understanding of New Zealand culture and customs:

I made ... Islander friends, and ... some European friends as well, you got a group, so you not get isolated by other people and you more confident to deal with other people. B324

These interactions also demonstrated mutuality as the recruits engaged with and trusted each other, while sharing the same goal to become police officers (Wenger, 1998). Some of the interactions between recruits were instructor –led where recruits helped each other, such as recruit pairs giving each other driving advice. Participants relished the chance to share their backgrounds with fellow recruits. One recruit unexpectedly developed friendships with recruits from another ethnicity, explaining:

Now I've realised ... I can actually express myself to many other types of people, not just Asians ... I thought actually that I wouldn't be able to ... be good friends with anyone, apart from Asians, but now I realise it's not that, it's just the actual behaviour that you have ... the way you behave, what kind of mentality you have.  
C280

A recruit highlighted the importance of police officers' awareness of different cultures, languages, ethnicities and customs. Additionally, he stated that this exposure provided a wide perspective and built rapport, which is highly relevant for policing:

... it would be an advantage if you are going into a situation ... and you know ... another language or know the language of the family that you go to and it's a sudden death [to investigate]. A059

The participants commented on feeling different due to being brought up in another country, not being a native English speaker, having different traditions and custom. Participants explained that when recruits shared their cultures, traditions and customs it built mutual understanding. They believed that in the police environment it was advantageous to know and have rapport with people in the communities they work in:

... you have to look at their culture and understand where they're coming from. So there's a few of us in the class from different ethnicities or backgrounds and ... we're able to sort of like enlighten the class on how things are done differently. A053

**“Communication is the key”:** Learning through an additional language. Through college staff and self-assessment recruits became aware of areas that required improvement, and sought ways to address these. A recruit became aware of how he struggled to use English under pressure and this delayed his reactions to defensive police tasks. He remedied this by simplifying his language, and using body language and felt his own performance improve:

When I was working under pressure ... doing my firearm scenario, I felt very difficult to shout, yell and deal with offenders. B203

My English was indeed influenced by my native language. I was trying to keep the sentences short and easy to understand in order to communicate with people. Communication is the key. As soon as my partners, colleagues as well as offenders could fully understand what I said, I can be more confident in coping with some stressful situations. B216

Recruits had to deal with cognitive overload while performing new tasks:

Driving was a bit of a challenge ... working with partners that belong to a different nationality to what you are, trying to cope up with their accent at the same time listening and directing them based on the info given on the radio and keeping an eye out for the signs, traffic, speed limits. C196

The same recruit also indicated that multi-tasking while speaking English was very difficult:

As English is my second language, it's really hard to work multi-task. While I was driving and talking, sometimes I forgot to indicate signals, change gears and check speed etc. B236

To understand unfamiliar New Zealand legal terms, one recruit translated words into his home language and then was able to recognise legal terminology from his home country to understand New Zealand criminal liabilities.

... you really need your English skills, language skills to challenge the suspect to get your answer and get the appropriate offence to charge them. B290

One recruit was conscious that some tasks required more concentration to understand them:

I try to grasp as much as information as I can ... But me being bilingual, I mean English not being my first language, I think I tend to pay more attention to stuff than what others do. C066

Another recruit felt challenged by needing more study time compared to others:

I realise the Kiwi people they gotta easy, better understanding of the textbook and they understand the contents easier, and they're faster than us. So ... I have to read more time than them ... We only have three or four hours per day so it's quite [a] challenge. B142

If English is your native language you don't need to worry about the talking ... it saves you lots of time ... to think about the language part, but for me I need to practise, practise, practise in order to ... get a better result, better performance. B483

The participants had positive experiences sharing their language with fellow recruits as they seemed to be valuing each other's differences. This was demonstrated by participants being invited to share vocabulary and pronunciation of their language(s) while gaining confidence in English and familiarity with Maori:

It is very important to share my native language with other recruits. Some of them even want to learn [my home language]. I taught some simple [language]



sentences to them ... they said that it is very important to learn some simple [language] in order to build rapport with [home country] customers. B201

When asked specifically about being a *bilingual* police recruit the participants articulated work related issues arising from language differences, like New Zealand English or pronunciation, in addition to adapting to the New Zealand culture and the New Zealand Police culture. One recruit who had a long history of speaking English encountered unexpected language difficulties in New Zealand, including realising he was using expressions in English that were very unusual. The style of Kiwi humour, other accents and expressions could also be hard to understand:

... especially with the accent people use over here. It's completely different to mine. Plus they speak really fast, really fast and I mean it was a bit of a shock for me ... I would ask them to repeat stuff for me and which was a bit embarrassing ... C034

Another indicated that as a bilingual student he was obliged to repeat words to be understood but did not feel singled out:

The way I pronounce words ... they ask two maybe three times before they get the word ... I don't really feel that being a bilingual student I was treated differently. A384

After periods of having to speak his home language less frequently one recruit recognised his English ability improving:

[home language] influence in my mind has become less and less, and my English is improved accordingly. B187.

Another believed his individual cultural challenges were not recognised or understood by others, consequently making the training more difficult:

It's a bit hard to adapt to the culture here. Firstly, it's a bit hard for me to adapt to New Zealand culture ok and then the police culture, so I mean the people that are born here, that are Kiwis or even Maoris they're used to the atmosphere that's here, but, for me I need to adjust myself with them. C018

This comparison to Kiwis was applied to specific and crucial aspects of policing, such as the in-depth language and practice required when communicating with suspects and victims:

People that are born and brought up here they can speak very well when they go and ... they take statements they can talk really y'know, without even thinking ... But for me I have to think hard before I say anything. I have to be like "Oh, what do I say next?" And every word needs to be correct, "Oh, am I using good words?" "Am I making any grammatical errors?" C144

The residential college environment revealed personal insights for participants about their own languages. One recruit recognised changes in his own character and behaviour when using individual languages, particularly when sharing jokes, and interacting with people he didn't know. He explained that tiredness too can blend one language with another, and result in language mistakes. The recruit became conscious of not mixing languages, particularly in the work environment:

During the day if you feel very tired and your [home language] influence your English when you talk... B086

Two recruits acknowledged that their own English did require improvement, while one recruit was considering ways to improve his English language post-graduation. He was also optimistic that with more exposure to NZ English and slang his comprehension would improve.

Police training placed recruits in new learning situations that challenged their ability to overcome obstacles. They used the support around them to keep improving and to become fully-fledged police officers.

Learning, through an additional language, how to become a police officer was a difficult task. The participants dealt with the terminology, humour, and cognitive overload by self-assessment then self-help. They recognised areas that needed more concentration, time or tuition and organised themselves to achieve this. They intended to display competence in the shared repertoire of being a police recruit by using the police jargon, Kiwi slang, and legal terms in the same way other police recruits and officers did.

**“A frontline officer”:** Envisaging oneself as a New Zealand Police officer. The participants were not only working hard to become officers, but to become New Zealand Police officers. They were cognisant of coming from another country and another culture yet were increasingly ‘seeing’ themselves in their new and significant roles in their policing districts. They were self-aware about their ‘cultural gaps’ and how they intended to develop modes of belonging.

I've also learnt that there are basic procedures that I could do to help keep me safe when doing general duties as a frontline officer. A269

It is vitally important for a[n] Asian constable to get involved into New Zealand culture, understand Kiwi jokes and able to communicate with them. A good English speaker is not necessarily a good communicator. B275

The participants were aware that language alone was not enough to ensure good communication. An understanding of the culture of the New Zealand police also required some understanding of New Zealand culture.

**“Get involved in this culture”:** Learning about New Zealand and New Zealand culture.

Recruits were expected to understand New Zealand-specific language, history, public events, personalities, sports and culture, despite their limited time in New Zealand. They

understood the relevance of knowing more about their adopted country, the people they work alongside and the public they'll be serving. They described some challenges they faced as they attempted to understand and apply New Zealand culture.

To learn the New Zealand culture is important and ... working here you gonna be able to communicate [with] your colleagues ... I mean including New Zealand slang, New Zealand jokes, ... deal with New Zealand colleagues, getting involved with the team, and just work together ... but you gonna be able to communicate with your colleague effectively and efficiently. B479

Recruits thought that communicating with colleagues, getting exposure to New Zealand culture and being an involved team member were important ways to learn about the work culture. Recruits spoke of getting involved in and adapting to the New Zealand way of doing things to fit in to NZ society generally and to their police role specifically:

We come from different cultural backgrounds, sometimes really need me to get involved in their culture, not them get involved in my culture ... I'm the only [home country person] in my wing, so, kind of like have to push myself to become a Kiwi. B422.

As new New Zealanders the participants spoke and wrote about their peers as New Zealand or Kiwi recruits, and made comparisons, but did not fully identify themselves as New Zealanders. One self-described non-Kiwi recruit said that he was technically a Kiwi but strongly connected to his home country. Another recruit saw employment in the police as a way to get further involved in New Zealand culture as he felt comfortable with New Zealand life and customs.

Being a bilingual police recruit was not a disadvantage according to one recruit, and was unlikely to be a reason why others would think of you differently. He believed that being a police officer is about being involved in the culture and teamwork:

It doesn't matter if you are bilingual or your cultural background, it's really, really important to get involved in this culture ... And if you got some friends ... you're not being isolated by other people. ... you will have more confidence to deal with other people ... to communicate with them. B320

A participant, who was small in stature, who required extra physical strengthening and was from an Asian nation, felt that these factors meant some of his peers were unsure of his ability to perform police roles, which led the recruit to doubt his own ability:

A few of them they just say it straight away in your face, to be honest. A few of them they'll be just like "Ok, do you think you'll be able to pick this [up]? I don't think so", y'know. C128

The recruits were proud of becoming part of the New Zealand Police. One recruit said he felt privileged to become a police officer, based on what his home country was like and the sacrifices he'd made in terms of family and time to be at the college. He also indicated a definite difference between him and some other recruits:

I feel I'm not taking it for granted. Some of the other people here at the college are ... I feel that being from, where I came from I'm a bit more appreciative of ... what it means to be here and ... what I can do. A045

One recruit had to forego, with family support, some cultural traditions, to become a police officer. This included wearing sports clothing in front of members of the opposite sex and speaking with them in work and social settings. He also believed he was subject to discrimination about his physical size and culture, making his experiences more stressful. On the other hand, as he forged a police identity, he later reported becoming more confident around other recruits and was aware of generally being much more talkative.

The participants quickly realised how necessary it is to continue to learn about New Zealand as they learn about the New Zealand Police. They acknowledged a lack of

understanding behind some information and ideas presented because of their limited exposure to aspects of New Zealand culture, yet they were also conscious that being able to understand and react to the public would be crucial to their job.

The participants saw the value, personally and professionally, to learn and understand more about New Zealand customs and culture. They were full of pride about becoming New Zealand Police officers but even though they wanted to, they didn't feel they could confidently call themselves New Zealanders. They were mindful of continuing to communicate well with their colleagues and to learn more about New Zealand.

**“Learn the police culture”: Developing a New Zealand police identity.** Police recruits made comments that showed they were regularly thinking about using their recently acquired policing skills. They made references to skills, values and experiences they knew would be beneficial in policing and how they were going to put these into effect. Participants articulated the importance for them to share cultural aspects, use their language skills, be strong communicators, be team players in work situations, exploit scenario-based problems and use police jargon. They talked about experiences, values and their individual skills that could contribute to police tasks, and aspects that could make the transition to policing smooth:

The college training is just a start of my career. The purpose of the training is to provide qualified police officers to our society ... therefore, it is really important to learn the police culture and the particular work environment. B280

Police staff acknowledged that bilingual polices' language skills will be used and sought after by both police and the public. Recruits spoke about the customer needs of the community and how their language skills will help build rapport, and this seemed to build a sense of confidence:

I think that I might be able to ... help out people, not just the police officers dealing with people but even the victims ... who cannot speak in English and who

actually don't even make complaints because they cannot speak in English ...  
that's gonna be a bit helpful, not just for us, but even for our community. C272

The recruits genuinely believed that the police organisation values recruits from many cultural backgrounds, and it recognises the police and the community's need for a mix of officers:

I believe that the college values recruits coming from different cultural backgrounds because it gives the organisation a better representation of the cultural mix that NZ society, especially in Auckland, is now facing. Having different recruits from different cultures opens up the opportunity for kiwi recruits to better understand how and why other cultures behave in certain situations. It also gives recruits knowledge and skills needed to deal with possible scenarios they may encounter once they go to their districts. A214

A recruit from another country perceived his home language as an opportunity to build relationships with other police officers with the same language skills:

In my own language, I can speak to other [home country] officers or [home country] staff more effectively. I can explain my point to them better in [my home language]. In doing so, we can build relationships in police organisation. B248

Recruits were presented with practical policing scenarios and explanations to reinforce the complexities of the police role and the risks involved. By applying real-life skills like defensive tactics or driving, recruits could understand more about their job roles and risks, and their relevance to day to day policing:

I guess as you do the job more you get more confident ... they teach you so many scenarios here ... y'know to experience the whole range of different things that you might encounter and just try to remember ... what are the things you need to do first before you go barging in. A410

One recruit was mindful that there was a danger that police communication can become unclear or misunderstood very easily. Avoiding misunderstanding was particularly important when dealing with time sensitive or complex information. He said that he'd experienced difficulties with Maori and English words or place names:

It is vitally important for a[n] Asian constable to get involved into New Zealand culture, understand Kiwi jokes and able to communicate with them. A good English speaker is not necessarily a good communicator. Therefore, I believe that communication skills will be a very important part that I need to improve in the future. B273

Through their training recruits used more police jargon and their responses seemed to indicate that they were 'seeing' themselves as police officers:

With the firearms scenario trainings, it gave me a realistic view of the dangers that I might be facing when I start frontline police work. The instructors are always emphasising about not being complacent with the jobs that might seem to be routine tasks but can quickly change into a volatile situation at any time. A236

Recruits gained a sense of self-efficacy as they continued to build on their training experiences, were aware of areas for improvement and with confidence could undertake a range of police duties:

Back at the district I can get more experience and more police jargons and more y'know, police words, so I hope ... I'll be working more effectively. B308.

The same recruit believed that his conservative ways helped limit mistakes and all recruits felt that experience would improve performance. Another compared police in New Zealand with those in his former home country.



In [my home country] if you are an offender you are treated like, I mean they're gonna bash you or whatever, cos they think you've done something wrong and you deserve it. But over here it's completely different. C050

They were cognisant of some of the uniqueness of their role, such as personal and public safety, and the assortment of situations they may have to contend with:

Police is different from other jobs ... you start the day very happy, but sometimes you deal with a murder. B414

Participants' responses indicated that they were increasingly using police jargon and speaking about themselves as police officers. Much of the content learned and skills required, was completely new. Yet, they were positive about their police futures and spoke about the importance of their role. Whilst being a bilingual recruit per se did not explicitly feature much in their responses, they felt supported, as bilingual recruits, by the police as an organisation. They felt that the organisation understood that they had some unique skills that would be valued when they were police officers. The participants appreciated opportunities to share their language and culture, and as they achieved good results in their training their confidence as police officers grew.

### **Theme Summary**

Recruits' challenges included every day and job-specific communication, time to learn and practice new information, and the time required to respond to work critical activities. They learned to apply strong organisational skills to achieve better time management, and flexibility in their own learning processes. Language and culture stood out as other layers of complexity that bilingual recruits must overcome to be New Zealand Police officers, particularly as they were learning police jargon, routines, and skills through an additional language. The recruits worked to develop relationships and to improve their knowledge of New Zealand in order to identify themselves as New Zealand Police officers.

## **Theme Two: Personal Reflection**

Recruits were open to new opportunities and experiences, including facilitating their own learning. They were able to overcome new work challenges, and this was partly due to family, religious and community support they each had. The recruits valued their cultural background and they gained deeper insights into their own language use. They described becoming aware of their own changing behaviours and identity.

**“Be like a bamboo tree: flexible, but stand your ground”:** Valuing own cultural background and support. Each recruit spoke openly and warmly of their cultural heritage. Families thought that being a police officer was a good, respectable, well-paying job. They provided moral, emotional, and psychological support during the recruitment process and training. Each recruit acknowledged the enormous pride their family had in them becoming police officers *in New Zealand*, which contributed to their desire for success at the college. One recruit admitted being strongly aware of not disappointing those who had supported him before and during the training. Meanwhile another recruit’s potential judgement and disrespect from his ethnic community if he failed was also a motivator:

If I just give up and I go back I know the amount of discrimination and ... they’ll be like oh so he went and then he came back and did nothing, that kind of thing. That goes on a lot as well in our community.C310.

All recruits indicated they experienced community support when joining the police, primarily from their ethnic community who recognised the importance of having one of their own in the police. This also meant respect for the individual and their family, and for some, it publicly recognised a recruit’s English language skills amongst their ethnic community:

The [home country] community, the friends ... know that I'm joining the police and they are supportive of what I do, they ... sort of look up to me as a role model for some of their children ... they're very interested in ... what I'll be doing if, and when, I do become a police officer. A103.

Recruits felt that coming from a different country with different languages, religions and culture was something to be proud of. They were openly acknowledged as assets by their instructors and peers in their new vocation. One recruit believed his strengths as a police officer were his conservative and traditional ways, which he believed were part of Asian culture, like speaking quietly and not using swear words. He admitted observing the way other recruits conducted themselves. He then thought about his own conduct and explained that he was comfortable sticking to his own values, culture and personality. He was consciously checking that he was aligned to the police, but not necessarily following the actions of other recruits. Another recruit was aware of how his cultural background supports resilience:

With regards to how my cultural background has helped me ... the thing that has stood out was my resilience in adopting new skills. When I was a kid, my grandparents have always taught me to be like a bamboo tree, be flexible but stand your ground. Sway with the wind if you must but keep your feet firmly planted. A195

The same recruit also mentioned he learned that as a bilingual recruit he can fit in to a group by being himself:

I have come to realise that I bring my own personality and culture into the group and that I do not have to be somebody that I am not. A272

The police training process helped one recruit to learn more about how people from his home country interact with each other in New Zealand and with locals.

Asian people ... probably because the language. You don't speak good English so they make their own friends, from [home country], so they don't communicate some with the Kiwi people, or local people. B046

This view of people from his home country was intriguing to him and helped him to see issues that he wasn't necessarily aware of before, such as the lack of English in his community and the problems it can cause.

Another recruit observed that some peers were not particularly open to bilingual recruits, their abilities and their experiences, and this made it hard for him to adjust to the police culture:

Some people actually understand the benefits of being from a different cultural background ... but some of them do not take being from a different background as a good thing and believe that people from different background cannot perform equally well compared to the ones who are from here. Some people just don't feel comfortable in talking to people from a different culture to their own and usually ignore or do not attempt to interact with us. C215

Another recruit could see how people from other cultures and cultural awareness could benefit all recruits:

Having different recruits from different cultures opens up the opportunity for kiwi recruits to better understand how and why other cultures behave in certain situations. A216

Entering Police College helped the recruits to recognise the support they had from their ethnic community and the pride they had in their own culture. They noticed the ways their language and culture made them different to most other recruits, but they could also imagine how they could be of benefit to the New Zealand Police as constables.

**“I have realised that ...”: Becoming aware of own identity.** Recruits noticed they had become more aware of their identities through the training. One recruit was challenged by the disciplined environment and the high expectations of all recruits. He then began to recognise his own value as a person and as a police officer, especially through his language skills. He acknowledged the changes he experienced such as adjusting to the new surroundings and dealing with different people:

Ok, so um, I try to cope up with this environment ok, so that will ... try to adjust myself or kind of cope. C354.

By working with other recruits they learned about themselves. They did this by putting themselves in others' shoes and considered their perspectives. Recruits seemed to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and tried to help themselves by maintaining and/or improving in these areas:

I have learnt to take thing positively and one at a time [because] I have realised that I tend to rush things up and start multi-tasking which does not work well for me ... I have found out that I need to concentrate a bit harder and try to get what they are saying [and] not having to ask them again and again as to what is to be done. I also translate a lot of what they have said to my own language in my mind to make myself sure of what I'm doing. C209.

Another explained that his strength at the college was planning ahead and organising himself:

I'd say being organised in what I do, I don't just go and do certain things without planning for it or y'know, in a way organising what I need to do first, before I do that ... I'd say another one would be just life experiences I've had. A324

One recruit realised the dependence he had on his parents so as a result of being on his own he developed life skills to be more organised and fit in:

You get to learn a lot over here to be honest cos you're ... independent ... and I've always been dependent on my parents ... living here by myself it's like completely new and different experience. C262

Learning to become a police officer meant that these bilingual recruits were exposed to multiple cultures, were challenged physically, academically and socially, and were open to new situations. Through this experience and interaction the recruits learned more about themselves and how they like to operate. They reflected on their prior experience and what they were changing as part of their participation in their new community of practice.

### **Chapter Summary**

Learning to be a New Zealand Police officer is a challenging assignment. Bilingual police recruits' perspectives of the training emphasises the challenges and benefits it brings to those who did not grow up in New Zealand and whose first language is not English. Like other recruits they are required to adapt to the physical and academic requirements, but there are underlying stresses that can make the training more demanding. The participants in this study have developed a greater awareness of what it is to be a New Zealand-trained police officer, relationship building, intercultural understanding, and more about the wider New Zealand culture. They have also reflected on themselves and their culture as their own police identity has developed.

## Chapter Five – Discussion

The findings revealed two closely linked main themes. These are: Learning to be a New Zealand Police officer and Personal Reflection. As the recruits progressed through their training and developed a greater sense of what it is to be a New Zealand Police officer they realised they were also learning more about themselves. At the same time recruits adjusted to both the New Zealand community and the New Zealand police culture. They also adjusted to a new study environment and learnt to be self-regulated students, which facilitated their learning to become police officers. The participants experienced new situations, reflected on their reactions and considered what this might reveal about themselves as they underwent changes to their identity.

This analysis uses the theoretical framework “Community of Practice”, explained in Chapter Two, to explore the two main findings ‘Learning to be a Police Officer’ and ‘Personal Reflection’. The first theme: Learning to be a New Zealand Police Officer, is presented under the community of practice concept of ‘Competence’ through its three dimensions (*joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire*)(Lave & Wenger, 1991). These dimensions are used to explore the police recruits’ exposure and induction into their new profession which is a community of practice, from within their current community of practice as police recruits. The recruits not only reflected on formal college results, but on the working relationships, knowledge and organisational awareness they were gaining as they got closer to full participation in the community as police officers. Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, 1991) is also used to explain the recruits’ transition towards being a police officer and examines their experiences as participants of multiple communities.

The second theme focuses on Personal Reflection using the community of practice ‘Modes of Belonging’ (*engagement, imagination and alignment*) (Wenger, 2000). This section delves deeper into the participants’ forms of participation within the social

learning opportunities at the college, and about the multiple identities they saw for themselves.

### **Competence: Learning to be a New Zealand Police Officer**

In this section I will analyse how the recruits began to experience real-life examples of what would be truly expected of them in their new police community of practice and the new pressures they faced.

**Joint enterprise.** This is the shared purpose of the community in which the recruits endeavoured to become full members. It is also where “members are bound together by their collectively developed understanding of that their community is about and they hold themselves accountable”(Wenger, 2000, p. 229) to it. Policing is the joint enterprise that binds this community of practice - the recruits shared the same goal of attaining full membership of this community as police officers. Because these participants had already worked with the ASP, they formed ideas about what police and policing were about prior to joining and they imagined themselves as police officers. This therefore helped them to understand what the police community is about. This common purpose also helped bind them to other recruits in the wing.

To be able to fully participate as members of the police community, the recruits were required to show competence in a range of professional skills and to demonstrate many personal qualities, such as supporting others and communicating well. This period of training provided formal and informal avenues for the recruits, as novices, to practice these competences in training situations. For instance, the recruits were consistently required to respond quickly and professionally under pressure and within time constraints. Ultimately this helped recruits to develop beneficial skills such as prioritising tasks and using good time management, and to prepare them for the realities of police life (Vodde, 2011). Exposure to such real-world police relationships, activities and pressures was valued by them.



Within the joint enterprise of learning to be a police officer, these recruits were interacting with three congruent groups – the bilingual group of police recruits, the whole group of recruits on the wing and the group of instructors who are full members of the community. These relationships, between and within these groups, required mutual engagement in order to be effective.

There already is an embedded repertoire of language, process and artefacts within the Police College and the trainers. However, the recruits, as newcomers, may also have an opportunity during their training to add value by negotiating aspects of the community. As Campbell argues, “the truths of a community evolve and change over time as the members of the group become more comfortable and, through risk taking, begin to develop trust” (2008, p. 110). This negotiation is part of their participation as recruits are expected to be active rather than remain passive. For example, they should ask for what they need, or debate other objectives they wish to achieve together, including professional, practical and social goals.

The advantages of belonging to different cultures and speaking more than one language were demonstrated in police recruits through their language, perspective, community awareness, and sense of community responsibility. These recruits were conscious of trying to be role models for their family, community, police, and the public as they strived to become full members of the police community. Bilingual recruits identified that their culture gave them an advantage in making links with fellow police officers too. Recruits seized opportunities within the formal elements of police training to share their cultural knowledge, and develop self-confidence. This may have generated institutional support and friendship through joint enterprise, and developed a willingness to share cultures across the police community. The participants came to see their cultural identity as an asset to police and this included their different ways of looking at problems or dealing with issues. These findings are similar to the Jaeger and Vitalis (2005) study where police officers felt their bicultural and bilingual identity was an advantage in their work roles. Overall, this suggests two intersecting identities – one as a

police officer and then another as a bilingual, bicultural police officer. This is further expanded upon in the 'imagination' section of this chapter.

However, the bilingual participants indicated that their fellow recruits were not particularly interested in learning about them as bilingual colleagues. Other novices did not necessarily recognise the resources that this group were bringing to the community as valuable. Nevertheless, the recruits became aware, from college staff that, once graduated, other police officers would seek their help due to their cultural and language talents. This confirmed to the recruits their own personal skills and qualities, and the need for the New Zealand Police to train bilingual people so they can use these skills in the wider community. It appears that while other novices were not aware of the resources that these recruits brought, the experts (the college staff) were.

Some peers wanted to learn a few words of the foreign languages the participants used but overall there seemed to be a limited amount of interest in the cultures and customs of those who had not grown up in New Zealand. Some bilingual recruits found, especially at the outset of the training, that they had to deal with being different, and initially it was easy when they worked with people from the ASP group. They felt disappointed that people were not that interested in where they were from, particularly as their nationality and culture were important to their identity. This was exacerbated by the interdependent nature of the training and the requirement for recruits to work together.

From the recruits' perspective, the joint enterprise was effective policing. The recruits, whose perspectives formed the basis of this study, strove to gain the competences needed to do this in reality, as well as in training. They saw that they had particular resources to bring to the police community because they were bilingual and bicultural but at the same time, they felt that these were not necessarily valued by those closest to them, their New Zealand born colleagues on the wing. While these resources were seen as assets by their instructors, they were also seen as a barrier because they were

learning though English which was not their strongest language, and they were also challenged to become active in their own learning which may have been new to them.

**Mutual engagement: Reciprocal recruit interactions that foster trust and cooperation.**

Mutual engagement is described as how members of a community “interact with one another, establishing norms and relationships of *mutuality* that reflect these actions ... to be able to engage with the community and be trusted as a partner in these interactions” (Wenger, 2000, p. 229).

For police training to be effective, trust – to help recruits open up to each other and to the instructors to get engaged in the learning – must be developed quickly. This allows recruits to make the most of the limited time they have, not only to gain police competencies, but also to develop strong peer networks. It was unclear whether the college deliberately helped recruits to get to know each other at the beginning of the training as part of their built-in schedule.

Relationships with other peers were deemed important by the recruits in terms of their recruit life, their continuing support and gaining more understanding of New Zealand culture. These findings are consistent with Chan’s (2003) research, where she described supportive interpersonal relationships, individual support friendships and support networks as essential for coping with learning in the police academy environment in New South Wales. The ASP grouping of recruits was an example of where relationships between some bilingual recruits prior to the training built a base for further relationship-building. This proved to be a positive activity that may have potential to be extended to other locations or groupings. It was seen by the recruits as a facilitator in the process of mutual engagement in the police community. Mutual commitment and participation in horizontal networks can strengthen learning and accountability in community of practice (Wenger, 2012).

For mutual engagement to work well, recruits, as a member of the community, should be confident to be able to raise issues amongst themselves in a safe environment (Birzer, 2003) The ability for recruits to do this amongst themselves is useful for individuals, but also for their overall support to their peers. There is a professional need for police to work together in a productive way, regardless of their individual differences. The participants began to rely on others in work environments. This not only helped them to get through their training but became valuable conditioning for their police roles. They facilitated their learning by developing their own study groups and by seeking more practice or tuition. As pointed out in Jose (2011) migrants can adapt to new workplaces with persistence, willingness to adapt and reliance on support networks. Additionally, these interactions provide participants with belief in the police system and in their confidence to be able to interact with others in real-life police situations.

Mutual engagement helped recruits to understand each other better at an individual and community level. Participants seemed to like to share aspects of their own culture and learn from others about theirs, even though, as pointed out in the above section, there did not seem to be much formal time for this, or great interest from other recruits. However, this cooperative spirit was not always evident; at times each participant felt uncomfortable around other recruits who seemed uninterested in bilingual recruits or their backgrounds. The participants did not let this become an issue during the time at the college as they learned to deal with peers in the college environment. They had confidence in other recruits and in the college staff, and were well supported by family and their ethnic community.

These bilingual recruits credited college staff and other recruits for facilitating their learning and practicing different aspects of the job, and their families for providing strong moral and emotional support. Tailored support by police at the college helped recruits to persevere with the training programme and to maximise their limited off duty hours. This simultaneously helped recruits to trust their police instructors and their

experience. Recruits had to manage and solve a range of different policing scenarios, with assorted answers to individual problems. They learned that solutions are not always clear-cut or binary, and that they must use flexibility, initiative, good judgment and teamwork to solve them. These factors approximated working in the real police environment. This indicated confidence in themselves and their experience of police training, as well as their commitment to their new role and to their fellow police officers.

The participants in this study became aware during this study of the importance of mutual engagement as a facilitator to becoming full members of the police community. From their perspective, the police training gave them opportunities to form cooperative relationships among themselves as bilingual recruits, with other members of the wing and most pertinently with their instructors with whom they needed to trust the success of their learning. These relationships were seen by the recruits as facilitators of their learning.

**Shared repertoire: The communal resources of the police that the recruits learn and use.** Wenger (1998, p. 2) describes shared repertoire as “communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artefacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time” and is the capability that a community of practice has produced. A recognisable part of becoming a police officer is that recruits must learn and (initially) conform to the shared repertoire of the police community. Recruits learn police jargon, specific language for communication, procedures, and routines. They are also required to wear uniforms, keep up fitness levels and follow a particular code of ethics. Sharing a repertoire by its very nature requires others to be involved, so this can include peers, instructors and other police officers.

Using police jargon helped recruits to become part of the police community, while acknowledging that they were ‘on board’ and aligned with the police’s formal and informal communication methods. Their use of police language helped demonstrate individual and collective professionalism vital for efficient and effective communication.

In addition to developing police language the recruits were incorporating more Kiwi and Maori words in their vocabulary. This is another indicator of recruits identifying with and embracing the new police environment.

How they learn and how quickly they learn the shared repertoire affects how they integrate into the community of practice. The recruits were formally assessed on specific work related subjects. At times, recruits were required to use this shared repertoire under time constraints and in complex situations, to demonstrate their competence. Achievement in exhibiting these behaviours and actions seemed to enhance the bilingual recruits' sense of identity both as recruits and as bilingual recruits in the college (Wenger, 2000). These tangible and intangible parts of the shared repertoire require a level of institutional obedience and trust, combined with buy-in as recruits inculcate them. While learning in another language and concurrently adapting to a new environment can be difficult (Campbell, 2009) they valued the educational support available and learned to seek help from fellow recruits as well as instructors.

Importantly, the residential nature of the training supported opportunities for sharing the repertoire of the community. It offered the prospect for recruits to engage in social participation and develop relationships in their formal recruit sections that they were also accommodated with, but also across their own wing. This therefore offered occasions for learning outside the formal part of the training. The physical living and working space of the college including the barrack-style accommodation and central mess hall also promoted interactions and insights from other police wings and fully-fledged officers who have had a greater experience in the community of practice. The recruits shared ideas, negotiated parts of the community they were able to influence, and developed confidence in themselves and amongst others. Therefore, after hours engagement amongst recruits was extremely important because it facilitated these relationships among the wing, and between the recruits and the instructors who offered encouragement and advice outside of working hours.

Conversely, recruits also had the chance to share their recent police college experience with police wings that started after them. These interactions provided horizontal and vertical interactions and opportunities in the learning process that were actively encouraged by staff. This compares to the Australian Army where tacit and explicit knowledge could be exploited through these networks within the organisation (Potter, 2009). For police recruits, this enlarged their community and the relationships within it.

The participants in this study were united in the process of gaining the competences that were regarded as part of the shared repertoire of police. These competences included occupational specific language and actions. Progress towards meeting the standards that were regarded as the shared repertoire of resources of police was formally measured. This promoted a clear understanding of the goals of training and a need to find ways of reaching it.

**Legitimate peripheral participation positions recruits in opportunities to increase**

**growth and experience.** Legitimate peripheral participation is what Lave and Wenger (1991) explained as “a form of apprenticeship that allows newcomers to participate at the edge of a community while learning the lingo and developing an intuitive sense of the shared identity of the community”(cited in Hara, 2009, p. 11). For the participants in this study, legitimate peripheral participation can take the form of “simple and low-risk tasks” where recruits start to understand and practice the fundamentals of policing. These tasks will change as the recruits gain competence, bringing them up to standards required for them to become police constables. Part of this learning involves the recruits interacting with and learning from old-timers (police officers) as well as undertaking self-assessment and enacting changes. This whole process is a pathway into gaining the skills needed to engage in the joint enterprise.

Interactions with college staff and other officers gave positive impressions of the broader police environment that the recruits were entering. Campbell (2009) notes that “the development of knowledge, skills and identity within the workplace often emerges

through the informal learning encounters between novice and expert” (p.655), and this was evident from the recruits’ interactions with police. These ‘old-timers’ encouraged recruits to do well, were attentive to their circumstances and mentored them for success. Furthermore, this can also help shape the goals of the police training by helping recruits “move from legitimate peripheral participation to into full participation” confidently and smoothly (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.37).

The training ensured that recruits were partnered with different people and working in groups. This allowed them to get to know others better and use each other’s strengths. This developed a sense of joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998) to accomplish tasks together. The recruit training pushed individuals to develop intercultural understanding through personal and professional relationships. This showed how participation and interactions within the recruit (or newcomer) cohort as ‘legitimate peripheral participants’ could support them in becoming fully participating members of the community of practice (Campbell, 2007).

During the training the participants had to deal with their own different levels of skill development across subject areas. The curriculum introduced them to new skills while they were practising others, and maintaining mastery of others at same time. This meant developing an ability to adjust to concurrent work, engage in self-assessment, and to continue to make improvements. The recruits had to manage their own skills practise outside the classroom, do in-depth study and maintain new skills. This presented opportunities for recruits to demonstrate their strengths as well as develop determination to acquire additional skills.

The data showed that the recruits became aware that they needed to take up the opportunity to use college support to improve academic and practical components of their training. For some recruits asking for advice, support or questions of an instructor was not familiar to them. This self-help is also relevant in the alignment of novices in the police community where, like tertiary students doing work integrated learning in the Bates, Thompson, & Bates (2013) study developing self-efficacy in the work environment



is invaluable. This meant that the recruits had to be courageous and overcome the challenge of seeking assistance, regardless of the outcome. At times safety and professional requirements reinforced the need to do it, and later the expectation to ask for support became a standard part of their training and a professional norm. This self-awareness in understanding their own anxiety and consciously choosing to confront it suggested that recruits were developing a professional identity.

As recruits began to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses within the policing tasks, they purposely considered what they needed to do to maintain or improve their individual police standards. They demonstrated ability to take on new responsibilities, solve problems and adapt their situation to meet college requirements. Furthermore, as Lave (1992) mentions that “moving towards full participation in a community of practice is a matter of transforming one’s identity, which subsumes the learning of knowledgeable skill” (p.4). The participants proved that they were receptive to attempting unfamiliar assignments or responsibilities and gained confidence and self-efficacy in the process.

The recruits came to see themselves as learners and purposefully considered their own preferred learning styles in different activities. This is relevant as the recruits were starting to self-assess and to notice ways that other recruits gained knowledge or skills. The recruits articulated what they thought their strengths were, and they particularly noticed and revealed areas they considered were more difficult or required extra time or tuition in order to improve. As they became aware of their own, and others’, learning styles, they came to value those differences. They learned about choice and autonomy available to them in New Zealand and the flexibility they had to be able to adjust the way they do things – whether they deliberately tried a new approach to learning or deliberately continued with learning strategies they thought worked for them. This highlights their want to self-assess and improve, thus, engaging in moving from the periphery to full participating members. The participants began to view themselves as facilitators of their own learning. They believed that they were developing a range of

strategies to help themselves overcome barriers such as a different cultural background or lack of experience in this way of learning. Becoming more autonomous and therefore more confident in the police role implies they are able to be responsible for themselves, can work independently, and do not have to always rely on others to make changes.

To function competently as police officers the recruits found they had to continue to learn about their new country via police scenarios or social participation with other recruits and college staff. As they became more self-aware they understood they did not have the same depth of knowledge about the culture of New Zealand compared to others but were curious at both personal and professional levels in wanting to know more. This demonstrates another identity – that of being a New Zealander. This is discussed further in the Imagination section.

Living at the college, and without family and friends, provided particular impetus for recruits to consider their individual language use and their culture. It also helped them to see family or friends from other perspectives. In addition, it highlighted some of the underlying reasons for wanting to be in the New Zealand Police as well as the effects it would have on themselves and how it impacted on those important to them. Becoming a police officer seemed to be an investment of time, effort and ambition for the individual recruits and their families.

In order to move towards full participation the recruits relied on support mechanisms outside the police environment too. This was crucial to their morale and their on-going studies, and helped to motivate them towards achieving the results they wanted. This support helped recruits to develop ways to try to overcome difficulties like fatigue, work overload, and retain a positive outlook. Religion or family support may provide significant support, not available at the college, to help recruits get through difficulties as they acquire a range of new skills in initial training.

Overall, participants gained confidence in themselves in the joint enterprise of becoming police officers when they experienced successful practical and academic results. They

acknowledged anxieties and stressors, as they continued to be challenged but remained determined. They showed initiative by seeking a variety of ways to overcome personal and professional challenges, such as developing mutual engagement with other recruits, as they aimed to become competent and professional police officers. Reliance on family and community support helped to sustain them as they moved from the periphery.

### **Modes of belonging: Personal Reflection**

In this section I explore the recruits' perspectives on what helps them to "belong" to multiple communities and how they identify themselves in different situations. Recruits' personal reflections are explained through community of practice terms: engagement, imagination and alignment.

**Engagement is a significant part of a police recruit's experience.** Engagement is described as "the most immediate relation to a practice – engaging in activities, doing things, working alone or together, talking, using or producing artefacts" (Wenger, 2012, p. 4) Having to work with others is a deliberate part of the college curriculum which assisted recruits to learn to develop a range of relationships during police training. College staff positioned these novices as active learners by getting them to do tasks with unfamiliar colleagues in small teams, as they will continue to do once they graduate. Being approachable is critically important to police, as is the ability to work in small-team environments. Therefore, recruits must be able to interact easily with others, be able to deal with difficult people or people in difficult situations. The participants seemed to understand the requirement for strong interpersonal skills and they remained actively engaged with other recruits in both work and social settings. This did not mean that there were not any issues between recruits, but they sought ways to deal with those concerns. Such engagement and negotiation is important in workplaces to share issues and to develop a professional identity (Trede, 2012).

The importance of bilingual recruits making new friends in the service should not be underestimated. It helps them to be supported by people in the workplace they can trust, rely on, and gain support from (Campbell, Verenikina, & Herrington, 2009) Collegiality and engagement with others in their new profession can also help future-proof them by having confidantes, or people to consider ideas, concerns, and experiences with. Bilingual recruits need support in their new roles as risk, pressure and the variety of the work could have language or cultural effects that they may not have experienced before.

**Imagination requires recruits to orient themselves to their new occupation.** In a community of practice imagination is about “constructing an image of ourselves, of our communities, and of the world, in order to orient ourselves, to reflect our situation, and to explore possibilities”(Wenger, 2000). When the recruits began to self-actualise and see themselves as a police officer, and as future role models in their new profession, they brought a sense of responsibility and seriousness to the job. They seemed to strive to acculturate by practicing police norms of behaviour, discipline and organisational skills. This led them to personally reflect on themselves and their future.

The bilingual recruits needed to gain membership of multiple new communities: their wing, the New Zealand police and as New Zealanders. This phenomenon is not uncommon as “a community of practice is not an isolated body, but is often composed of members, who themselves are members of many other communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998a, cited in Campbell, et al (2009)). These overlapping of communities of practice were personal and changeable as the recruits endeavoured to maintain old identities and develop new ones.

The bilingual recruits relished the chance to become police officers to improve their own lives or the lives of their families, and these became sources of motivation and determination to succeed. They recognised elements within their individual cultures that provided strong support to them and in turn, they developed mental toughness and

confidence. The recruits were proud of their heritage and their home community, and seemed sensitive of how other people perceived them, in terms of their culture and language use. As they imagined their police future the recruits considered, in the spirit of self-improvement, what elements from their own culture or home country were helping or hindering their progress as they became police officers. For example, they compared different learning strategies, or thinking about their frequency of English language use outside the police college.

Participants used language that showed they were reflecting on what they were doing and were able to discuss their own reactions to certain situations. This was exemplified when a recruit realised that his communication with his colleagues could be improved by using simple words and more body language.

As the bilingual recruits interacted with other police recruits they also learned about themselves through comparisons and observations of other recruits. One recruit felt that he was an outsider when the training started but then recognised that his colleagues were 'in the same boat' as he was – a beginner learning a whole new job.

Recruits also made comparisons with their former life in their home country to both New Zealand and their new job. These comparisons seemed to help them to articulate their own motivation, pride and point of difference.

The recruits also reflected upon and discussed their own actions and reactions with trusted peers. The participants revealed they learned more about their own cultures by explaining aspects of them to others, or by witnessing their home communities from a different perspective. This last point reinforces Jaeger and Vitalis' (2005) research where ethnic minority officers in the New Zealand Police reported they gained increased awareness of their own backgrounds after joining the police and working with people from other cultures. For some recruits their own culture acted as a mirror to reflect what was actually going on in a community and provide a greater insight to less obvious cultural actions.

Recruits were aware that their families were likely to notice changes in them as they did police training. They thought that it was important to alert and educate family about these changes and why they embraced new ways. An example was the recruit who shared with his family what behaviours and actions were acceptable or not in New Zealand, and why that was the case - based on his new experiences of social activities and police training. This came about as he realised he was part of a police wing with a diverse mix of people that were very different to himself and he realised there were reciprocal expectations that he had not been conscious of, and that he was now taking on more western attributes.

Undergoing police training put the recruits into situations that would make them reflect on what they were doing and what individual characteristics they noticed about themselves. The findings suggest that the bilingual recruits began to get a wider perspective of their own ethnic community, the New Zealand Police, and New Zealand as a nation. They discovered that they had multiple identities based on ethnicity, work and linguistic connections (Duff, 2012).

Recruits enjoyed opportunities to affirm their cultural identities. This was evident when they had a chance to share aspects of their culture with the other recruits, when others' acknowledged their perspectives, and when they assisted others to work in multi-cultural communities. When instructors, and later, peer recruits, said that they would leverage the bilingual recruits' language skills in particular, this further enhanced their confidence in joining the police. Recruits acknowledged they could notice themselves changing and adjusting to life as a police officer, for example, some felt the training had improved their English language.

Recruits seemed to be forging an identity as a police officer even though they were novices within the police community. This began when they joined the ASP group, got an understanding of what a future in police might be like, and began imagining themselves as a member of the police community of practice. They were challenged with an array of police duties within real-life scenarios, continued to have motivation to complete the

training and envisaged doing real police tasks. They had belief in themselves to get through the training, were confident in their growing abilities and began to articulate a keen understanding of what the job really entailed. At the college each participant was determined to become a New Zealand “cop” and discussed future focused themes relating to working in their district upon their return home. This indicated that they were committed to New Zealand and were acculturating in order to become more knowledgeable citizens and better officers.

“Communities do not exist as a system that has definable boundaries from other human interactions. The reality of communities is that they are complex and often involve the interaction of several groups” (Campbell, 2008). Significantly, the recruits started to see themselves as *New Zealand* police officers which portended a new work outlook and opportunities. As Campbell, Verenikina and Herrington (2009) concluded “the new identity is not one that is completely reformed, instead it is a composition of previous histories overlaid with new experiences” (p. 655). Ethnic police officers they met during training may have reinforced recruits’ own intent to become New Zealand Police officers as other police officers shared their own experience. At the Police College recruits learned, while under pressure, about several identities or cultures at the same time. These training pressures seemed to force recruits to consider what parts of their identity held personal importance to them as a citizen and as a police officer.

At times recruits adapted to New Zealand customs and other times they were comfortable with their own ways and deliberately did not change their personal behaviours or identity. Therefore they developed a new identity that fitted the circumstances. In terms of cultural identity the recruits used words like “Kiwis”, “us”, “Asians” and “the others” to differentiate themselves from those who were not bilingual recruits. The police training and their new peers enhanced their cultural awareness of New Zealand and it became clear how this could help them be more effective in their jobs within New Zealand communities.

The recruits played down the bilingual component of their recruit lives; they were more conscious about becoming part of the police community than about being a bilingual police officer. Yet, at an institutional level they considered their bilingual abilities as an important aspect of being an officer – and understood the organisational benefits of being able to assist other police and the public. Understanding the advantages of police dealing with members of their own ethnic communities was also evident in police literature (Jaeger & Vitalis, 2005). Police training made the recruits think more broadly about their bilingual background and the importance it may play in their future in New Zealand.

As bilingual police recruits, the participants were conscious of being role models for their family, community, police, and the public. Their home community was equally proud and were receptive to them being in the New Zealand Police. The participants were required to practise the tasks and responsibilities of a police officer at the college, but they needed to “see” themselves as a police officer in order to become one. Therefore, the recruits required imagination to accommodate multiple identities as they negotiated New Zealand life and their cultural life, and as they established their police identity.

**Alignment involves recruits following the actions, behaviours and values expected of police officers.** Alignment is closely linked to imagination and to moving from peripheral to full participation. It includes “making sure that our local activities are sufficiently aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond our own engagement ... [and is] a mutual process of coordinating perspectives, interpretations, and actions so they realise higher goals” (Wenger, 2000, p. 228). Recruits felt they knew less about policing than they initially thought and this was a potential barrier. However, the activities, expectations and life of a police officer became clearer as they acculturated. Recruits learned what it is to be a police officer, through their academic and practical work as well as their interactions with police instructors, other police officers and the public. Being on a residential course, as stated in the shared repertoire section,



compelled the recruits to live the values of the police 24/7 and to learn the police culture quickly. Recruits were teamed and acculturated into groupings used in police work - by operating in pairs and small groups. Having a strong foundation of the police values, expectations and skills is important for the transition to work as a police constable.

Feedback, tutorials and informal comments by college staff helped with alignment. These responses help participants to gauge their strengths and weaknesses as well as to give confidence to them. This also helped them to keep on track with the behaviours and expectations of the police community generally and their training specifically. Keeping aligned to the standards at the college, and being accountable for them, is to help instil those standards so that they remain aligned to them in their personal and professional lives beyond the college.

Facilitating their own learning required recruits to be ultimately responsible for their own professional growth and education (Birzer & Tannehill, 2001). Academic preparation was not an obstacle for the recruits. While parts of their studies were difficult, like legal matters, the recruits found that previous study in the English language at New Zealand schools or university helped them towards their goal of becoming police officers. They learned to quickly process information, and to respond safely and appropriately to changing situations. Participants were exposed to new ways of learning through other recruits and instructors. It did not mean that they could easily switch from long practised learning styles to new ones whilst under the training pressures, but it did provide some alternatives for the future, and insight into ways that other New Zealand police recruits learn.

While attending the college recruits were exposed to expected and unexpected challenges that forced them to adjust and to align to the new police role, but it also made them consider whether to make adjustments in other parts of their lives. This centred on features like language, social interaction and physical activities. Recruits

were regularly making decisions on whether to change aspects about their activities, behaviours, language and interactions as they learned about their new profession. However, at times recruits adjusted elements of their culture in order to fit in to New Zealand life and the New Zealand Police. Some of this adjustment was job-specific, but others were more personal.

### **Chapter summary**

In this chapter I used a theoretical framework from communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) to analyse what it was like for the bilingual police recruits to join the police community. Police recruits were not only learning to be police officers, but are learning to be New Zealand Police officers, and this presented more learning opportunities and added stress to their already busy training. The recruits learnt to engage in the joint enterprise of being a police officer, through social participation with others. Engaging with other novices as well as old-timers consolidated their formal and informal learning. This built trust and allowed the recruits to get a greater sense of the communal resources like processes, procedures and language that are a significant part of the police community. Through all this training the recruits became more self-aware and self-reflective. This helped them to consider how to become legitimate participants in both the New Zealand Police and the wider New Zealand community. They evaluated their strengths, considered which adjustments were necessary, and imagined their future as fully participating members of the police.

## **Chapter Six – Summary and Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I will summarise this study by briefly revisiting the aim, the methodology, the findings as they relate to the research questions. I will then outline some possible implications, some limitations and some opportunities for future research.

### **Summary of the research**

This research uncovered what was helpful to bilingual police recruits training at The Royal New Zealand Police College to become members of a community of practice, and what hindered that process from their perspective. The study used a phenomenological methodology to explore what the college experience was like for three bilingual recruits during their 19 weeks of police training. Data were gathered through interviews and journal entries. Community of practice was used as the theoretical framework for analysis.

### **What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?**

This study revealed key themes about what it was like learning to be a New Zealand Police Officer from the unique point of view of bilingual recruits. It showed that they individually learned more about themselves in the process. Learning to be a New Zealand Police officer required recruits to adjust to the New Zealand Police. This included adapting to New Zealand culture while managing the rigours of police training; and engaging in personal reflection, as they learnt about themselves and reflected on their backgrounds through the processes of doing a range of activities, interacting with people, and managing emotions.

### **How do bilingual police students perceive their strengths during their initial police training?**

The goal of becoming a New Zealand Police officer provided strong motivation for these recruits. What helped the recruits to become members of a community of practice was that they persevered through the on-going pressures and intensity of training in order to become proficient and prepared for work as a police constable. They responded to those pressures by keeping to high standards, being professional, and being organised. They became resilient as they used the support around them to cope with and adapt to the demands of the training. They acquired new skills and a sense of self-efficacy as they successfully managed stress and developed competence with previously unfamiliar responsibilities. The recruits successfully coped with intercultural interactions as they developed new relationships in their new community of practice. They gained new friends and a greater understanding of the subtleties of New Zealand culture. They also began to develop a police identity.

The recruits were committed to becoming police officers and immersing themselves further into New Zealand life. They were proud of their roots, their current achievements and were looking positively towards their police employment. From the lived experience of the bilingual recruits the police training and support was conducive to providing them with the expectations, values and skills to successfully begin their future job. The self-help culture at the college encouraged the recruits to push their own boundaries and to develop useful behaviours for their future police roles.

The bilingual recruits acknowledged learning more about themselves as they undertook personal reflection throughout the training. They revealed how much they valued their own culture as well as the support from their families and ethnic communities. The participants developed a greater awareness of their individual identities as they encountered new challenges.

### **What challenges do bilingual police students report?**

Several issues hindered bilingual recruits' process of becoming a member of the police community of practice. They were learning a new profession in an additional language and this meant that in some instances they found it difficult to use English when multi-tasking or when undertaking police tasks under pressure. They felt they required more time to study or practise certain skills compared to other recruits.

The recruits were not only adapting to the language but were trying to adapt to new learning styles and strategies at the same time, including facilitating their own learning. They were compelled to learn about New Zealand as they became exposed to history, major events, Kiwi slang, and other facets of New Zealand that would help them to understand and converse with other New Zealanders. In addition, sometimes the recruits did not understand or follow New Zealand cultural nuances.

There were occasional difficulties with peers in their wing particularly as some did not have interest in recruits' backgrounds or culture, making it more difficult to establish professional relationships with them.

### **How do bilingual police students report that others (family and fellow recruits) respond to their new role?**

The recruits were well supported by their families to become New Zealand Police officers. According to the recruits, their families not only indicated their agreement for the recruits to enter the police, but were avidly providing moral and psychological support throughout the training. They were proud to have a member of their family become a New Zealand Police officer, and this consequently meant the recruits received respect from their ethnic community too.

For the most part their fellow recruits responded well to them becoming police too. Peer recruits engaged them during classes, in the residential areas and socially. The

participants were able to share and discuss work or non-work matters with them, and this extended to providing support for each other once they got to know and trust each other.

### **Limitations**

Limitations acknowledged at the beginning of this research were mitigated. Having only three participants is within the bounds of a phenomenological study. Limiting participants to this number ended up being advantageous because even three participants generated a great deal of rich data. Whilst I was concerned that time constraints of police training could affect the participants' journal completion, this did not prevent participants from completing the journal task. Throughout the research the participants provided data in English – an additional language for them, but occasional errors orally and in writing did not compromise their meaning.

### **Implications**

The importance of pre-college groupings to increase social networks, confidence, and awareness once at college cannot be underestimated. The ASP experience was a vital part of these bilingual recruit's introduction to the police as it helped them to settle into the college. It did this by introducing New Zealand cultural and policing elements, but also fostering support amongst bilingual recruits which then enabled them to communicate with other new colleagues. What was not apparent in this study was what the training experience was like for other bilingual recruits who did not have the opportunity to participate in the ASP group, and whether they too could benefit from such support. This is perhaps an area that could also be explored.

The recruit responses indicate limited peer support and interest in them as bilingual recruits. It was not clear whether recruits were introduced to each other in a structured way, but if that did not occur then perhaps that could help with early engagement across

the wing. This could benefit all recruits by compelling them to learn about each other early in the training. Moreover, the recruit perspectives from both individual and institutional levels indicate that it is relevant for police recruits and officers to understand the cultures and religious backgrounds of other members of the police. This includes appreciating the pressures faced by recruits from cultural backgrounds other than New Zealand Pakeha and looking for ways they may be supported better. Such awareness and appreciation is also about cultivating greater integration and intercultural confidence amongst the future police officers, educating each other about the multi-cultural police population and the multi-cultural aspects of policing. Sharing backgrounds, languages, and traditions can help recruits to not only get to know other wing-mates or members of the police community but could lead to better awareness and relationships with members of the public.

The New Zealand Police could develop other ways that show that it values different backgrounds and cultures within the training itself. For example, none of the recruits mentioned any cultural training or any college scenarios involving people who spoke little or no English. Recruits mentioned instructors who were Maori or spoke with British accents, but no other ethnicities were mentioned. Employing experienced bilingual police as instructors or mentors could also help to signal the changing New Zealand Police demographics and to potentially open avenues to share different aspects of their cultural background and linguistic talents.

Recruits want to use and share the bilingual skills they have, both in their job and with other workmates. This is an aspect that the police could potentially exploit further during training. Bilingual recruits were told by officers that their language abilities would be used in front-line policing yet there was no indication of how police might help recruits to maintain those skills, nor was there any suggestion of how other police recruits or officers could develop language skills that could be used on the job. It was not apparent whether the police encourage officers to learn another language during their

employment or whether recruiting bilingual police is the sole way of incorporating bilingual personnel into the police community.

Bilingual recruits work in multiple cultures at the same time; their own culture, the New Zealand culture and the police culture. Bilingual recruits are regularly adapting their language and their humour to suit the environments they are in and the people they are interacting with. During their training they may require extra time or concentration for them to manage oral tasks. They may also be required to make cultural adjustments to their lives in order to fit in with their new employment. These are weighty challenges that college instructors should be made aware of. Being knowledgeable about other cultures and customs would help instructors to be cognisant of the discomfort experienced in recruits when they ask for help, and to become conscious of the grim consequences of failure for some recruits, for example.

The careful selection of college staff who are supportive, strong role models can positively influence bilingual recruits' impressions of police officers and the wider police environment. This can have a significant flow-on effect to the recruits in their upcoming role, but also on how, and to whom, recruits voice these perceptions.

Given the positive feedback from the recruits about their training perhaps it would be beneficial for other institutions if the RNZPC were to share their practice of inducting newcomers into their employment as they seem to have a robust, tried and tested programme that may be adapted for other work environments.

### **Future research**

This research examines recruits only while they are undergoing training. Further research on bilingual probationary constables could enlighten the New Zealand Police on the experiences of this group as they adapt to full-time police work. A longitudinal study examining bilingual police officers say two years after graduation may also provide useful insights into the challenges and rewards, or overall experiences of a bilingual



police officer. It could indicate information that may be useful from an initial recruit training perspective, but also the support these officers do use or could use in their everyday police work.

Host culture perceptions of the bilingual experience are not specifically covered in this research. However, in future research it may be useful to ask the participants' peers about what they think may have helped or hindered bilingual learners become New Zealand Police officers. Their perspectives may provide different perceptions compared to those directly experiencing the phenomenon of being a bilingual recruit learning to become a police officer.

This study will make a contribution to research by providing rich descriptions of bilingual recruits' experience as they underwent professional training. This will be useful to police as recruit perspectives on training is very under-researched. However, this may also be relevant to nursing studies that explore training, especially using phenomenological approaches, as well as being pertinent to other professional training. In New Zealand this research is also useful in terms of understanding what helps and hinders adult students whose native language is not English.

Overall, the participants viewed training at the Police College was tough but achievable for bilingual police recruits; each participant graduated as a New Zealand Police officer. The New Zealand Police training helped them to prepare for a challenging job where English is the most common everyday language, and where they are relied on for their skills to help the citizens of their adopted country. This study highlighted the need for further research both at the college and the post-graduation period of a bilingual police officer's employment. It also suggests that greater awareness by college staff, of the demands on bilingual recruits as they deal with multiple cultures and as they develop their police identity, could provide an even stronger police community of practice. These bilingual recruits had a great deal of self-determination, belief in themselves, and were future focussed. Bilingual police are vital members of the New Zealand Police. Bilingual police officers bring a wealth of experience and culture to their policing duties. This

benefits the police and the community through having a diverse mix of personnel amongst their team.

*I have come to realise that I bring my own personality and culture into the group and that I do not have to be somebody that I am not. A272*

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## Appendices

- A. Institution Information Sheet – Royal New Zealand Police College
- B. Institution Consent Form – Royal New Zealand Police College
- C. Indicative interview questions
- D. Indicative prompts for the reflective journals
- E. Participant Information Sheet
- F. Participant Consent Form
- G. Institution Instructor Consent Form – Royal New Zealand Police College
- H. Participant Personal Details Form



## Institution Information Sheet – Royal New Zealand Police College

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

Hello, my name is Kiely Pepper. I am a Masters student from the Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington. I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master's degree in Education. This information sheet provides you with information about my research and explains the possible involvement of the Royal New Zealand Police College.

### **Aim of the research**

Police literature primarily focuses on probationary or commissioned police officers. Research on bilingual police students is very limited. This study aims to explore the barriers and facilitators to bilingual police students learning at the Royal New Zealand Police College (RNZPC). It will focus on their experiences of police training; the influences of their first language, families, religion or culture; and the expectations of other students or other police.

This research intends to uncover what police students think contributes to their success, and how they feel that their home community is responding to them becoming a police officer. If the New Zealand Police is aware of bilingual students' experiences, it could help police to recruit, support, train and retain a diverse workforce and enrich New Zealand policing.

### **Important information**

This research has been assessed and approved by Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and the New Zealand Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research please contact Dr Allison Kirkman, chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Ethics committee: [Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz)

### **RNZPC Assistance**

I would like to request permission from RNZPC to approach New Zealand or foreign-born bilingual police students in the first month of their training to meet the aims of the research.

I would like permission to request RNZPC instructors to indicate whether any police students will not be able to cope with the extra demands of the research whilst undergoing their training.

**Police student involvement**

Selected police students will take part in two individual semi-structured interviews which will be audio-taped and transcribed. This interview will be approximately 40 – 60 minutes long and will take place at a time and place that suits them. I would like permission to interview participants at the college if they suggest this as a convenient location.

Police students will also be asked to write short weekly journal entries and email them to me. I will give them some prompts to guide them to write about both their experiences at the College and the reactions by others about them becoming a police officer.

**Will police students be identified in this research?**

I will maintain confidentiality at all times and recruits' identities will be protected. Any reference to individual participants will be by pseudonym, and only my two university supervisors and I will know their real name. Specific details that could identify particular participants such as ethnicity or gender will be altered so that the participant's identity is masked. These measures will be explained to the participants.

**What happens to the research data?**

All written material (interview notes, transcripts etc) will be kept in a locked file and access will be restricted to my supervisors and myself. All written materials and audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

Information gained through this study will be used in the writing of my Masters of Education thesis which will be placed in the Victoria University Library and may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences. The finished thesis will be made available to the New Zealand Police. A summary of findings will be sent to the participants.

**Questions**

If you have any questions related to this research please contact me via email: [kielypepper@gmail.com](mailto:kielypepper@gmail.com) or phone: 0274 522 xxx. You may also contact my supervisors: Dr Margaret Gleeson ([Margaret.gleeson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Margaret.gleeson@vuw.ac.nz) or ph (04) 463 9563) and Dr Carolyn Tait ([Carolyn.tait@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Carolyn.tait@vuw.ac.nz) or ph 04 463 9590).

Thank you,

Kiely Pepper



### **Institution Consent Form – Royal New Zealand Police College**

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

- This research has been assessed and approved by Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.
- I have read the Institution Information Sheet – Royal New Zealand Police College, and I agree that the College will provide assistance to the above research project.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that the Royal New Zealand Police College is willing to:

- Allow the researcher to approach police students who identify as being bilingual.
- Allow the researcher to approach the above police students within four weeks of the start of their training.
- Assist the researcher by naming recruit course members who will not be able to cope with the extra demands of the research whilst undergoing their training.
- Allow the researcher to interview research participants at the College if they request it as a convenient location.
- I would like a copy of the summary of results of this study. Please send it to the following email address .....
- I understand that this research will be used to inform a Masters Thesis which will be held in the Victoria University Library and a copy will be offered to the New Zealand Police.
- I understand that this research may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Indicative interview questions

Research questions	Interview questions
<p>What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?</p>	<p>Describe what it is like to be a linguistic and cultural minority student undergoing police training.</p> <p>What do you think enhances your learning?</p> <p>What obstacles do you encounter in your learning?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do bilingual police students perceive their strengths during their initial police training?</li> </ul> <p>(cultural, family, physical, social, religious, academic)</p>	<p>As a bilingual police student what do you think are your strengths right now as you learn how to be a police officer?</p> <p>Can you think of a time when you used this strength?</p> <p>As a student that is bilingual what do you think helps you to learn at college?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges do bilingual police students report?</li> </ul> <p>(cultural, family, physical, social, religious, academic)</p>	<p>What challenges have you experienced as a bilingual learner as you undergo your training?</p> <p>What has challenged you the most?</p> <p>Tell me about a time when you felt challenged.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do bilingual police students report that others respond to their new role?</li> </ul>	<p>How do other people (like family and friends) outside the police environment, respond to you</p>

	<p>as you as someone learning to be a police officer? Can you give me an example of how one person responded to your decision to join the police?</p> <p>Tell me about what this means for you.</p> <p>How do other people (like fellow students, instructors or others) inside the police environment, respond to you as you undergo your training? What kinds of things do people say to you?</p>
	<p>What else can you tell me about your experiences as a linguistic and cultural minority student undergoing police training?</p>

## Indicative prompts for the reflective journals

Research questions	Reflective journals prompts
<p>What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?</p>	<p>Describe your experience as a bilingual student learning to be a New Zealand police officer.</p> <p>As a student that is bilingual what do you think helps you to learn at college?</p> <p>What positive learning experiences did you have this week?</p> <p>How do experiences prior to police training impact upon your initial training?</p> <p>How does your first language influence your learning experience?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do bilingual police students perceive their strengths during their initial police training?</li> </ul>	<p>Tell me about the strong points in your learning this week?</p> <p>Why do you think it was a strong point?</p> <p>What areas of policing do you have particular confidence in at the moment?</p> <p>Why is this?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges do bilingual police students report?</li> </ul>	<p>What challenged you this week?</p> <p>Give me an example.</p> <p>Why was it difficult?</p> <p>How did you overcome/manage this challenge?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do bilingual police students report that others respond to their new role? (your friends, your fellow trainees, your family, your ethnic community)</li> </ul>	<p>How do other people, inside and outside the police environment, respond to you as you undergo your training? What makes you think so?</p> <p>What responses to your police role have you had from people outside the police environment?</p> <p>What responses to your new police role have you had from people within the police environment? What do they say or do?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>What else can you tell me about your experiences as a linguistic and cultural minority student undergoing police training?</p> <p>How/ is your bilingualism acknowledged? How does having another language help you as a police student? Have you been offered any additional support? Have you requested or sought any additional support for yourself?</p>





## Participant Information Sheet

### What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

Hello, my name is Kiely Pepper. I am a Masters student from the Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington. I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master's degree in Education. This information sheet provides you with information about my research and explains your possible involvement. It is important that you make an informed decision about whether you want to participate.

#### Aim of the research

Police literature primarily focuses on probationary or commissioned police officers. Research on bilingual police students is very limited. This study aims to explore the barriers and facilitators to bilingual police students learning at the Royal New Zealand Police College. It will focus on your experiences of police training; the influences of your first language, families, religion or culture; and the expectations of other students or other police.

This research intends to uncover what you think contributes to your success, and how you feel that your 'home community' is responding to you becoming a police officer. If the New Zealand Police is aware of bilingual students' experiences, it could help police to recruit, support, train and retain a diverse workforce, and enrich New Zealand policing.

#### Important information

This research has been assessed and approved by Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and the New Zealand Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research please contact Dr Allison Kirkman, chair of the Victoria University of Wellington Ethics committee: [Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz)

#### Volunteers

I need volunteers who are New Zealand or foreign-born bilingual police students to meet the aims of the research.

If you are interested in participating, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form. Then you will be asked to complete a form to provide basic information about yourself to help the researcher select participants. Whether you chose to take part or not will make no difference to your police training. This is entirely your decision.

However, even if you agree to take part, you can withdraw your consent at any time up until the second interview has been conducted. If you withdraw from the study you will not be penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

### **Your involvement**

You will be invited to take part in two individual interviews which will be audio-taped. This interview will be approximately 40 – 60 minutes long and will take place at a time and place that suits you. I will send you a transcript of each interview in case you want to make any changes.

You will also be asked to write short weekly journal entries and email them to me. I will give you some prompts to guide you to write about both your experiences at the College and the reactions by others about you becoming a police officer.

### **Will I be identified in this research?**

No, any reference to individual participants will be by pseudonym, and only my two university supervisors and I will know your real name. I will maintain confidentiality at all times. Personal details that could identify you such as your ethnicity or gender will be altered so that your identity is protected.

### **What happens to the research data?**

All written material (interview notes, transcripts etc) will be kept in a locked file and access will be restricted to my supervisors and myself. All written materials and audio recordings will be destroyed by the researcher at the conclusion of the research.

Information gained through this study will be used in the writing of my Masters of Education thesis which will be placed in the Victoria University Library and may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences. The finished thesis will be made available to the New Zealand Police. A summary of the findings will be sent to you.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions related to this research please contact me via email: [kielypepper@gmail.com](mailto:kielypepper@gmail.com) or phone: 0274 522 xxx or my supervisors Dr Margaret Gleeson ([Margaret.gleeson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Margaret.gleeson@vuw.ac.nz) or ph (04) 463 9563) and Dr Carolyn Tait ([Carolyn.tait@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Carolyn.tait@vuw.ac.nz) or ph 04 463 9590).

Thank you,

Kiely Pepper



### Participant Consent Form

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to take part in the above research project.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed twice by the researcher.
- Allow the interviews to be audio taped.
- Write a short weekly journal entry that will be submitted to the researcher by email each week.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential. Any reference to me will be by pseudonym and only the researcher and her two university supervisors will know my real name.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in the study.

If I do choose to participate I understand that I can withdraw at any time until the second interview has been conducted, and I just need to let the researcher know by email or telephone.

I understand that if I withdraw from the study I will not be penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that this research will be used in the writing of a Masters of Education thesis which will be placed in the Victoria University Library and may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences. The finished thesis will be made available to the New Zealand Police. A summary of the findings will be sent to you.

I understand that this research may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences.

I understand that all written materials and audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....



**Institution Instructor Consent Form – Royal New Zealand Police College**

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

- I have read the Institution Information Sheet – Royal New Zealand Police College, and I agree that I will provide assistance to the above research project.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Allow the researcher to approach police students who identify as being bilingual.
- Allow the researcher to approach the above police students within four weeks of the start of their training.
- Assist the researcher by naming any police students who will not be able to cope with the extra demands of the research whilst undergoing their training.
- Allow the researcher to interview research participants at the College if they request it as a convenient location.
- I would like a copy of the summary of results of this study. Please send it to the following email address .....
- I understand that this research will be used to inform a Master of Education Thesis which will be held in the Victoria University Library and a copy will be offered to the New Zealand Police.
- I understand that this research may be used for publication in academic journals and conferences.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....



**Participant Personal Details Form**

What do bilingual police students perceive as facilitators and barriers to their learning during their initial police training?

**To help me get more of an idea about languages you can use and about your background it would be helpful if you could please answer these questions.**

Please tell me about what languages you are skilled at. Then show me what you think your language ability is like by putting an X on the line where you think you are at.

Language \_\_\_\_\_

*Not skilled at all* \_\_\_\_\_ *Highly skilled*

Language \_\_\_\_\_

*Not skilled at all* \_\_\_\_\_ *Highly skilled*

Language \_\_\_\_\_

*Not skilled at all* \_\_\_\_\_ *Highly skilled*

Language \_\_\_\_\_

*Not skilled at all* \_\_\_\_\_ *Highly skilled*

Please tell me about your background. (For example, where you were born and where you grew up, where you went to primary school and high school)

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Please tell me what your ethnicity is and, if you are comfortable, what your religion is.

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Which age group are you in?

18-25

25-35

35-45

45+

Please give me your full name as well as your email and telephone details so that we can be in contact.

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