

**International Student Expectations:
Undergraduate Student Voices in an Australian University**

Stephen Neil Howlett

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of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

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Certificate of authorship/originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

(Stephen Neil Howlett)

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First, I express my gratitude to the students who participated in this study, and to the teachers and education managers at the research site who shared with me so generously their classes, time, ideas and dreams for the future.

My journey as a teacher was principally inspired by the example and encouragement of the teachers at the Sydney College of Advanced Education (now a part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in the University of Technology, Sydney) in the 1980s. In particular, I was inspired by the example of Ian Cornford, who remained a constant mentor and friend over many years, and until the time of his retirement in February 2008, was the Principal Supervisor of this work.

When I arrived in the research site, it was Ken Hawkins who encouraged me to begin to understand some of the practical issues and possibilities that inform the discourse in international education; and to then describe these for others so that our practice might thrive and prosper. Later, working and learning with Alison Owens across the full expanse of university teaching with international students was a high point in my career.

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I dedicate this thesis to my family, from whom I learned something of understanding and perseverance; and to the future of all the young people from many nations that I have been honoured to call my students. They would have enjoyed knowing that sharing some small part of their learning journey might benefit others who engage in the practice that we call international education.

Abstract

The education of full-fee paying international students is a multi-billion dollar business in Australia. One consequence of global market growth is the entry of new and increasingly aggressive competitors in the international marketplace who are gaining market share at the expense of traditional suppliers such as Australia. This has opened a new dimension in the discourse: the imperative of commercial sustainability in international education and its effect on good practice.

Students from the Indian subcontinent represent a fast growing but also a volatile demographic for Australian universities. This study explores the experiences of a cohort of Sub-continental international students studying a Bachelor of Accounting degree in an Australian university. It was conducted on the city campus of a teaching-intensive university that caters exclusively to full-fee paying international students. The work captures a cross-sectional appreciation of the perceptions of the student sample during their learning journey in Australia.

The research takes the approach of problematising student expectations in order to generate questions investigated through a survey questionnaire and in interviews with students on site. The study seeks to engage with students' voices through dialogue with the researcher. The framework for analysis is grounded in a symposium approach and an appreciation of four theoretical fields of international education, literacy and critical thinking, commercial practice, and the policy agendas surrounding international education in Australia, to create a trans-disciplinary perspective of teaching as business. To date, there exist no published studies of Sub-continental student experiences which have conducted this particular kind of enquiry.

The research finds that these students' perceptions are reflected within and across the theoretical constructs and can thus be used to derive a better appreciation of value in an international education experience. International students' perception of value is found to derive in the first instance from satisfaction of their expectations as a consumer-student. Such students' perception of value is found to be further

enhanced, and satisfaction in their other role as a student-consumer improved, if constructs of difference between international and domestic students are no longer problematised within the discourse.

The study presents an alternative holistic conceptual frame for theorising agendas in international education. That frame foregrounds student expectations in order to improve the practice of international education. The research outcome paves the way for proposing what might constitute an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education that can strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in the global market of services.

Keywords

accounting	L2
action research	learning expectations
Australia	market growth
Bangladesh	migration
commercial sustainability	needs and expectations
competition	Nepal
consumer satisfaction	overseas students
consumer-student	Pakistan
critical thinking	Pedagogy
education	relational
ethics	risk
equity	social justice
ESL English as a second language	Sri Lanka
ESOS educational services for overseas students	student-consumer
global development	student voice
global market	Sub-continental
globalisation	sustainability
India	symposium methodology
international education	TBL triple bottom line
international students	teaching-intensive university
L1	undergraduate

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Background to the research

In the internationalisation of education there exist both benefits (for example, IDP Education Australia 1997; Reid & Loxton 2004) and costs (for example Kell 2006; Wesley 2009). Both contingent and corrigible, these aspects of internationalisation impact upon and change each other in a system of education that is a service product affecting diverse institutions and sectors. Internationalisation can be seen as a product of change, one part of the transformation of university education in Australia initiated by Dawkins (see Sinclair-Jones 1996) and more recently by Bradley (Bradley et al. 2008). It is also a challenging yet planned response to change (see Häyrynen-Alestalo & Peltola 2006; Trompenaars & Woolliams 2003). Sometimes internationalisation is a stimulus for change (OECD 2001; Welch 2004). And, at times, it is a combination of all three (AIEFC 1997; AVCC 1999). Regardless of perspective, the construct of “international”, or the classification of university students by nationality, is influenced by ‘powerful pull- and push-factors in contemporary world-wide student migrations’ (Stichweh 2004, p.468).

This report presents the results of an investigation into one aspect of that migration, namely the relationship between international education in Australia and the experiences of one cohort of fee-paying undergraduate students from the Indian subcontinent studying a Bachelor of Accounting degree in the ‘international student only’ city campus of a regionally-based Australian university. Diagrammatically, the object of this research, its relationship to the broad field of study, and the key issues surrounding the research are shown in Figure 1.

The research reported here is based on an interpretation of education as a product that affects many players, and is beset by the vigorous marketing of education services worldwide, and particularly in Australia (Sidhu 2006).

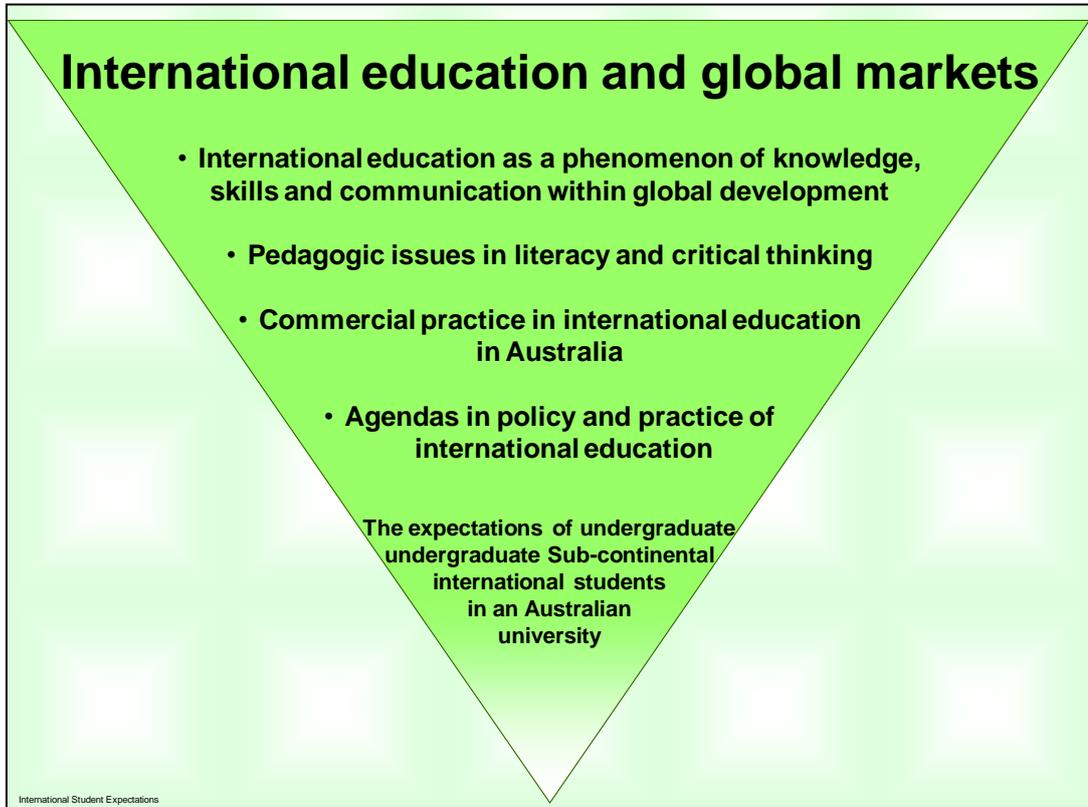


Figure 1: Background to the research (adapted from Perry 1995, p.9)

The report investigates the expectations that a group of Sub-continental undergraduate international students bring with them to university in Australia and the problems that they encounter. The desired outcome is to identify actions or changes that might be appropriate in order to better inform both educational practice and commercial sustainability in a market that is increasing in importance in various policy frameworks and in the practice of teaching and learning in universities in Australia (Access Economics 2009; DIAC 2009a; Suarez-Orozco 2007).

The research is thus grounded in the discipline of international education, which itself is positioned within the business of international education services. In 2007, over 3 million tertiary students worldwide were enrolled in studies outside their country of citizenship. This represented an increase of 3% from the previous year

(OECD 2009a, p.309). A confluence of circumstances stimulates the internationalisation of education. For example, the OECD (2009a, pp.310-311) identifies factors such as global trends towards freely circulating capital, goods and services, host country policies that encourage international students as a source of applicants for migration, the revenues that institutions can raise from foreign tuition fees, the inability in source countries to satisfy growing educational demand, and the recognition by employers of the benefits that overseas-educated workers can contribute to their international operations.

In Australia, the education of full-fee paying international students is a multi-billion dollar business (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics Finance and Public Administration 2007). That business has been identified by Gillard (2009a) as the nation's third largest source of overseas earnings, generating \$15.5 billion in 2008 and supporting more than 125,000 jobs. Revenue from international education services has become the leader of export earnings in Victoria, and the second largest source in New South Wales, which together account for almost three-quarters of the total revenue from international education in Australia (HTA 2009, p.3).

By the end of the first half of 2009, more than half a million international students were studying in Australia (DEEWR 2009b). Of these, Sub-continental students numbered around 97,000 or 18% of total international student enrolments. Sub-continental students represented a fast growing, but also a volatile, demographic for Australian universities (AEI 2009a; McDonald 2009). Sub-continental nationals also represented the second largest (20%) cohort of skilled migrants to Australia in the financial year to 30 June 2009 (DIAC 2009b, p.3).

One consequence of such growth has been the entry of new and increasingly aggressive competitors in the pursuit of global market share (Sherry et al. 2004). This has opened a new dimension in the discourse: the imperative of commercial sustainability in international education and its effect on good practice (Marginson 2002).

Harman (2005) typifies the discourse in international education as broadly traversing four theoretical fields. These are the concept of international education as a phenomenon of knowledge, skills and communication within the global construct of international development (Hellmundt 2001; Knight 2003; UN 2005; UNESCO 2007), pedagogic issues in literacy and critical thinking (Hellmundt 2000; Vandermensbrugghe 2004; Owens 2005), commercial practice in international education (Marginson 1993, 2007), and the policy agendas surrounding international education in Australia (Ball 1998; Bradley et al. 2008; DEST 2003).

A review of relevant literature across these four fields in Chapter 2 finds that little harmonised research exists to directly link them with the construct of sustainable business in international education as it affects the experience of international students in an Australian university. Analysis of the literature also suggests that a gap exists between the two dimensions of students' past learning experiences and the pedagogic expectations of universities in Australia. It leads to a research premise that attitudes and beliefs regarding past learning experiences could impact on expectations for subsequent learning (Rogers & Randall 1997; Scott 2005) which could, in turn, impact on business sustainability (Harman 2005).

Exploring such a premise could identify an opportunity for both improved business and pedagogic practice in universities, and improved learning outcomes for international students. Expressed simply, investigating the research gap provides an opportunity to examine the premise that “good teaching is good business”.

Research problem and hypothesis

Within such a context, the aim of this study is to address questions posed in the present discourse in international education as practised in one site. The research focus is a specific cohort of almost 200 full-fee paying Sub-continental undergraduate international students studying in a Bachelor of Accounting program in the ‘international-only’ city campus of a regional Australian university.

The research is designed to connect the four major theoretical perspectives described by Harman (2005) as they interact with the twin issues of the business in international education and international students' needs and expectations. This contextual positioning of the research problem opens the door to the following statements of research intent, namely:

Topic

The expectations of undergraduate international students in an Australian university.

Research questions

1. How do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?
2. How can we relate students' perceptions to the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives?

These two questions aim to explore the extent to which the satisfaction of international students' expectations achieves an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education, and any changes that might be appropriate.

Thesis

The benefits to be gained from the satisfaction¹ of international students' expectations in the equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business

¹ The terms "satisfaction", "expectation" and "experience" and the connection between them is explained later in this chapter in the section headed Definitions on page 22.

and education² will improve the sustainability of the market for international education in Australia.

The research problem and hypothesis fits the research into an opening for new learning. They also provide a conceptual framework for the research effort, and a scaffold for the development of a research methodology.

Justification for the research

Investigation of the research problem is justified on several theoretical and practical grounds. Principally, the research examines the situation of students from the Indian subcontinent, who are presently the fastest growing cohort of international students in Australia (AEI 2009a). Yet, the learning needs of these students do not appear to have been previously researched in depth (Harman 2005). There is evidence in the literature of increasing concern about the growth and viability of the international student market as a whole and the ability of Australian university providers to maintain market share and quality (Marginson 2002; Sherry et al. 2004). It is timely therefore to consider the experiences in Australia of Sub-continental international students. These Australian experiences are being shaped within the contexts of:

- A political agenda that effectively commercialises university education in Australia (Marginson 2005a);
- Unprecedented numbers of full fee paying international students in Australia (DEEWR 2009b); and
- A perceived lack of clarity by university educators in Australia of international students' academic expectations³.

² The construct of “equitable, ethical and sustainable” practice and its relationship to both business and pedagogy in international education is discussed and problematised later in this chapter in the section headed Definitions on page 22.

³ This will be discussed in the section: The second conversation: ‘risk in learning’ in Chapter 2

Three specific circumstances are presented here to illustrate theoretical and practical justification of the research effort. They are:

- The critical importance of international education to the Australian economy and to educational policy and practice in Australia;
- The limited nature of specific research in the area of how business and pedagogy interact in the practice of international education in Australia;
- The potential benefits to be realised from a better understanding of educational practice played out in a commercially sustainable marketplace.

Firstly, international education is critically important to the national economy (Access Economics 2009; Gillard 2009a) and to education in Australia generally (Bradley et al. 2008; Marginson 2007). The government-controlled internationalisation of higher education in Australia, especially within the global context of the GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services (Ziguras 2003), has prompted universities to make deliberate efforts towards the internationalisation of curricula, and encouraged commercial expansion - some would say, at any cost (Harman 2004). The growth over the last few years of Australian higher education, and the challenges it currently faces, relate directly to the continued decrease of government financial aid and regulation (Bradley et al. 2008). Despite growing numbers of fee paying international students, Australian universities find it difficult to make ends meet when domestic student enrolments keep rising and government funding diminishes (Tucker 2006).

Trends in education accountability and the internationalisation of education therefore impact agendas for educational change globally (Gacel-Ávila 2005), and at the local level in Australia. Hira (2003), writing early in a decade that has witnessed significant change, examined the global business of education pointing to causal factors such as the driving force of globalisation, the rise of information technology, and demographic pressure. These factors created demand and supply forces that resulted in rapid expansion in the international education market that was underscored by a state policy of ‘well-developed trade strategy ... to attract foreign students and develop international training contracts’ (Hira 2003, p.918). To Mazzarol and colleagues (2003) this ‘third wave’ trend in international

education created ‘a new market place that is very different from the local markets of recent memory’ (Mazzarol, Soutar & Seng 2003, p.97) with market sustainability driving a quest by universities for sustainable competitive positioning (Mazzarol & Soutar 2001). Set within this state-controlled environment of quality being more assurance than enhancement (Lomas 2007), increased competition is assumed to translate into increased efficiency in the market (Floyd 2007).

Second, there appears to be limited specific, or harmonised, research into the ways that business and pedagogy interact in the practice of international education in Australia. The literature review presented in Chapter 2, and methodological discussion and research design developed in Chapter 3, examine this point in detail and justify the research effort in terms of its potential contribution to knowledge in the field; in particular that it brings to the education debate knowledge from fields that to date have not generally been used collectively in research on academic issues.

The research effort is also justified in terms of its methodology. As discussed in Chapter 3, the study examines the meaning of practice (Kemmis 2000) and the different ways of studying it (Beckett & Hager 2002) within the twin conversations of pedagogy and commerce (Reeves & Forde 2004). In this way, it has become possible to link high-level conversations in the discourse of international education (Engeström 1999) to the daily activity of international students and teachers in an Australian university campus (Owens 2005). The linkage points the way to designing a research methodology which is both interpretive, or ‘symposium’, in nature (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000, p.14) and linked to activity theory (Engeström 1999).

The methodology also builds on earlier studies in the way that language is crafted in the research instrument. Devices used earlier by Cooper (1998) and Lixin Xiao (2006) employ questions that convey a negative or problematic approach to the sometimes different experiences encountered by international students in a foreign country. The instrument crafted for this research effort has deliberately excluded the use of negative framing. Instead, neutral action verbs are used to stimulate a

considered, scaled, response from participants, and to “tease out” both positive and negative aspects of participants’ expectations. The value of this approach in methodology and its effect on participant engagement and thoughtfulness is discussed in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, the research findings are useful in terms of their potential application in practice. Based on the initial assumptions presented in this chapter, the benefits from the research can be the capacity to use this new knowledge to open a way to better educational practice, and better commercial practice and sustainability in a market that is increasing in importance in the policy frameworks and in the practice of teaching and learning in universities across Australia. Examples of these benefits include:

- Better understanding of how strategic policy changes impact on practice at the local level;
- Enhanced practice in both business and pedagogy in the field of international education;
- More satisfied “students as consumers”⁴; and
- Strengthened prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in the global market for international education services.

Such outcomes from this study could reduce the need for and burden of remedial education or the management of academic conduct arising from students’ lack of awareness of the learning expectations in Australian universities. It could also contribute to the development of new work practices in teaching and business that strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in the global market of international education services.

These three justifications for the research effort, and the way they are played out in both the literature and in practice, are used in this report to structure an analytical review of the literature and to then develop a research methodology.

⁴ See the discussion and problematisation of the concepts of “student-consumer” and “consumer-student” in the section headed Definitions on page 22.

Methodology

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 develops a conceptual framework for the research. It does this by traversing four theoretical fields in international education to develop twin conversations of risk in business and risk in practice. To explore the way in which these twin conversations of risk are played out in a university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students, Chapter 3 provides an explanation and discussion of the practical issues involved in developing a methodology, research instrument, and sample to be used in the research.

Overall, an interpretive ‘symposium’ research methodology (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000, p.14) combined with activity theory (Engeström 1999) is applied to the research effort in order to bring together the rich diversity of research.

Structure and outline of the report

The structure of this thesis traverses the fields of education practice and the business of international education. The format was adapted from the recommendations of Perry (1995) for writing that reports both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The structure chosen thus draws together the main threads in the issues studied, and provides a bridge between theoretical and practical concerns (as suggested by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 2002).

To this starting point for thinking about structural issues is added an appreciation (drawn from Love 2001) of the level of clarity and detail that needs to be achieved in the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research and its extended use in the multidisciplinary situation of teaching and business. In particular, Chapter 2 graphically maps out the structure of relationships between the theoretical perspectives to create a foundation on which the research methodology is subsequently based (Love 2001). In this way, the epistemological foundation of the study is grounded on theoretical perspective and allows the inclusion of multiple theoretical perspectives.

Chapter 1: Introduction, presents the core of the research problem. The chapter “sets the scene” and proposes the research issues. A description of the research cohort and an appreciation of their learning expectations is combined with a problematising of issues relating to rote learning and passivity in classrooms (Biggs 1994; Dhesei 2001; Kennedy 2002; Raina & Dhand 2000). Such issues are then compared with the problematic typification of pedagogy in Australian universities (Scott 2005). This chapter then outlines the path that will be followed in subsequent chapters to establish the overall field in which the research resides, identifying a gap for new knowledge, describing and justifying the methodology used to gather evidence, and demonstrating how, through analysis and interpretation, a contribution is made to the body of knowledge in international education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, builds the theoretical foundation of the research by reviewing relevant studies across four theoretical fields of international education, literacy and critical thinking, commercial practice, and the policies of international education in Australia. The outcome is to create a trans-disciplinary perspective of teaching as business that problematises the issue of international students’ expectations. The foundation created in the literature review is thus a means of creating research questions that link the research problem to the wider body of knowledge.

Chapter 3: Methodology, presents the methodology used to collect the evidence and answer the research questions identified in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The chapter justifies the selection of methodological approach, identifies the units of analysis, describes the design of the various research instruments employed, and considers ethical and administrative issues surrounding the conduct of the research.

Chapter 4: Pilot of the Questionnaire, presents an analysis of the pilot questionnaire that was administered to a sample of the research cohort in October 2007. The pilot was intended to test the utility of the survey instrument, and to identify questions to be asked in subsequent follow-up interviews. The chapter concludes with the observation that the generally good response to the pilot and the need for only one minor terminological change in the questionnaire wording meant

that the data gathered in the pilot could be included with the analysis of data gathered in administration of the main questionnaire. Chapter 4 thus paved the way for administration of the main questionnaire, and the analysis of evidence gathered.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Data, presents an analysis of the data gathered by questionnaire and interview. The reflective or heuristic process of analysis, enabled by the range of qualitative and quantitative methods employed in the research, prepared the way for considering the research questions that are discussed and answered in the concluding Chapter 6.

Finally, **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications**, demonstrates how the research makes a distinct contribution to the body of knowledge in international education. Starting with a review of conclusions about the hypotheses that stimulated the research, Chapter 6 draws from the research conclusions to identify implications in the new knowledge generated for theory, policy makers and practitioners in the field. The limitations inherent in the research methodology are reviewed, and then used to propose opportunities that might encourage other researchers to further explore the findings of this study.

Following Chapter 6, a series of **Appendices**, provide supplementary data in support of the conduct of the research effort.

The research in context

This section presents the context within which the research was conducted. It briefly describes the research site, the cohort of students selected for study, and their learning experiences at home prior to starting study at the research site.

Research site

The academy selected for study was the researcher's workplace, the city campus of a regionally-based Australian university. As noted above, the campus caters exclusively to the education of full-fee paying international students.

Research cohort

The undergraduate cohort at the research site constituted slightly less than half of the academy's student population. Of these undergraduate students, 491 or 63.4% were studying a Bachelor of Accounting (BAcc) program. BAcc students whose languages in their home countries were representative of the Indian subcontinent (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) counted at 186 or 37.9% of the students enrolled in the BAcc program.

During the period that this research was planned and conducted, the proportion of students from these countries fluctuated between 20% and 60% of the BAcc cohort, demonstrating both the volatility in the market for international education, and implying a need to better understand the main concerns of this particular student demographic. Students from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were thus invited to participate in the research. Data describing the students who participated in the research, and an explanation of why they constitute a meaningful potential research population, is provided in Appendix 1.

An overview of the research cohort is shown in Figure 2 below.

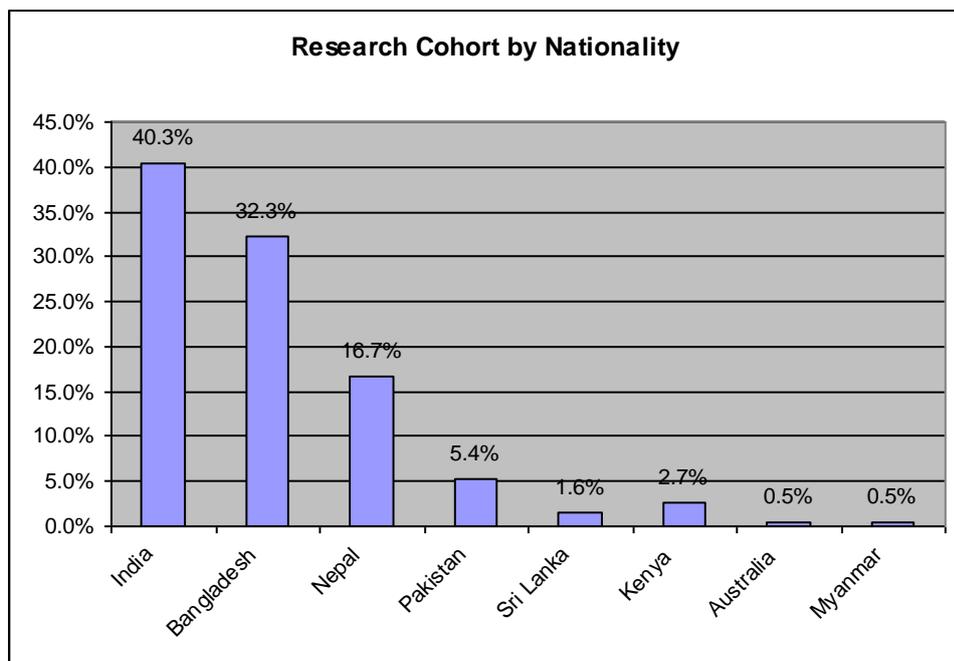


Figure 2: The research cohort (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

Learning experiences

Rogers and Randall (1997) in reviewing the skills and learning expectations of students in tertiary education in the US explored the concept of learning expectations broadly in terms of self-perception or “how you learn now” (termed ‘areas of prior knowledge’) and “how you hope to learn” or ‘areas of interest’ (Rogers & Randall 1997, p.257). In this research, the broad categorisation of learning expectations proposed by Rogers and Randall (1997) is used to create the basis for exploring the match between the learning expectations of international students arriving in an Australian university from the Indian subcontinent and the general pedagogy attributed to teachers in Australia today.

The term “Sub-continental” is used as a collective descriptor to identify a majority group of persons who participated in the research, and are identifiable with origins from the region of the Indian subcontinent. The students who participated in the research were from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Their expectations are considered in the following section.

The expectations of students from India

This study adopts an intuitive approach that the learning expectations of high school Indian students are the product of their past experience. Generally, and as discussed by Dhesi (2001), the principal expectations of post-school education on the part of students from India (and those of their parents) relate less to learning outcomes than to perceptions of ‘improvement in income, career opportunities, social prestige and marriage prospects’ (Dhesi 2001, p.23). Specified learning outcomes are not generally expected from the education process, nor are such issues widely researched or reported in the academic literature. When starting university in Australia, Indian students presumably bring with them expectations of a similar educational approach. A typical educational scenario in India has been described as follows:

Students read from a textbook, often outdated, or they listen to a teacher, and then recall the information orally or in writing. The blind memorization of facts thwarts creativity. Usually, such skills as process, critical thinking, communication, or

library research receive no attention. Teacher domination and content domination are the order of the day.

(Raina & Dhand 2000, p.86)

Raina and Dhand further suggest that in India, curriculum can be equated with the syllabus, with the syllabus embodied in the textbook. The IBE (International Bureau of Education 2003b) world data on education report for India particularly noted:

Textbooks remain the principal instructional material in the classroom, and thus assume great importance, especially in contexts where, for most students, they are often the only reading material available.

(International Bureau of Education 2003b, n.p.)

Classroom pedagogy is consequently determined by the content of the prescribed textbook. Textbook chapters serve as a means to organise the total time available in a year for the instruction that the teacher provides. The role of NCERT, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (Government of India 2006, p.129), as the state producer of textbooks reinforces this situation, and results in classroom pedagogy that is driven by textbooks.

Evidence can be found in recent studies by Kingdon (2007), and Khirwadkar and Pushpanadham (2007). In presenting a case for the role of evidenced-based policy-making for education in India, Kingdon identifies learning achievements in both primary and secondary schooling as 'low' (Kingdon 2007, p.192), with 'facilities/inputs [being] low and teacher absenteeism high'. Khirwadkar and Pushpanadham (2007, p.8) in discussing needs in teacher education in India posit that a 'teacher is seen as a transmitter of knowledge'. They further describe the school system in India as 'resistant to change', with 'rigid patterns of education ... not developing capacity to think and reflect ... highly structured and exam oriented' (Khirwadkar & Pushpanadham 2007, p.5).

Overall, therefore, the situation of classroom pedagogy in India being heavily influenced by the textbooks has, in practice, tended to dilute to a level of insignificance the intent of a National Policy on Education (NPE), introduced in 1986 and later revised in 1992 (International Bureau of Education 2003b). That policy aimed to improve the quality of education through a competency-based

curriculum and activity-based learning methods in schools, complemented by examination strategies that assess the ability to understand rather than the ability to memorise.

In effect, the role of teacher in India currently remains that of interpreter of the textbook, preparing students for a single public examination at the end of each year. The textbook is defacto curriculum, and the examination pattern mirrors the text. This is a situation which is said to encourage rote learning in students and discourage teachers from trying new ideas or pedagogies. The most common form of classroom instruction in India has been described as ‘read-recall-recite’ (Raina & Dhand 2000, p.88).

Quantification of secondary student attainment across the country on a common scale has not been attempted to date (International Bureau of Education 2003b), and so an environment of passive learning and knowledge of the textbook thus seems to correlate with student achievement (Alexander 2001, p.520; Gupta 2004, p.83). When coupled with the expectation of education as social advancement noted by Dhesi (2001), these expectations of rote learning may also be presumed to generate the expectations of learning that students take forward to subsequent learning experiences in Australia.

The situation in Bangladesh

Parallel experiences, and therefore presumably parallel student learning expectations, are also evident in literature describing school education in Bangladesh, a nation beset with numerous problems of low per capita income, poverty, widespread illiteracy, rapid population growth, poor management and administration, want of accountability, and inadequate school contact time (International Bureau of Education 2003a). In Bangladesh, the pedagogical environment has been described by Thornton (2006) as ‘a complex mix of colonial heritage, traditional Bengali culture, global change and Islamic influence’ in which there exists an emphasis on:

academic “bookish knowledge” which lends itself to the transmission mode of teaching on the part of teachers and rote learning and memorization for students, thus preserving the teachers’ authoritarian position in the classroom.

(Thornton 2006, p.183)

Secondary curricula in Bangladesh were formulated in 1977, and textbooks produced in 1980-82. Little has changed since. The IBE (2003a) World Data on Education report for Bangladesh particularly notes that secondary education is largely examination-oriented, and focused on a student’s ability to recall facts and information, with:

Hardly any attention ... given to the higher abilities of reasoning, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis. In most cases, the affective psychomotor domains are not addressed at all.

(International Bureau of Education 2003a, n.p.)

The IBE (International Bureau of Education 2003a) report continues that generally curriculum is created without a research base, and the textbook is the principal instrument of curriculum implementation. It therefore appears reasonable to assume that, when starting university education in Australia, students from Bangladesh like their counterparts from India, bring with them learning expectations based on an experience of pedagogy as lecture followed by memorisation and recall.

The situation in Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Nepal represents a highly complex ethnic and language composition (International Bureau of Education 2003c). Beset by civil conflict between Maoist insurgents and the state (Caddell 2006, p.464), political and social events there have effectively disrupted educational development (International Bureau of Education 2003c). This has created in academia an ongoing, yet possibly potentially creative, tension between ‘nationalists and those in favour of globalization or wider horizons – those who speak of “our values” and those who speak of “global values”’ (UNESCO 1998, p.106). As is the case in both India and Bangladesh, the source for production and distribution of school textbooks is the state. Coupled with an academic and professional qualification rate of only 41% for secondary school teachers (International Bureau of Education 2003c), it therefore appears reasonable to assume that when starting university in Australia, students from Nepal, like their

counterparts from India and Bangladesh, also bring with them similar learning expectations based on lecture, memorisation and recall in examinations.

In Pakistan, the primary goal of the 1998 National Education Policy remains the ‘universalisation of primary education’ (International Bureau of Education 2003d). This activity, coupled with the dissemination of Qu’ranic principles and Islamic practices, overshadows development in other sectors of education practice. In the secondary sector, a uniform national curriculum biased toward vocational outcomes is centrally set by the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Wing, and this curriculum is subsequently translated into texts. Since the cost of foreign books is prohibitive, most students can never own a book for intensive study, and classroom instruction is therefore pivoted around the texts as preparation for external examinations which encourage memorisation (International Bureau of Education 2003d). In terms of learning outcomes, and hence the expectations of students from Pakistan arriving in Australia, the Ministry of Education assessment of the UNESCO-coordinated Education for All movement (UNESCO 2007) identifies pupils as being weak in writing, comprehension and problem-solving, but strong in rote memorisation and mechanical reproduction (Saleem 1999, Table 32, p.39). This suggests a premise of learning expectations similar to students from India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Sri Lanka, the final country reviewed for the purpose of survey sample selection in this research, has been characterised as ‘a plural society riven by ethnic and religious divisions’ (Colenso 2005, p.411). Although education can be traced back to the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BC, Sri Lanka, like Nepal, is also beset by civil turmoil and this has hindered education development. As examples of this, the IBE review of education in Sri Lanka (International Bureau of Education 2003e) identifies state control of textbook publication, public end of year examinations and low participation in teacher training. As in the case of other countries reviewed for this research, it could be expected that students arriving from Sri Lanka bring with them learning expectations based on a perception of pedagogy as lecture followed by memorisation and recall.

Summary of learning expectations

This overview of the perceived learning expectations of undergraduate international students arriving at university in Australia suggested that a reasonable and homogenous cohort for study would comprise students from the following countries:

- Bangladesh,
- India,
- Nepal,
- Pakistan, and
- Sri Lanka.

To describe this research cohort, the collective descriptor “Sub-continental” is used, as described in the section headed Definitions later in this chapter.

University pedagogy in Australia

University pedagogy in Australia is more problematic to typify than is the case with the Indian subcontinent. Conflicting evidence exists that describes student learning in Australia as either constructivist (Brownlee 2004), or ‘too encyclopedic and over concerned with formalism at the expense of application’ (Guest & Duhs 2002, p.151), and in some respects reminiscent of the learning styles ascribed to the Sub-continent earlier in this chapter. A range of learning experiences appear to be present in Australia and this may affect the concept of a “gap” in learning expectations that is being investigated in this research.

On the one hand, some observers depict pedagogy in Australian universities as significantly different from that in the Sub-continent. Productive practices in university teaching in Australia are identified by writers such as Scott (2005) as practice-oriented and interactive. This constructivist perspective in teaching and learning (as described, for example, by Krause, Bochner & Duchesne 2006) encourages students to collaborate, self-regulate and actively participate in their learning. Other writers (for example Carpenter, Bullock & Potter 2006, p.3) point to the role and number of textbooks used as indicative of a wide range of pedagogic interventions applied by teachers. University library services are also described in

constructivist terms of a focus on outcomes for students, and particularly in attempting to meet the diverse needs of international students (Saw, Lui & Yu 2008).

Brownlee (2004) describes teachers' epistemological beliefs now being 'more likely to conceive of teaching as transformative (constructivist) than as transmissive' (2004, p.2). To Krause and Coates (2008, p.503) the constructivist approach is representative of 'an Australian perspective on engagement', involving students in 'constructing their own knowledge through activities linked with high-quality learning outcomes'.

The university teaching expectation is thus positioned by these observers as one in which students will engage in a combination of traditional face-to-face learning and teaching, which focuses on interactive (rather than passive) learning strategies, and where students participate in independent study and negotiated learning (Krause et al. 2005). Strategies identified with such an engagement theory include learning from essays, quizzes, self-teaching packages and writing portfolios, and problem-based learning (Marshall 2007). Interactive strategies include simulations, discovery learning, and computer-enabled learning methods and resources, including access to quality-assured and searchable databases and web-based learning (for example, Vardi & Ciccarelli 2008; Zhou et al. 2003).

On the other hand, there is a minority of observers who depict pedagogy in Australian universities as not significantly different from that in the Sub-continent. Guest and Duhs (2002) present a perspective of a less progressive university pedagogy in Australia today. Commenting on poor pedagogical practices in the teaching of economics, they describe first year courses as 'too encyclopedic [and] ... over concerned with formalism at the expense of application' (Guest & Duhs 2002, p.147). Describing the teaching of economics as 'low cost large scale lectures' (p.151), they call for the teaching of university students to be restructured with 'fewer topics in more depth, more emphasis on real-world applications, [and] assessment that emphasises assignment work that focuses on problem-solving' (p.158). Star and McDonald (2007, pp.19-20) also comment upon an objectivist

approach to pedagogy in undergraduate university teaching, especially in the cases of young school leavers, mature age, and international students.

Wainwright (2005) reflects upon evolving pedagogy in Australian universities from the perspective of future directions for university libraries. Wainwright acknowledges a constructivist pedagogy in terms of generating knowledge and meaning from experience (for example, Papert 1980) in terms of ‘learner-centred’ and ‘knowledge-centred’ pedagogies (Wainwright 2005, p.443) and greater interactions with ideas in texts, audio and visual forms. Yet, he also observes that few teaching or library spaces, ‘and indeed teachers, actually embrace or meaningfully engage with such concepts’ (Wainwright 2005, p.443).

A gap between expectations?

A challenging research situation therefore arises from this review of student learning in the Sub-continent and in Australia. The two determinants of wide-ranging reading and active participation that typify the generally constructivist view of university pedagogy in Australia suggests that a gap may well exist between the learning expectations of Sub-continental students on entering university in Australia, and the pedagogy generally practised in Australian universities (Ryan & Hellmundt 2003). It also suggests a need for international students to adjust to a different pedagogical philosophy as discussed by Eisenberg (1997, p.328).

Accepting that constructivist pedagogy concerns enabling the learning and intellectual growth of students (Macneill, Cavanagh & Silcox 2005), in contrast to objectivist instruction that treats students as the object of curriculum implementation, then successful classroom pedagogy for first year international students in an Australian university should require that teachers understand how students have “learned to learn” in the past, and then design, implement and assess educational activities that bridge the gap between the expectations of students arriving from a Sub-continental high school environment and the pedagogic practice of the university in Australia.

Any research which investigates such a gap could help to further our understanding of the cultures of learning (Lixin Xiao 2006) for both students and universities in Australia. The research could identify an opportunity for improved intercultural understanding (Hofstede 1991, p.6) and strategies for more effective teaching and learning.

Definitions

This section provides an explanation and discussion of definitions used in the writing of the report. The section also serves to problematise the way in which our understanding of the meanings generally attributed to some of these descriptors affects our perceptions and practice when dealing with categories such as “domestic” or “international” students, the assumed differences in learning when international students are classified as L2, or people for whom English is a second language, and the interplay between the practice of business and pedagogy in international education.

The abbreviations and terms used have meaning as follows:

- Business – the commercial enterprise and the people who constitute the trade in international education services. This appreciation is developed from the discussion by Mazzarol (1997, pp.1-12) of the nature of education as a ‘marketable service’ (Mazzarol 1997, p.9).
- Conversation – a construct employed in Chapter 2 to build upon the work of Harman (2005) in selectively mapping what he terms a ‘fractured discourse’ (Harman 2005, p.119) community in international education.

The employment of conversations is used, firstly, to consider the discourse in terms of four separate “lenses” or theoretical fields that may appear to constitute disparate and potentially conflicting themes in the discourse of international education. In an attempt to help ‘chart some of the complex relationships’ among these themes’ (Wooffitt 2005, p.1), the four lenses are then grouped into

two conversations that bring into sharp focus the issues of commercial sustainability in education and its effect on good practice.

The first conversation is termed “risk in business”, and relates to the interaction between commercial practice and the policy agendas surrounding international education in Australia. The second conversation, “risk in learning” is used to explore globalisation effects on education and the issues embedded in literacy and critical thinking as they relate to the concerns of players in the field of international higher education in Australia.

Exploring the way in which these twin conversations of risk are played out, a theoretical foundation is built for the research to be conducted in a university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students.

- Cultural difference - as used here is seen as difference ‘in and through its interactions with others’ (Harrison 2003, p.343) in order to open ‘a space of negotiation and translation’ (Giroux 1991, p.507) that creates the discrete research cohort described earlier in this Chapter. In this research, the concept of cultural difference is not therefore related to the consideration of issues in inequality, conflict, change, or any exclusions or limits placed on different people through interacting with a dominant Western tradition (for example Giroux 1991, p.502) in Australian universities.
- Domestic student - a student not classified as an “international student”. In the context of this research, a domestic student is therefore one who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or who holds Permanent Residency status in Australia (The University of Adelaide 2008).
- Equitable, ethical and sustainable - fair, acceptable and balanced practice that values academic principles in a university and acknowledges and supports the significance and potential of commercial imperatives in international education. This terminology applies to the field of international education an interpretation from the domain of accounting that considers sustainability as a ‘balancing act’ or ‘triple bottom line’ (Foran, Lenzen & Dey 2005, p.9). It is also, in part, a

reflection on the work of Florida (for example Florida 1995; Florida, Mellander & Stolarick 2008) on creativity, education, regional development and their effects on the social, economic and demographic factors that drive a global economy within the notion of “goodness” in practice.

The construct is applied in the analysis of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to unite four disparate and potentially conflicting theoretical fields in the discourse of international education. By problematising the intent and interaction between the four theoretical fields, a research platform is created upon which it is possible to investigate Australian business and practice in international education, on a bottom line basis that is broader than just academic reputation or financial performance alone. The application of this connotation of “equitable, ethical and sustainable” practice in international education is further discussed later in this section under the terms “risk” and “triple bottom line”.

- Expectation – an awareness of a learner’s culture of learning including needs, wants, capacities, potentials and learning style preferences to meet that learner’s expectations and to foster their guided development (adapted from Lixin Xiao 2006).
- Experience - the totality of events lived by an individual or group through direct personal participation or observation, and how they are emotionally moved and learn by those events (adapted from Dewey 1938, 1997).

There is a connection between expectation and experience that is relevant to this research. An international student’s experience when compared to that person’s expectation will encompass a totality of events beyond education, and will help to form the way in which they subsequently perceive satisfaction or dissatisfaction as a result of that experience. Brown and Swartz (1989, for example) have identified a relationship between the perceptual gaps in expectations that exist in both a service provider and a client, and the subsequent evaluation by each of a professional service experience. They observe:

[I]nconsistencies in expectations and experiences affect the service evaluation. The magnitude and direction of the inconsistencies will determine if the client is pleasantly surprised (resulting in greater satisfaction), bitterly disappointed (leading to dissatisfaction and possibly even litigation), or mildly pleased or displeased.

(Brown & Swartz 1989, p.96)

The implication for this research of such a connection between expectation and experience is that the components of a positive, negative or neutral student experience (Ong 2007) will impact their perception of “satisfaction” as a “consumer-student” as discussed later in this section.

- IELTS – the International English Language Testing System (IELTS 2008). IELTS is an English language proficiency test. Australian Student Visa Regulations require international students to have undertaken an IELTS test or equivalent prior to lodging their application (DIAC 2007b). The IELTS Academic Reading and Writing tests assess whether a candidate is ready to study or train in the medium of English at an undergraduate or postgraduate level (IELTS 2008, s.1-p.9). An IELTS band score of 7.5 - 9.0 is generally considered by the IELTS administrators to be an acceptable level for ‘linguistically demanding academic courses’ such as medicine, law, linguistics, journalism, or library studies. An IELTS band of 7.0 is generally considered to be an acceptable level for ‘linguistically less demanding academic courses’ such as agriculture, pure mathematics, technology or computer-based work (IELTS 2008, s.6-p.8).
- Impact – the effect to which the perceived value in the buying or selling of educational services moves the price and/or perception of value of the services against other buyers or sellers (adapted to the construct of education as a marketable service from Liu, Leach & Bernhardt 2005).
- International education. A construct fraught with political, economic, and cultural conflict (Ellis & Giunta 2005), interpretation of the term ‘international education’ can range from globalisation effects on education across the formulation of policy (for example Ball 1998; Carnoy 1998; Davies & Guppy 1997; Henry et al. 1999; Taylor et al. 1997) in response to market forces

(Marginson 1997a; Robertson, Bonal & Dale 2002) and the ways in which these forces shape global agendas in education (Jones 1997, 1999; Mundy 1998; Tickey 2001), democracy and peace (Jones 1998), and intellectual labour (Aronowitz & Fazio 1997; Marginson 1997b; Slaughter 1998). International education can also be interpreted as a comprehensive approach to education that intentionally prepares students to be active and engaged participants in an interconnected world through the examination of the cultures, languages, environmental situations, governments, political relations, religions, geography, and history of the world (for example, Teichler 2004, p.6).

Accepting that there appears to be no unique or definitive interpretation of the term, the descriptor is used in this research in the context of education seen as operating in a commercial service industry (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics Finance and Public Administration 2007) with international students as the consumers of a globalised education commodity (Kinnell 1990).

- International market – the provision of Australian international education services to students extending across or transcending Australian national boundaries (Mazzarol 1997).
- International student. In this research, an international student is considered to be an individual who studies in a nation other than their self-identified nation of permanent residence (see, for example, Hinchcliff-Pelias & Greer 2004, p.9). In the Australian context, this identifies as international students people who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents and are studying in Australia in fulltime accredited and registered courses in what is termed the Overseas Student Program (DIAC 2009a). The Sub-continental student cohort that is the subject of this research is thus identifiable as comprising international students.
- Internationalisation. The objectives of internationalisation go beyond financial considerations, and include issues such as international research collaboration, the internationalisation of staff, curriculum and students, and international benchmarking (Welch 1997). The growing internationalisation of Australian

higher education institutions is a noticeable and significant change within the sector, and a prime motivator in embracing internationalisation has been identified as the generation of significant income (DEST 2008, para.285).

- L1 – a shorthand acronym to identify a person’s first or native language. The term is generally used in contrast to L2, the language a person learns after L1. Hulstijn (2005, p.129), for example, identifies L1 acquisition as principally a processes of implicit learning, whereas the acquisition of L2 often relies on both implicit and explicit learning.
- L2 - a second language (L2) is any language learned after the first language (see, for example, Evers 2007 in relation to pedagogy and learners for whom English is L2).
- Manipulation – the controlling or adjusting of any factors that directly affect the sustainable competitive advantage enjoyed by a particular provider of educational services (see, for example, Marginson & Rhoades 2002).
- Product – the educational commodities offered for sale by universities (Altbach 2002).
- Qualification - an award or some other form of certification of attainment, competence or attendance earned by students upon satisfactory completion of a course of study (DEST 2005).
- Reputation – the state or degree to which education services are capable of being held in ‘approbation or honor’ (Richardson & Nigro 1987, p.374).
- Research site - the university campus within which this research was conducted has been de-identified in the writing of this report.
- Risk – a hazard or source of danger in the business of international education that represents a potential for incurring loss or misfortune. This appreciation is

developed from the views of Wolf (2002, 2004) on the nature of education and its relationship to economic growth.

- Risk in business – one of two conversations examined in the literature review in Chapter 2 to explore the ways in which a business imperative might dominate educational values in the practice of international education.
- Risk in learning – the second of two conversations examined in Chapter 2 to explore the ways in which academic values might be impacted by the commercial pull of business controls and cost management in the international market for education services.
- Satisfaction of international students’ academic expectations – the extent to which an academy’s own perceptions of cultural sensitivity towards learning styles and strategies is used to gradually adapt learners to the academy aligns with the educational need and/or expectation of a learner (Sherry et al. 2004; UKCOSA 2007).
- Student-consumer – and a complementary juxtaposition of the term into “consumer-student”. The construct is developed from the work of Baldwin and James (2000) into the student as ‘informed consumer’ and the outcomes of education as ‘exchangeable goods without corrupting the essential nature of learning’ (Baldwin & James 2000, p.140). Gabbott and colleagues (Gabbott, Movondo & Tsarenko 2002, pp.171-172) similarly use this concept of students as customers, consumers (and products, after graduation) when discussing the role of students in the educational setting, and deriving an holistic perspective to understanding the determinants of international students’ satisfaction as a predictor of likelihood of their recommending a university to prospective students.

The terms student-consumer and consumer-student are used in Chapter 2 to illustrate one element of the tensions that exist in the discourse of international education. In the conversation of risk in business, international education is viewed through a commercial lens, with students primarily acting as consumers

making choices and purchases of education services. That is, acting as consumer-students. In the second contrasting conversation of risk in learning, these same people act as student-consumers in the traditionally understood role of students as participants in the learning process, whilst also displaying the ‘often irrational and ill-informed’ (Baldwin & James 2000, p.141) behaviours of consumers.

The issue of international students displaying positive or negative traits of consumer satisfaction, its impact, and possible actions appropriate to business managers is discussed at length in the academic literature on customer relationship management (Goodman 1999, 2006; Goodman & Newman 2003; Lerman 2006; Liu & McClure 2001). This construct of satisfaction is applied in the analysis and interpretation of the research findings in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

- Sub-continental students – a collective descriptor, used in this report to identify a majority group of persons at the research site who were the participants in this research, and identifiable with origins from the Indian subcontinent.

Generally, the Indian subcontinent is accepted as the peninsular region of larger South Asia incorporating the nations of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as parts of Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. Politically, the term is useful in helping refer to the countries of the region as a group, or when discussing issues that affect the common history, culture, etc. of the countries.

The Sub-continental descriptor is also distinct from the collective of ‘*continental* Asian’ (see, for example, Aspinall 2002, p.809) students who comprise the other majority group at the research site (see Appendix 1 on page 167).

The Sub-continental collective descriptor is used in this report without any racialised, politicised, or any other perjorative intent or implication of minority and/or marginalised status within the discourse of multiculturalism.

- Symposium research methodology. The construct of ‘symposium research’ (Kemmis 2000, p.14) is proposed by Kemmis as a research methodology that allows for differing traditions to work together to investigate and transform practice in a particular historical circumstance or condition. By considering the purpose for which a particular research exercise is undertaken, Kemmis suggests that an amalgam of epistemological and methodological perspectives and research purpose can provide a more comprehensive view of the nature of practice, as well as connecting and interrelating different aspects of that practice. To better investigate the discourse community in international education that is the subject of this research, a symposium approach has been chosen for both the review of literature in Chapter 2 and the methodological design discussed in Chapter 3.
- Teaching-intensive - the teaching aspect of a university’s full spectrum of operations (Ballantyne, Bain & Packer 1999; Dearn, Fraser & Ryan 2002). As noted by the University of Southern Queensland (USQ 2005, p.3), the institutional label of teaching-intensive as used in this report is not intended to ‘misrepresent value’ in the diverse university sector in Australia. The term is used in order to contrast with the research-intensive aspect of university operations, in that some areas of activity are teaching-intensive whilst others are research-intensive. Intensity in this context also implies a genuine commitment to high quality in teaching and learning (Ballantyne, Bain & Packer 1999, p.255) that matches anything in the research-intensive construct in higher education.
- Tertiary education - higher or post-secondary education, including vocational education and training, which prepares students for employment, and generally culminates in the receipt of a degree or vocational certification. This definition aligns with the OECD’s thematic standard for tertiary education programmes at the ISCED International Standard Classification of Education levels 5B, 5A and 6, including adult education programmes equivalent in content with some ISCED 5 programmes and regardless of the institutions in which they are offered (UNESCO 1997, p.27).

- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language (ETS 2009). A USA-based English language proficiency test used to assess the capacity/competence of an international student to study in English (DEST 2005).
- Triple bottom line (TBL) - an interpretation of the terminology used in accounting and sustainability reporting to identify constructs that are ‘linked, but not necessarily interchangeable’ (CPA Australia 2004, n.p.). When considering the concept of sustainability in international education as developed in this report, the use of TBL is intended to convey to the twin practices of business and pedagogy in international education in Australia a construct of uncompromising practice (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) that will advance continuing improvement in the quality of education services available to international students in a commercial education marketplace (see, for example, World Bank 2008). This interpretation of TBL is also related to the descriptors of risk and equitable, ethical and sustainable practice presented earlier in this section of the report.

Limitations and key assumptions

The research and its findings are positioned within explicit boundaries. Whilst grounded in the discipline and business of international education and university practice in Australia, the primary focus of the research is one specific cohort of fee-paying Sub-continental undergraduate students enrolled in a Bachelor of Accounting degree in the city campus of a regional Australian university. A series of assumptions that underpin construction of the research instruments and the methodology for interpretation of results is discussed in Chapter 3.

Implicitly, the appreciation of difference in relation to issues in language and pedagogy for international students and their domestic counterparts, and the other difficulties encountered by undergraduate students may be more generalisable across the undergraduate student population in Australia. Similarly, issues relating to the potential to consider improved customer relationship management may also be applicable to other universities in Australia.

The survey questionnaire administered to Sub-continental students in the present study could at a later date be completed by students of other nationalities, and possibly serve as a source for comparative analysis. The questionnaire was therefore written to allow for such data collection across the undergraduate cohort, and to avoid any potential issues of exclusion of one group of students in favour of another in the research.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundations for the report. It introduced the research problem of the expectations of undergraduate international students in an Australian university, and the research questions and hypotheses. Then the research was justified in terms of its importance to the Australian economy and education, and the value in exploring issues relating to the twin aspects of business in international education and the expectations of international students in Australian universities. Definitions were presented, and an interpretive symposium research methodology combined with activity theory was briefly described and justified. The structure and an outline of the report were then presented, and the limitations of the research outcome identified.

On these foundations, the subsequent sections of this report offer a detailed description of the research. To position the research within a conceptual framework of major theoretical perspectives, and to create a platform for selecting and justifying the research methodology, Chapter 2 presents a selective mapping of the discourse community in international education.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents a selective mapping of the discourse community in international education. The intention is to position the research within a conceptual framework that relates it to recent key writings in the area and to the major theoretical perspectives that are explored during collection, analysis and interpretation of the data used to address the research questions. The rationale for constructing the approach used in this chapter is discussed in Chapter 1.

The research explores the relationship between pedagogy and the business of international education in Australia. It is grounded in the development in Australia of a significant market in international education, coupled with national policy agendas that have, in effect, started the privatisation of university education. These developments have brought into sharp focus the issue of commercial sustainability in education and its effect on good practice.

This chapter thus aims to build a theoretical foundation for the research. It reviews relevant literature to identify an opening for new learning and thus lead to consideration of the research methodology described in Chapter 3.

Within the environment in which this research is conducted, the discourse community in international education engages three broad communities of practice, or areas of interest:

- The first is the academy, a university in the traditional mould (Patterson 1997) attempting to balance competing imperatives and values. The academy experiences a tension between local and national strategic policy agendas and their impact on the community. There is also tension in coming to terms with developments in globalisation, international education, changing cultures, as well as issues in lifelong learning. As universities struggle to come to terms with that ‘product of learning’ (Barker, 2008; McWilliam, 2008) and the desirability or otherwise of mixing business and education, the actors find themselves conversationalists in a ‘fractured discourse’ (Harman 2005, p.119) of diverse, competing, and yet potentially equally valid constructs.
- Secondly, there is the practice of international education, constituted by players in the academy and others in the profession of international education who find themselves attempting to reconcile conflicting values and paradigms, such as fee-paying students who demand recognition as ‘consumers’ (see White 2007, p.603 for example) and attempting to meet those ‘student-consumer’ needs (Yeo 2008) whilst remaining true to ethical and equitable principles in pedagogy. And, at the same time, these players are also drawn into a business-driven policy agenda.
- The third field of play is the university as workplace, in which university administrators and business people use a business process focus (McAdam & Bickerstaff 2001) to source through sales and marketing activities the finances to support effective teaching and learning conducted to a minimum cost model (Alavi & Yoo 1995; Sohail, Daud & Rajadurai 2006), whilst also remaining aware of the needs of “consumer-students”, some of whom (in their “traditional” role of “student” as well as “consumer”) are sometimes at academic risk, and thereby threaten the reputation of the university and its business.

Within this environment, university policies aim to ethically and equitably satisfy the expectations of undergraduate students in the university, in a sustainable educational and business context. In other words the environment, whilst positioned as one in which good practice should drive good business, is also one of conflicting and

competing messages and constant change. This overall context to the research is represented in Figure 3 below:

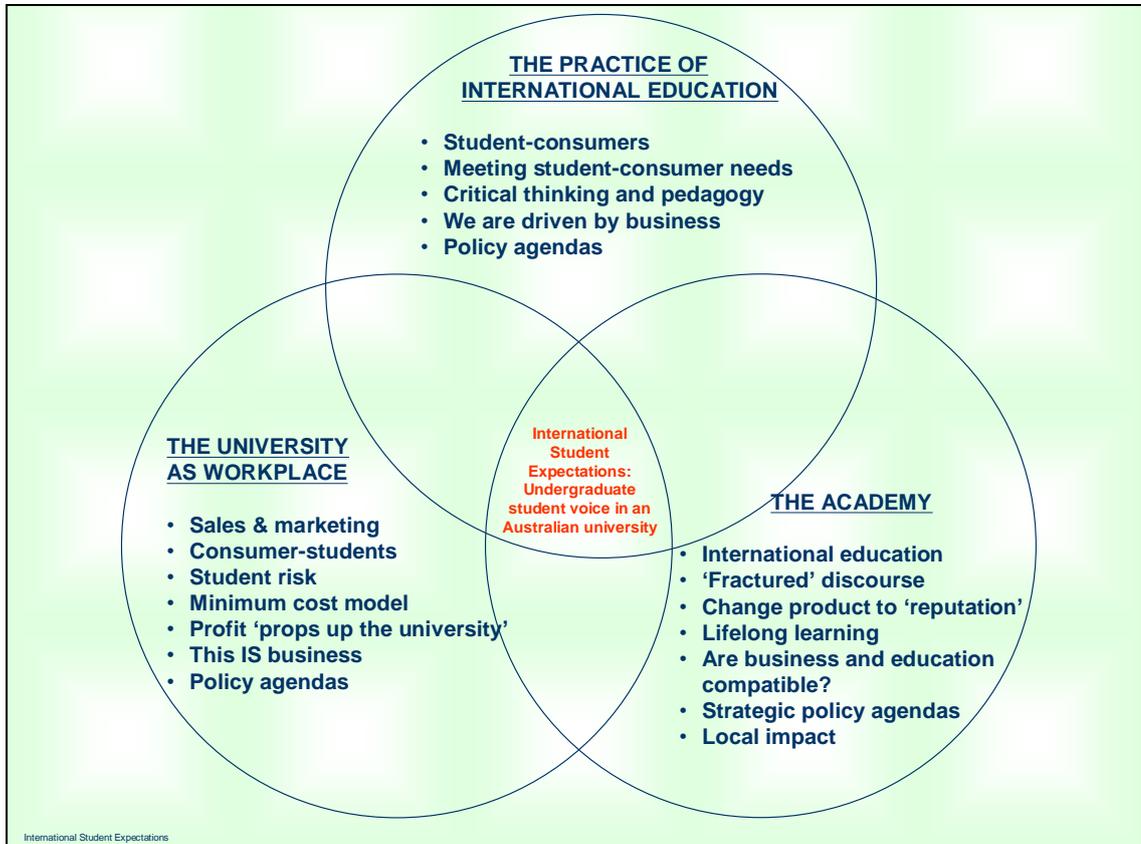


Figure 3: Positioning the research within the discourse community of international education (adapted from Lee, Green & Brennan 2000)

Thus engaged, these three broad communities of practice can more formally be considered as representing four major theoretical perspectives in the discourse of international education as described in the following sections of this chapter.

Major theoretical perspectives

The research is embedded in four major theoretical perspectives in the discourse of international education. The literature reviewed in this chapter therefore traverses these four theoretical fields of:

1. International education and the globalisation effect on education generally,

2. Literacy and critical thinking as they relate to the issues faced by international students, lecturers and supervisors of higher education in Australia,
3. Commercial practice in international education in Australia, and
4. The policy agendas surrounding international education in Australia.

At first, these four theoretical fields may appear to constitute disparate and potentially conflicting themes in the discourse of international education. Yet, when considered as four lenses that might provide an insight into the parent discipline of international education, they produce an interconnected knowledge base and factors for later analysis. The results of such analysis might then be applied to questions that arise relating to the risks in both business and learning that may need to be managed. The result could be an expression in terms of an equitable, ethical and sustainable 'triple bottom line' (as in CPA Australia 2004; Florida 2002, for example) for the Australian business in international education, on a bottom line basis that is broader than just academic reputation or financial performance alone (Foran, Lenzen & Dey 2005, p.9).

The approach taken in the review is to use the literature identified in each of these four lenses to open two conversations that produce tension and a pressure for change that is worthy of investigation:

- One conversation relates to risk in business, and the ways in which a business imperative might dominate educational values.
- The other conversation relates to risk in learning and its effect on commercial 'pull' in the international market when academic values dominate business controls and cost management.

Exploring the way in which these twin conversations of risk are played out in one university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students allows for the consideration of what changes might be appropriate in order to realise the economic benefits to be gained from a triple bottom line approach to sustainable practices in business and education.

The issue arising in the construction of this review is the need to attempt an alignment in the discourse that demonstrates the interconnectivity between immediate disciplines that has arisen through the commercialisation of education in Australia. Exploring these four disciplines concurrently provides an understanding of the way in which knowledge is acquired and used in education, the practice of educators in an international context, and the commercial and policy aspects of the discourse in international education.

The outcome of the review serves to link the research problem described in Chapter 1 with the wider body of knowledge in the field of international education. The review thus represents a trans-disciplinary perspective of teaching in international education as a business in which the issue of international students' learning expectations, when viewed from the perspective of teachers in an Australian university today, is problematised.

The foundation that is created in the literature review is thus a means to the end of creating research questions that link the research problem of international students' expectations to the wider body of knowledge in international education. A fundamental issue to be addressed is thus:

- What does it mean when commerce and education interact?

A classification model of the research question

Perry (1995, pp.14-15) suggests that a model or 'mind map' be constructed to show the relationships between a research study and its immediate discipline within the broader construct of the subject's parent discipline. A classification model of the research question for this report is constructed by adapting to social science the business construct of a 'competing values framework' (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983). This approach is similar to that of Cameron and Quinn (1999) which adapted the competing values framework into a model for diagnosing and changing organisational culture. One strength of this approach is that it will bring to the education debate information and knowledge from the leadership literature that to

date has not widely been used. As urged by the Carrick Institute, such an approach can represent an attempt to ‘move beyond the (educational) literature to an understanding ... based on empirical evidence’ (2006, p.6).

The competing values framework is so called because the criteria within the framework at first seem to carry conflicting messages, yet the resulting model can theoretically derive ‘a hypothetical rather than an empirical statement about the perceptual understructure’ (Quinn 1984, p.16) of an issue. The framework presents a juxtaposed spatial model that can help to organise the literature and indicate the concepts most central to the research effort. Positioning the various aspects of the literature within the framework demonstrates that they are in fact ‘analogues of one another and thus provide an overarching framework to guide subsequent investigation’ (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983, p.363). The framework thus represents an attempt to ascribe some degree of certainty or fixed points in a dynamic and often turbulent discourse. The framework acknowledges both consensus and disagreement in the various competing lenses of the discourse, and thereby helps to ‘clarify the interface’ (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983, p.374) within and between the conversations that represent the immediate and parent disciplines that constitute this study.

To help put some degree of alignment into an apparently disparate and changing environment, the framework has been utilised here to develop a series of primary and secondary dimensions which relates to the three broad communities described in Figure 3. Such a framework allows for consideration of the four different, competing, and yet complementary, major theoretical perspectives in the discourse of international education.

Two mutually perpendicular axes are constructed to produce the primary dimensions in the situation. Intersection of the axes creates four quadrants, or “lenses”, each of which represents a differing perspective on the issue. Each lens organises and categorises a number of key issues relevant to its theoretical perspective. Understanding these lenses and their interaction with each other is aided by labeling the interactions as “conversations” in the discourse. The conversations represent secondary dimensions in the situation. The conversations connote the main

characteristic of the issues common to each pair of lenses, and the concerns that typify them.

The interaction of elements in the four quadrants therefore produces the two dimensions that are the conversations in the research topic, which in turn generate the research questions. Development of the two conversations thus positions the research within a conceptual framework. The two conversations are seen to produce tension, and a pressure for change that is worthy of exploration. When the conversations are positioned within a research context, two questions emerge that point to a methodology for exploring the expectations of international students in an Australian university.

In this research, an adaptation of the competing values framework thus represents one way of understanding the interaction of the four major theoretical perspectives, and the way in which they generate the research questions. Figure 4 below thus aims to show the relationships between the research and its immediate discipline within the broader construct of the parent discipline of international education:

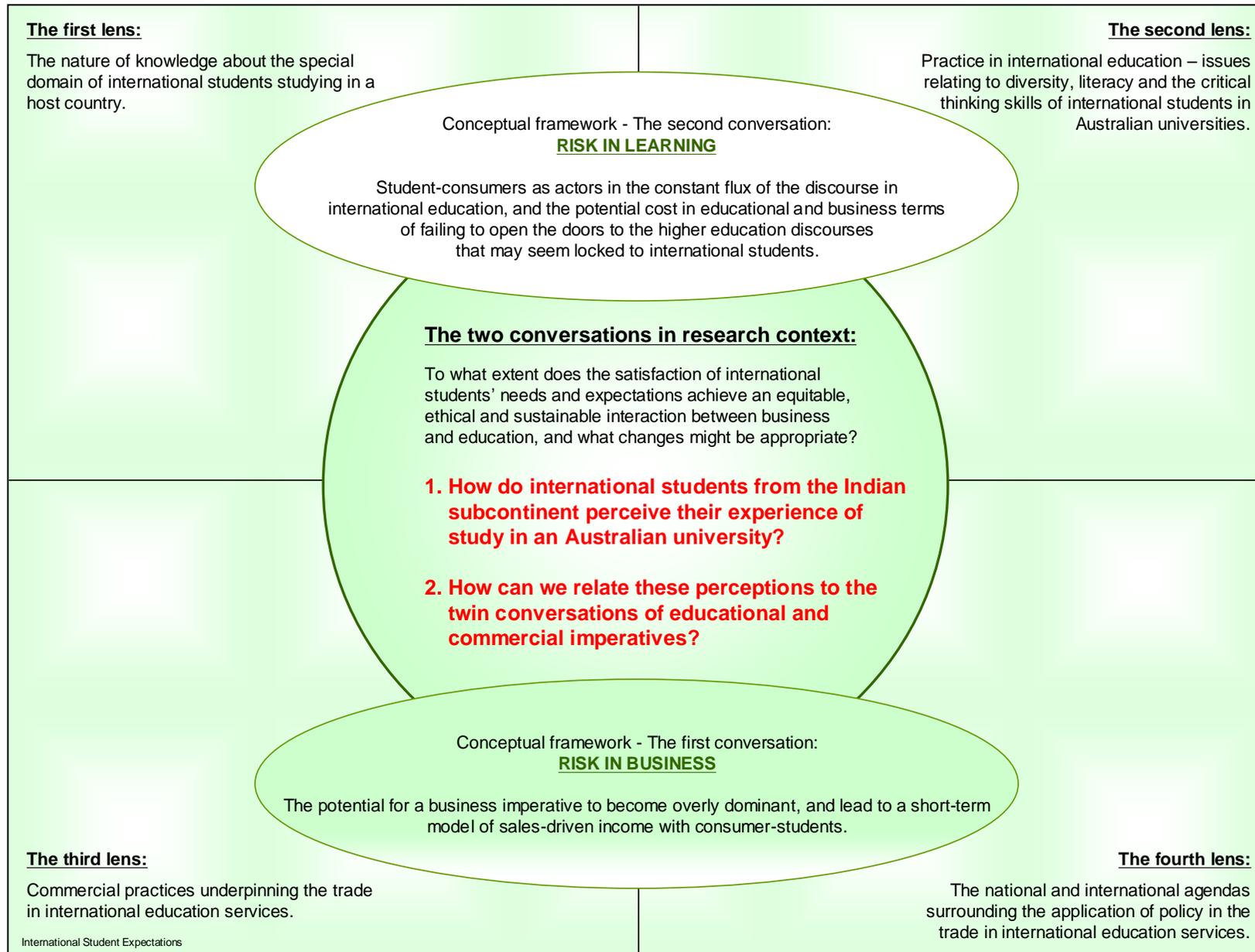


Figure 4: A classification model of the research question (adapted from Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983; Harman 2005)

Key studies

To further investigate the interactions within and between the research disciplines represented in the analytical model in Figure 4, this section presents a review of key studies in the recent literature that underpins the research.

Four lenses to view the discourse in international education

The research effort is underpinned by four major theoretical perspectives on international education. As noted earlier in this chapter:

- The first theoretical field of international education and the globalisation effect on education relates to the nature of knowledge about the special domain of international students studying in a host country.
- The second theoretical field relates to issues in diversity, literacy, and the critical thinking skills of international students in Australian universities.
- The third theoretical perspective focuses on the commercial practice underpinning the trade in education services.
- And the fourth perspective revolves around the national and international agendas surrounding the application of policy in the trade in international education services.

Interpreting a ‘fractured discourse’

In order to attempt this interpretation of the prime research question of what it might mean when commercial values interact with education, it was necessary to first invert the above sequence of theoretical perspectives in order to appreciate the significance of commercial enterprise and its consequent impact on pedagogic practice. The challenge has been that the four major theoretical perspectives, whilst offering a rich seam of knowledge ready to be mined, together present something of a ‘fractured’ discourse in international education.

The approach taken here builds upon the earlier efforts of Harman (2005, p.119), who offers a critical review of scholarly and professional literature produced since 1990 on the internationalisation of higher education in Australia. Of particular significance is the insight provided into the multiple interpretations of the term 'international education', which includes activities as diverse as: the international movement of students, academics and researchers; the internationalisation of higher education in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, globalisation, politics and power; as well as the commercial import and export of education that underpins this research.

The critical approach of Harman (2005) provides useful insight into the relative lack of meaningful interaction between scholars and practitioners across the differing domains in the discourse community of international education. The relevance of this 'fracture' (Harman 2005, p.119) is to bring into sharp focus a context within which this research is conducted.

The first lens: policy, and its effect on business and practice

The first theoretical perspective, or lens, to be considered explores national and international agendas surrounding the application of policy in the trade in international education services (as for example in Marginson 1993; Eisenberg 1997; Ball 1998; Association of University Teachers & Development Education Association 1999; Anyaso 2003; Association of Commonwealth Universities & Observatory on Borderless Higher Education 2004).

That discourse is laden with symbolism and rhetoric. For example, and reflecting the poignant anxiety of many observers, Anyaso (2003), editor of *Black Issues in Higher Education*, stimulates an emotive agenda for international education by positioning it in an environment 'charged by terrorism and high-tech saber rattling ever since Sept. 11, 2001' (p.4). Others support the need to sensitively understand cultures other than one's own and increase 'awareness, dialogue and acceptance' (Battle-Walters 2003, p.74). Travel and study abroad as 'the daily work of democracy' (Williams 2004, p.36) is seen to underpin international education as a force for good that challenges stereotypes and preconceived notions that embed ignorance and intolerance. Such dialogue is considered from a postcolonial perspective by writers, such as McCarthy,

Giardina, Harewood, and Park (2003) for example, who develop the argument that educators in the field need to pay special attention to developments in human migration, globalisation, and the rapid movements of cultural and economic capital. Practitioners and students are depicted as functioning in a plurality of social and cultural sites and practices that can destabilise the culture and identity of both the organisation and the individual. McCarthy et al. therefore position international education as a ‘wedding of opposites’ (p.460) capable of creating ‘a radical, progressive democracy premised on the basic values of love, care, and equality for all humanity’ (p.449). Marginson and colleagues (in Marginson et al. 2010) describe this as:

extend[ing] liberal humanism beyond national borders to globally mobile populations; and to support a cosmopolitan international education that facilitates intercultural exchange on equal terms between the West, emerging Asia and the developing world, helping to usher in the future global society.

(Marginson et al. 2010, preface)

Thus positioned on the one hand within a context of emotive but socially progressive and seemingly desirable values, the ‘policy of international education’ also elicits economic attention within nations as a strategy for capacity building and revenue. For example, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (2004) sees in international education services a model for countries to build capacity in tertiary education, and to enhance economic development, provided that appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks can be introduced. Linking policy to commerce, Knight (2003) reflects on GATS (World Trade Organization 2004), and the positioning of countries to defend and build their own education markets in the face of global competition. Whilst Knight notes that the majority of nations have yet to declare any formal position on a joint agreement (see, for example, the stance adopted by Australia, in World Trade Organization 2001), there remains a wide range of opinion about the possible benefits and risks in trade in international education.

Nevertheless, higher education is now perceived as operating within a global and multi-cultural arena (Association of University Teachers & Development Education Association 1999) that is in a state of constant flux. It is suggested that in an era of

instant global communications in which many higher education institutions see themselves as international bodies (Mazzarol & Soutar 2008; Rivza & Teichler 2007), the role of academics now includes the need to understand the causes of injustice and inequality in the world and to ‘work towards a universal goal of just and equitable sustainable development’ (Association of University Teachers & Development Education Association 1999, p.3) and ‘global citizenry’ (Gacel-Ávila 2005, p.121).

Such an appreciation is echoed by others. Ball (1998) for example considers international education as a policy ‘problem’ for contemporary social, political and economic practitioners. Eisenberg also suggests that educators are agents of change needing to resolve the ‘conflict and friction that arise when both educators’ and students’ expectations concerning classroom behaviour and outcomes have not adjusted to the shift in pedagogical philosophy and associated techniques’ (Eisenberg 1997, p.328). Additionally, Eisenberg points to the pedagogic implications of changing student populations and their impact on educators who do not necessarily understand the goals, hopes, and expectations of this new demographic. Eisenberg sees a solution in educators more actively learning about their students, integrating such knowledge into their teaching strategies, and creating realistic expectations both for students and themselves.

Exploring the discourse within an Australian context, Marginson (1993, 1997a, 1999, 2002; Marginson & Rhoades 2002; Marginson 2005a; Marginson & Sawir 2005; Marginson 2007; Marginson & Wende 2007) has provided provocative commentary on the impact of international education and its link to policy in Australia. Particularly, Marginson reflects on the impact of international education on higher education policy in Australia and its link to the so-called ‘Nelson reforms (DEST 2003)’, university fees for domestic and international students (see also Illing 2005; Jobson & Burke 2005c); the political shift to voluntary student unionism (Jackson 1999; Marginson 2001, 2005c); and the subsequent loss of revenue to university associations, ‘quality auditing’, and fears of a possible ‘ranking’ of universities (AUQA 2004; Jobson 2005b; Marginson 2005b).

The effective creation of teaching-intensive⁵ practice within some universities that cater primarily to international students has introduced wide-ranging change in the landscape of university education in Australia. Marginson (2005a) fears that such endeavour to extract maximum profit from international education impacts adversely on the nature and quality of education itself. Others, such as Marshall (1998) for example, venture radically further, fearing that university education in Australia will eventually become, in effect, 'privatised' (Pick 2006, p.229). If such a situation develops, then all participants in the field will need to embrace a commercial reality of the business of education (for example, see Marginson 2002a; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka 2006).

The field of policy and trade agendas in international education is an area that receives research attention in its own right. For example, Sidhu (2003) provides a doctoral dissertation on the globalisation of international education using analysis of one area of specialised interest in the discourse to add a social perspective to the construct of the international student functioning in a network of governmental and institutional practices that are reshaping the contemporary international university.

Ahern (2009) discusses the impact of the transformation of education into a trade commodity in Australia. When trade in education is combined with immigration needs, Ahern identifies the phenomenon of 'visa factories', and a practice of providing minimal tuition at minimal cost for students seeking to prolong their stay in Australia. Significantly, Ahern concludes that with Australian universities dependent on funds generated by international students, they are now financially vulnerable to changes in the global market. Secondly, Ahern suggests, universities in many cases are providing an (unintended) immigration service for students rather than an educational one. In such an environment:

Universities are now vulnerable to Australian policy decisions in both education and immigration, as well as being vulnerable to foreign currency fluctuations or other changes affecting the global education market. ... When the two are closely linked, the trade in education services becomes, at least for some participants, a trade in permanent residency. Permanent residency is treated as a highly valued

⁵ See Definitions, page 22.

commodity. It is so desirable, such a great prize, in fact, that it skews the entire trade in education services.

(Ahern 2009, p.10)

At the level of national policy, Schofield (2003) reported on submissions to a governmental discussion paper on plans for the establishment of an Australian National Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (see ALTC 2009; DEEWR 2009a). Using a process of ‘headlining’ diverse opinions, Schofield was able to distil from the conversations in more than 50 separate submissions a ‘critical imperative’ in Australia to develop the ability to predict and prepare for future teaching and learning within an international perspective.

Two challenges emerge from this reading of the agendas of policy and trade in international education. The first relates to the often provocative and emotive language arising in the discourse, understandably stimulated by the varying political agendas of participants who argue for change on a social level. In order to dispassionately distil meaning from the discourse for later examination alongside findings from other immediate disciplines in the field, it was deemed necessary to ‘desensitise’ the righteous emotion found in the literature. The methodology chosen for that action was to confine the issues investigated to summary “heads of findings” as used by Schofield (2003).

The matter of emotive language also links to the second challenge emerging from the reading of agendas in policy and trade in international education. That second challenge is to link the results of research in this field of policy and trade to comparable learning that arises from the second theoretical perspective of commercial practices. The intent in this review is to ask if the two lenses, considered together, might produce a cohesive ‘conversation’ that identifies a construct of ‘risk’ in the business of international education.

This review of the first of four lenses for the theoretical appreciation of the field in which the research is positioned also poses an issue in research methodology. Kemmis (2000, p.6) suggests an interpretation of practice that is constituted in social and material relationships. The rich diversity of opinion evident in the national and international agendas surrounding the application of policy in the trade in

international education services is seen to be grounded in relationships, and suggested candidacy for a 'symposium' research methodology (Kemmis 2000, p.14) in order to draw out some common attributes in the discourse for comparison with the other theoretical lenses. The symposium methodological approach is further discussed later in this chapter.

The second lens: commercial practices in international education

The second theoretical perspective to be investigated, commercial practices in international education, has been discussed by many observers (such as, for example, Deumert et al. 2005b; Marginson 2001; Marks 2000; Mazzarol 1997; Mazzarol & Soutar 2001; Mazzarol, Soutar & Seng 2003). This second, commercial, lens includes consideration of the cost to universities and students of adapting to the new domain of the Australian higher education context.

Considering firstly the trade in international education services, one is confronted with a worldwide, multi-billion dollar industry (Knight 2002; Patrinos 2000). Across the world suggest Bourke and Coppel (2005, p.ix), significant numbers of people choose to undertake an international education: since 1980, the number of students enrolled outside their home country in courses of higher education has almost doubled. In 2002, there were around 1.8 million international students, and projections suggested that world demand for international higher education could increase to eight million student places by 2025 (Böhm et al. 2002).

In Australia, that trade directly generates around \$6 billion annually, or 4% of Australia's export earnings (Deumert et al. 2005; DFAT 2005; Gillard 2009). By 2008, the annual intake was 324,215 commencements by international students in Australia, representing an annual increase of 24.8 percent on 2007 figures (AEI 2009a). In the financial year to June 2008, the net export value of education services, including expenditure by international students in Australia and exports from other education operations, returned an annual increase of 23.4% to \$14.2 billion (DFAT 2008, p.3). Education services that financial year ranked as the third largest export category earner behind coal and iron ore, and ahead of services in personal travel and professional services and the merchandise trade categories of gold, crude petroleum

and aluminium. Each international student (including their friends and family visitors) contributed an average of \$28,921 in value added to the Australian economy and generated 0.29 full-time equivalent jobs (Access Economics 2009, p.i).

In a current global 'downturn of uncertain severity and duration' (IMF 2009a, p.1) in which major advanced economies are in recession or slowing abruptly (Ellis 2009; Rudd 2008), the international education sector in Australia appears temporarily robust. Year-to-date data for 2009 has indicated sector growth of 20.8% during the crisis year to March 2009 (AEI 2009b), suggesting that as world growth starts to re-emerge in 2010 as projected (IMF 2009b, p.xii), the earlier market predictions of Böhm and colleagues (2002) might still eventuate. One reason, posits Ahern (2009, pp.6-7), may well be the attractiveness of Australia to international students generated by the policy link between education and skilled migration through the government's Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL, see Phillips 2006).

In this environment, China and the Sub-continent have been the main sources of international students in Australia, respectively providing around 25% and 15% of the annual intake of students (AEI 2009b; AVCC 2005b, p.47). Some commentators have warned (for example, Birrell 2005a) that increased education availability in China, coupled with the increasing cost of Australian services and a potential tightening in the Australian labour market could affect skilled immigration quotas and hence reduce international education enrolments. Despite this, it is predicted that growth in international education will continue over the next decade (AEI 2009a; Australian Trade Commission 2004; Böhm 2002; Lenn 2001). Of particular relevance to the present research, the trade is expected to increasingly satisfy the growing and unmet demand for higher education services in the Sub-continent. Whilst Antony (2005, pp.4-5) observes that the demand for higher education in the Sub-continent is 'not increasing much', Australian research (for example Birrell 2005b, p.6; Hugo 2008) records that 98% of Sub-continental students in Australia intend to apply for skilled immigration category permanent residence after graduation from an onshore university.

The practice of higher education for full fee paying international students in Australian universities is therefore a significant commercial enterprise and linked to national policy in migration. The practice is now also vital to the continued viability of some institutions (Allport 2007, 2008). In the extreme case of a regional university such as Central Queensland University, profit from international operations has been described as necessarily ‘propping up the whole show’ (CQU former deputy vice chancellor Professor Jim Mienczakowski, cited in Jobson 2005a, n.p.). In such a teaching-intensive sector of a university campus (USQ 2005), return on investment stems from competitive advantage gained through the generic business strategy of cost leadership (Porter 1987). Essentially, this means that both budget and business performance depends almost exclusively on measurement of the twin indicators of income generated by international student fees and the cost of operations. Continued high sales coupled with only essential and minimal expenditure are therefore the principal drivers in what is essentially seen as a business agenda (Pick 2006).

In such an environment of ‘business first’, the opportunity and resources to deliver quality educational services and compliance with the guidelines for university and international operations (for example, CQU 2005a, 2005b) has become of necessity a function of, and dependent upon, successful and sustained marketing. The commercial imperative is underscored by the emergence into the market of management companies that provide international higher education services on behalf of universities. One, for example, is the holding entity for the business partner of Central Queensland University. That company describes its market position as ‘the development of pre-packaged educational products and [is] a global distributor of pre-packaged curriculum. Its principal focus is on the development of strategic partnerships with educational institutions and authorities’ (Campus Group 2005, n.p.).

The distribution and marketing of education services is therefore now well understood by the commercial sector within university operations (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka 2006). Research by Mazzarol (1997), for example, identified distinctive business competencies that can provide institutions with a source of sustainable competitive advantage in the market. Mazzarol demonstrated that a generic

enterprise strategy of differentiation and the calculated selection of a unique market entry strategy are significant determinants of success. As a marketer, Mazzarol also identified the quality of image, market profile, coalition formation and forward integration into the export channel as likely strengtheners of such competitive advantage. These competencies (summarised in Mazzarol 1997, p.xiv) were further seen to provide potential barriers to imitation by competitors, and to 'produce isolating mechanisms which assist the institution to sustain a competitive edge'.

Significantly, such research is focused on marketing the business of higher education in Australia. As will be discussed later in this chapter, issues related to other theoretical perspectives that underpin the present research, the lenses of knowledge in international education and student experiences or difficulties in literacy and critical thinking for example, are subjugated in the second lens of commercial practice to the marketing imperative.

However, whilst the trade in international education might be high on the agenda of national policy makers, and represents around 24% of university income in Australia (AVCC 2005a, p.11; DEST 2008), higher education managers and academics at the institutional level have yet to fully appreciate the implications (Marginson 2005b) or embrace the commercial imperative of the massification or commodification of education in the larger global economic and social setting (Freedman 2009). They have not as yet perceived that the trade affects the way we teach, in terms of appropriate pedagogy when interacting with international students in Australia, nor has practice demonstrated a more informed appreciation of differences in student learning styles (Coffield et al. 2004). Moreover, only partially explored is the effect that lack of appreciation of these issues might have on market sustainability (see, for example, Caruana, Ramaseshan & Ewing 1998).

The business agenda that drives international education has therefore resulted in change in the nature of university operations. Such change, alongside other political reforms in Australian education has been labelled by Marginson (2005b) as 'epochal', and stimulated in the first instance by federal government budget cuts in 1996 which stimulated the overseas marketing of education, thus mirroring wider

international practice (Sharkey & Beeman 2008). To observers such as Marginson, this perspective is similar to that of the marketers of international education. Marginson is critical of Australian policy-makers, whom he describes as ‘economic determinists ... [focused on] ...the gains to be realised in manipulating university fees, finances and structures at the expense of social and educational growth’ (Marginson 2005a, p.9).

The first conversation: ‘risk in business’

Two theoretical perspectives or lenses have been considered so far in this review. They are the national and international agendas surrounding the application of policy in the trade in international education services, and the commercial practices that underpin the business of international education. One question in the research is:

- Could these two theoretical perspectives constitute a single conversation?

If so, then the integrated outcome could point to determinants of ‘risk’ in business. The issue to be explored would be the potential for a business imperative to become overly dominant, and lead to a short-term model of sales-driven income, with ‘consumers as students’ (Gabbott, Movondo & Tsarenko 2002).

In such a short-term business scenario, educational output could possibly decline into unsustainable ‘bargain basement volume maximisation strategies, designed to generate efficiencies from product standardisation and scale’ (Marginson 2005a, p.9). The end result could be the qualification-focused, so-called ‘degree mills’ lamented by some contemporary observers (for example, Ahern 2009; Jobson & Burke 2005a; Jobson & Burke 2005c). For example, an indication of such a scenario is contained in the observations of Birrell (2005b) who suggests that changes in Australian immigration policy lead to changes in study preferences by international students, which in turn influence changes in course offerings by universities concentrating on this market. Another clue is evident in Maslen (2005), who noted the potential for Australian universities to move international operations offshore by 2010 in response to overseas governments encouraging foreign providers to service a large, unsatisfied demand in home countries. A third indicator of risk could be

changes in the link between Australian immigration and onshore international education enrolments should the levels of skilled migration be reduced (for example, Coorey 2009; Narushima 2009; DIAC 2010b). The business of international education could therefore be deemed at risk when changes in policy enter the conversation.

Understanding the way in which the conversation of risk in business is played out in practice might lead to a plan to mitigate such risk. This could be particularly so if issues related to the perspectives of knowledge in international education and student experiences are incorporated into the marketing imperative. The outcome might lead to an alternative and as yet little tested scenario. This could be to consider a longer-term perspective in which the university's "product" is repositioned to become "stature" or "reputation" engendered through "learning".

For example, Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003, p.324) have noted that international students choose to study in the UK for a number of reasons. Foremost is educational standard and wide recognition of qualifications, but also important are ease of university admission and immigration procedures, finding employment during and after study, and the costs of living, accommodation, safety and culture. They conclude that reputational factors such as quality service and care offer the best promotional strategy to attract more international students. Similar student experiences are also reported by Sung and Yang in South Korea (Sung & Yang 2009), whose research further suggests that universities could cultivate a reputational relationship with students through a focus on the quality of students' educational experience.

O'Connell and Perkins (2003) position this construct of reputation differently, describing it as 'more a function of expenditure per student and student quality than tradition and endowment' (O'Connell & Perkins 2003, p.499). Noting therefore that such reputation is based on students' experience rather than an institution's history alone, it would appear that building the intangible resource of reputation (termed a "product of learning" in this report) could be vital to a university's overall success (see for example McMillan & Joshi 1997, p.84) and the students' perception of

service quality and ‘good value’ in an international education experience in Australia (Arambewela 2003; Arambewela & Hall 2006; O’Neill 2003; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1991, 1993).

Repositioning the university product in terms of reputation could thus replace the more simplistic notion of ‘qualification’ that some observers presently associate with the award of a university degree. Viewed through such a lens, to nurture the interests and academic success of students would retain educational values in prominence. But in a dominant commercial construct of consumer-students, is this alternative sustainable? Quantifying and investigating the conversation of “risk in business” therefore forms one theoretical context for this research.

The third lens: practice in international education

From a consideration of the twin perspectives of policy and business in international education and the conversation they generate of ‘risk in business’, this review next approaches a third immediate theoretical discipline, the practice of higher education in the international context. Exploring this topic required an investigation of three broad issues. These are:

- The diversity, literacy, and critical thinking skills of international students in Australian universities (explored by Hellmundt, Rifkin & Fox 1998; Hellmundt 2000; Willis 2000; Hellmundt 2001; Hartig-Prym 2005).
- The perceptions and experiences of international students and their lecturers in teaching and learning in an intercultural context (for example Volet 2001; Volet & Ang 1998).
- The impact of this intercultural context on student retention (for example Alred, Byram & Fleming 2003; Vandermensbrughe 2004).

Various studies (for example, Meiras 2002; Sinclair-Jones 1996) also suggest that the field of higher education within the context of internationalisation is an area that receives attention in its own right. Focused primarily on the transformation of universities into a uniform structure by John Dawkins, Minister for Employment, Education and Training in the Hawke Labour Government (recounted in detail by,

for example, Sinclair-Jones 1996), the case study research of Meiras (2002, in particular) identifies a significant movement in university positioning aimed at ‘improving Australia's place in the highly competitive international economy’ (Meiras 2002, p.1). Meiras constructs an argument to identify in these ‘discourses in international education’ an opportunity to better understand the expectations and needs of international students. The ongoing transformation of the higher education sector, and a response to needs in the ‘third wave of internationalisation’ is also evident in contemporary national policy (Bradley et al. 2008, p.xv).

Addressing the literacy needs of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, for example, has been explored by Willis (2000), and the success of culturally sensitive linguistic interventions to aid better critical thinking and learning by international students in an Australian setting has been documented by Hartig-Prym (2005). Further, extensive research by Hellmundt and others (for example Hellmundt, Rifkin & Fox 1998; Hellmundt 2000; Hellmundt 2001) has demonstrated the need to practice linguistic sensitivity and recognise the requirement for ‘student voice’ to be heard in planning pedagogic practice with international students. Such findings reinforce the twin findings of ‘opportunity and challenge’ identified in earlier research (for example, Browne, Dale & Australian College of Education 1989).

There has developed a common view of Asian students as lacking in critical thinking (Ballard & Clanchy 1997; Ramanathan & Kaplan 1996). However, this has been criticised by Vandermensbrugge (2004, p.420) who advocates more clarity and openness about learning practices to overcome the ‘unbearable vagueness’ in our use of critical thinking in classrooms. If Australia wants to continue to attract international students and be considered as offering a truly international education program, Vandermensbrugge (2004, p.421) argues that there is a need for academic staff to develop intercultural competencies, and that critical thinking must be understood by placing it into the context in which it is used. The ‘western’ construct of critical thinking used in Australian institutions, she argues, disadvantages many international students, who often have not acquired the cultural competencies necessary to read in context, and who may be unfamiliar with ‘our’ concept of critical thinking as a learning experience.

Additionally, Volet (2001, for example) also takes exception to the stereotypical view of international students. Her work on the significance of mutual and reciprocal influences in student motivation for learning suggests culturally effective and collaborative learning can happen in student-led groups at university when these groups are culturally diverse (Volet & Ang 1998).

Snider (2003) is another contemporary researcher investigating the experiences of full-fee paying international students. Aware that university staff often encourage students experiencing difficulties in coping with cultural and emotional issues to seek university counselling services, Snider investigated the under-utilisation of counselling services by East Asian students. Relating levels of individualism and collectivism to attitudes towards counselling, the findings of Snider's study indicated that individuals endorsing collectivistic attitudes expressed a strong preference for counsellors who were direct, expert-like, and helped consumers seek concrete solutions to their problems. This represented a situation generally opposite to the services currently provided.

The practice of higher education in Australia can thus be seen as 'international' in nature. Therefore, attempts to better understand the values and issues inherent in the diversity, literacy, and critical thinking of international students in Australian universities could reasonably be expected to be heard across the entire discourse.

A need to better 'listen' to intercultural experiences and share this knowledge across the field is identified by others researching education in the international context (an issue explored, for example, by Alred, Byram & Fleming 2003; Bell 2002). Yet little meaningful research exists to identify what constitute the determinants of value in education from the viewpoint of international student customers (see, for example, Orr 2000), or what influences customers when choosing between competing countries or institutions in the international marketplace. Saffu and Mammam (1999) go so far as to infer that the current Australian strategic alliance network that constitutes the university-owned marketing entity IDP Australia (see IDP Australia 2005) may even hinder this process.

For their part, IDP Australia (2004) in researching the perceived quality of international education programs has so far identified ‘quality of education’ in terms of ‘professional international recognition of qualifications’ as the prime determinant of choice by students when selecting an international education provider. In contrast, Kemp, Madden and Simpson (1998), and Michael, Armstrong and King (2003) have suggested that touristic considerations alone predominate in the buying decision of students. Both these sets of findings tend to support the ‘consumers as students’ perception in the conversation of ‘risk in business’ discussed earlier in this review.

The third immediate theoretical discipline underpinning this research, the lens of practice in international education, has illuminated what presents as a lively discussion in the discourse of international education. The need for considering the principle of educational reputation as the “product of learning” in the extensive business of international education in Australia tends therefore to appear self-evident, and worthy of further investigation. The third lens thus represents an opportunity to better understand through practical research the expectations and needs of international students.

The fourth lens: the nature of knowledge

The fourth and final lens through which the field of this research is viewed centres on a better understanding of the nature of knowledge as it applies in the special domain of international students studying in a host country. This includes theories about learning, including activity theory (as, for example, in Engeström 1999; Ryder 2005), and social theory concerning education and training, citizenship and lifelong learning, and how these are informed by post-colonialism, liberalism, humanism, human capital and social capital theories, and theoretical work on institutionalised reflexivity and the risk society as a product of late modernity (for example, Beck 1986; Leiss 1992; Nonaka 1994).

This lens of ‘the nature of knowing’ draws on activity theory as a theoretical framework in order to better understand the construct of social transformation within which the research is positioned, and to open an understanding of the meaning of ‘practice’ in terms of the different views that can be taken in studying it (Kemmis &

McTaggart 2000; Reeves & Forde 2004). The lens illuminates the complexities that can arise when selecting a methodology for studying the practice of teaching and learning in a university (Beckett & Hager 2002). The literature reviewed here is used to point the way to studying activity from the level of policy to produce change at the point of enactment in the academy (Reeves & Forde 2004a; Ridley 2004), creating a multilayered social structure for the transformation of practice (Engeström 1999; Hellmundt 2000).

Activity theory presents an opportunity to build a bridge between theory and practice. The work of Engeström (1999) helps to position activity theory as a means by which a methodology might be created to bring together large-scale socioeconomic systems and local behaviour into a dualistic framework for 'reflective mastery of practice' (Engeström 1999, p.36). By viewing the activity of the research cohort in this report as 'a principle of explanation' (Engeström 1999, p.26), it has been possible to construct a methodology to investigate the dualities of business and pedagogy in international education.

In the context of this research, the key issue arising from Engeström's work is its immediate applicability to the present research scenario. Engeström (1999) and other writers such as (such as Ryder 2005, for example) provide a construct of activity theory as a means for understanding the social implications of education and training, citizenship and lifelong learning. By interweaving this new knowledge with the observations of others (Beck 1986; Leiss 1992; Nonaka 1994), it is possible to better appreciate the way in which social transformation is enacted in the field of international education.

As was the case in other perspectives considered in this review, this fourth lens of 'the nature of knowing' also includes Australian research in the field as it applies in the special domain of international students in a host country. In considering international education and international students from a postmodern perspective, Koehne (2006), for example, examines the conversations in international education as part of the discourse of power and knowledge inside western academies. Her analysis uses international students' insights as a way of deconstructing concepts that

are taken for granted, in order to expose how some voices become dominant, and others are subsumed. Koehne's concern is that existing discourses within the university make assumptions about international students, and tend to position them as:

needing help because they have 'deficiencies'; as needing to adjust and adapt and be assimilated, resulting in the loss of their voice(s); being positioned as Other, and, in the worst cases, being stereotyped as ethnic groups.

(Koehne 2004, p.13)

Koehne's work offers a valuable contemporary perspective on international education, and is drawn upon here to illuminate issues within the two conversations of 'risk' that are the basis for this research.

The second conversation: 'risk in learning'

Reflecting upon what emerges in the twin lenses of knowledge and practice in international education, it is possible to perceive a second, and parallel, conversation underway in the overall discourse. This second conversation relates to pedagogy and learning for international students studying in Australia.

One recurring theme in the conversation is a perceived lack of student language and study skills, particularly in the area of critical thinking, and the potential for more and better student support in this area (for example Egege & Kutieleh 2004; Kutieleh & Egege 2004; Paris 2003; Schoorman 1997; Tanaka 2002; Vandermensbrugge 2004).

To Ridley (2004, p.92) this theme of intellectual capital (or 'cultural nobility', as in Bordieu 1984, p.2) in the second conversation of the discourse of international education is in a constant state of flux. Its purpose, context and form are both constituted by what has gone before, and constitute what is to come in the future. Such an ongoing and evolving conversation produces mainly questions. For example:

- Does the discourse of academic discipline in Australian universities disadvantage international students who may not bring with them cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Hellmundt 2000) in terms of language, literacy and learning

experiences required to adapt to the new domain of the Australian higher education context?

- How can both students and teachers identify and access the higher education discourses that may seem blocked to international students (Meiras 2002)?
- What is the cost in educational and business terms of failing to provide such access?
- Would more successful learning by international students result in better retention (as suggested, for example, by Hunter 2002 and others)?

The second, parallel, conversation opened here thus relates to risk in a university's reputation as a product of learning experiences. In this report the term "risk in learning" is used to describe this second conversation.

As in any educational enterprise, problems and solutions arise in everyday practice. In international education, an ongoing theme in assessing students' performance has been the perception by academic staff of a lack of appropriate skills in learning and critical thinking that students bring to the academy (Cummings 1998; Egege & Kutieleh 2003; Samuelowicz 1987). A consequence has been a relatively high incidence of academic misconduct and student failure (see, for example, Anyanwu 2004). Whilst some researchers note the changing nature of students themselves, in terms of their diverse backgrounds, abilities, expectations and engagement with the learning process (James 2002, p.1) as a prime cause of misconduct, others (such as Bernardi et al. 2008, p.383, for example) attribute this generally to the higher competition for grades evident amongst international students in Australia. Still others (such as Devlin & Gray 2007, p.188) attribute misconduct more to a poor understanding of plagiarism, and view it as generally unintentional. Kidwell and Kent (2008, p.S8) identify collaborating on individual assignments as 'the most common form of academic misconduct', further noting that in group work, 'over two thirds of students did not believe free riding on group members was cheating' (p.S6).

The management effort associated with academic misconduct also represents an additional and unprofitable cost of production, both in the time consumed by the process and in the management support required to prosecute such claims (Brimble

& Stevenson-Clarke 2006, pp.35-36). Although the precise extent of this cost has yet to be determined, an alternative productivity could be assumed from the resources allocated to investigating claims of misconduct. Remedial support can become an additional non value-adding cost in the form of special learning and language skills units (see, for example, Hattie, Biggs & Purdie 1996; Biggs et al. 1999; Hartig-Prym 2005).

Attrition does not appear to be a significant issue in this regard. In their investigation of the differences between international higher education students and their domestic counterparts, Lukic and colleagues (Lukic, Broadbent & Maclachlan 2004, p.5) report attrition, in terms of neither graduating nor continuing to study in the following year, as being both 'stable' and 'low' when compared with domestic students over the six-year period to 2002.

For a commercial enterprise, the impact of student failure and withdrawal from the university therefore represents an immediate loss of expected income, decreased professional reputation, less pull in the international market, and a consequential further potential loss of revenue (Hodge 2009; McDonald 2009; Ross 2009). This is the damage that can ensue from neglecting to manage the second conversation of "risk in learning".

To manage this second risk, an alternative route could be to consider enhancing in-class pedagogic practice, particularly in tutorial sessions, to incorporate teaching the 'mechanics' of European notions in critical thinking (as explored for example by Hellmundt 2000; Kutieleh & Egege 2004) and 'learning how to learn' (as in Coffield et al. 2004; Koehne 2004; Wong 2004).

Others have contested this view. Rather than 'teaching foreign notions' (Egege & Kutieleh 2004), Volet and Ang (1998), for example, see the way ahead toward truly international education more in terms of encouraging inter-cultural interaction between international and domestic students. Calling such interaction 'reciprocal understanding' (Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999), and recognising the merit in promoting culturally mixed group work and assignments (Summers & Volet 2008; Volet & Mansfield 2006), the work of Volet presents an alternative approach to managing the

“risk in learning” that is the theme in this second conversation in international education. Volet also notes the common reluctance of Australian students to interact with international students because of Australian students’ perceptions of the ‘difficulties of concepts and thought patterns’ (Volet & Ang 1998, p.6) that they encounter when interacting with students from different cultures. What the approach of Volet does not accommodate, however, is a circumstance in which the international students are learning in an exclusively international campus without regular access to domestic students, as is the case in this research.

Biggs (Biggs 2003; Biggs et al. 1999) also positions this issue differently. Observing that ‘approaches to learning are affected both by the teaching/learning environment and by individual factors’ (Biggs et al. 1999, p.296), his view to managing “risk in learning” proposes that support and advice in the context of writing (Biggs et al. 1999, p.305) for international students learning in a second language (L2) should follow a didactic approach (Biggs et al. 1999, p.298).

This range of views and pedagogic options for managing the “risk in learning” reinforces the observation earlier in this section of the literature review that the discourse is in a state of flux. Thus, quantifying and investigating the conversation of risk in learning is therefore an interesting second context explored in this research. The issues to be investigated relate to learning difficulties faced by international students, and their causes. The results could identify alternative courses of action and potential reductions in cost.

When viewed through this lens, both learning and teaching could be more successful and rewarding, thereby both reducing incentives for academic misconduct as well as requiring less on-cost in remedial and managerial effort. The alternative would also nurture the interests and academic success of students, enhance everyday practice, and improve the reputation and market appeal of the university. The question posed is:

- What would it take to change practice in this way given an increasingly stringent commercial environment in the education sector today?

The sharing of knowledge across the two lenses in this second conversation might enable policy-makers, marketers and managers of education services to perceive a university's reputation as being the "product of learning" (as opposed to the image of quality and market profile identified by Mazzarol 1997). Positioning "risk in learning" in this manner could introduce an important factor in the success of the business of international education. As a 'new' key success factor (or KSF as described for example by Thompson & Strickland 2003, p.106) the reputation generated from successful student learning outcomes could then be manipulated to grow market share and profitability in the industry.

Positioning the two conversations in a research context

The two conversations of risk in business and risk in learning that emerge from the lenses of the four immediate disciplines in this review produce a tension and a pressure for change that is worthy of exploration. Lee (2005, p.47) for example, suggests that we need to 'think through the philosophical questions and their realisations into curriculum and pedagogy in a critical dialogue with managerialist and profit-driven agendas'.

Given the dual tensions of the cost of business and the cost of educational value in international education, it would appear that the two conversations are not parallel and separate, but are in fact interconnected. It would therefore appear to be of interest to practitioners to investigate how these conversations are played out in practice. A strategy could emerge in which the duality of 'good learning' and 'good business' acknowledge their differences and to build in universities a 'product of learning' that generates a sustainable source of international students to benefit both the business and the practice. And thus, good practice could be seen to drive good business.

In addressing the questions posed by the discourse in international education explored in this chapter, the learning journey has, in essence, been heuristic (as eloquently described, for example, by Irvine 1998). The travels have circulated and recirculated through the concepts of international education, business and pedagogy

until a more clearly describable first research question has emerged to focus the research effort. That question is:

1. How do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?

From this question a new challenge emerges. That challenge is to identify a methodology for interactions with international students in an Australian university that could expose a clear link between four independent fields of enquiry to see if they do actually produce two parallel but interdependent conversations of ‘good business’ and ‘good learning’ in international education.

The methodology discussed in Chapter 3 describes an action plan to investigate this first question. The methodological approach identified also opens a way for consideration of a second research question that arises from this literature review, namely:

2. How can we relate these perceptions to the twin ‘conversations’ of educational and commercial imperatives?

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted a selective mapping of the discourse community in international education in order to problematise issues that arise when a “fractured discourse” is viewed through four different “lenses” onto the one immediate discipline of international education. From these lenses have emerged two parallel conversations that relate to risk in business, and risk in learning. These conversations have been found to be interconnected. That connection has, in turn, created two questions for the research effort. Those questions also position the research within a conceptual framework.

The next section of this report, Chapter 3, discusses an appropriate methodology, research instrument, and sample to investigate the two research questions. Overall, an interpretive ‘symposium’ research methodology (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000,

p.14) combined with activity theory (Engeström 1999) is proposed in order to bring together the rich diversity of opinion and information emerging from the literature review undertaken in this chapter.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents an explanation and discussion of the methodology and research instruments used in the study. A mix of methods was used to provide a deeper perspective on the issue (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 2002, p.31). Kemmis (2000, pp.14-16) describes this as a symposium approach to research practice.

The approach taken in this chapter is to first provide a justification for the methodology in terms of how the research questions fit with the opening for new learning identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. From this discussion is derived an overall approach to the methodology selected, and an appropriate method for the interpretation of results.

Subsequent sections of the chapter then describe the rationale and process by which a research instrument was developed, and the procedures adopted for data collection. The penultimate section of the chapter discusses ethical considerations of the research and the methods adopted to counter any potential for risk or harm to participants, the research site and faculty, and the commercial interests of the university. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the intended outcome of the research effort.

Research questions

The discourse in international education explored in Chapter 2 identified a theoretical foundation of twin conversations relating to risk in business and risk in learning. Two questions arose to explore the way in which these twin conversations are played out in a university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students. They were:

1. How do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?
2. How can we relate these perceptions to the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives?

The plan for answering these questions was to use an analysis of participant responses to the research instruments as the basis for answering the first question, and identify students' perceptions of their experience of study in an Australian university.

Further analysis and interpretation of the findings arising from these student perceptions would enable an answer to the second research question. Understanding the interaction between student perceptions and the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives would thus enable the identification of the benefits to be gained from meeting international students' expectations in an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction of business and education, and improve practice and business performance in the market for international education in Australia.

Justification for the methodology

The process used in this chapter to design a methodology to investigate the impact of commerce on the field of pedagogical practice starts with a consideration of the meaning of practice (Kemmis 2000), and an appreciation of the complexities that can arise when selecting a methodology for studying the practice of teaching and learning within an academic workplace (Beckett & Hager 2002). Given the broader

social and commercial dimensions that interconnect with this study of local practice, two further perspectives are used to point the way to studying activity from the level of policy to produce change in the academy (Reeves & Forde 2004) within a multilayered social structure for the transformation of practice (Engeström 1999). The activity of the research cohort is thus used as ‘a principle of explanation’ (Engeström 1999, p.26).

This approach accords with the view of Love (2001, n.p.) that the epistemological foundation of a research project allows the inclusion of multiple theoretical perspectives.

The study of practice

This section presents an appreciation of how practice is defined and constituted within the context of this research. Two forms of practice are considered. The first is that of pedagogy being ‘good practice in teaching and learning’ (McNaught 2002, p.1). The second is the practice of business ‘becoming more competitive [in a] variety of business practices’ (DTI 2005, n.p.). These two forms of practice call into question the notion of practice itself, and the manner in which it is described, investigated and improved.

Kemmis (2000) aims to illuminate this through a combination of the different interpretations of what constitutes practice in the various traditions used to describe and study the issue, and the purposes for which that study is undertaken. By approaching the concept of practice from a combination of epistemological and methodological perspectives, Kemmis proposes the use of different kinds of research ‘to throw light on different facets of the realities of practice in day to day settings’ (Kemmis 2000, p.15).

Epistemological interpretations are thus seen to be both reflective and dialectic. Reflection occurs on two levels. On one level, Kemmis views practice to be objectively reflexive in terms of the ‘action in history’ of an individual acting alone or in social context. On the second level, practice is also subjectively reflexive. Subjectivity occurs through the interpretations made by observers of the ‘intentions,

meanings and values [in the] languages, discourses and traditions' (p.1) in which actions are positioned in a social context by the practitioners themselves and by others. Kemmis also describes practice as being understood to be dialectic (p.1), in terms of the methods of investigation used by observers to evaluate the concepts underpinning those actions.

Thus, by adopting a reflexive-dialectic epistemological perspective to knowing what practice is, differing notions of practice can be accommodated. To Kemmis (p.7) the methodology chosen to investigate practice therefore allows for a combination of research methods, and their justification within a particular research context. This approach is similar to that of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, pp.44-45) who describe methodology as 'not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself' that is used to describe and analyse the range of approaches used to gather, interpret and explain data, and to then suggest new formulations.

Within the construct of symposium research, differing traditions can work together to investigate and transform practice in a particular historical circumstance and condition. By thus understanding practice from multiple points of view, the study of practice is opened up so that the researcher might better 'understand and change the world we have ... into the world it can be' (Kemmis 2000, p.16).

The key implication for this research of the symposium approach to understanding practice is that it can free the research effort from the constraints of any one particular research tradition. Considering that the lens of four interconnected theoretical perspectives in which this research is situated is itself non-traditional, such freedom empowers a different examination of the multiple discourses in business and pedagogy. A range of methodologies and instruments is thus available for selection, provided always (as noted by Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.1) that such methodology 'fits the purpose' of the enquiry.

A symposium research methodology for the study of pedagogical issues in a commercial setting is therefore justifiable. The use of a questionnaire and follow-up interviews to identify the factors of risk in business and risk in learning also appears valid. Further, such a research design can allow for subsequent examination of the

economic benefits to be gained from equitable, ethical and sustainable practice in the environment of education as business.

A consideration of life, work and learning

The view of practice put forward by Kemmis also enables this research to move from positivist epistemology (Smith 2001) towards reflection. This approach does, however, open the question of complexity that can arise with a methodology to study the practice of teaching and learning in an academic workplace. To address this matter, Beckett and Hager (2002) defer to Schön (1987) and the metaphor of the swamp and the high ground to suggest that whilst higher-level or macro issues might present ‘manageable problems’ (Schön 1987, p.3) that lend themselves to the application of research-based theory and techniques, it is in the ‘messy, confusing ... swampy lowland’ that lie the problems of greatest human concern, and where people strive to develop ‘a type of knowing what to do in practice that is evident in their various intentional actions’ (Beckett & Hager 2002, p.5).

Functioning within ‘a dynamic of globalised and policy-driven change’, Beckett and Hager (p.7) position practice in postmodernity. They describe a continuum of practice in education in which the concept of ‘knowing how’ can be appreciated as part of practice itself, and workplace experience can become a foundation for learning (pp.8-9). The advantage, therefore, of this approach to understanding practice and learning in the ‘swamp’ of daily activity in a university is that a researcher may again experience the freedom to draw upon a variety of forms of knowledge and experience as valid matters for investigation.

In the environment of the professional doctorate that is this report, the researcher may now more readily embrace the triumvirate of workplace, practice and academy described by Lee, Green and Brennan (2000), and set about designing a research methodology suited to the circumstances evident in the worksite to be studied. The researcher is therefore able investigate and propose improvements to practice, as well as developing one’s own critical, self-reflecting practice (Smith 2001). Such a continuous process of reflection and transformation has been well described by Schön (1987) wherein:

The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation.

(Schön 1987, p.68).

The social dynamics of changing practice

In the search for new understanding, the construct of creating a social or a ‘third’ space for learning suggested by Reeves and Forde (2004) provides a link between the work of Kemmis (2000), Beckett and Hager (2002), and the threefold context described by Lee, Green and Brennan (2000) that is illustrated in Figure 3 on page 35.

Reeves and Forde position their discussion of the social dynamic in change within the context of continuing professional development of education managers in Scotland. Reeves and Forde search to ‘find a space in which to behave differently’ (p.90). For them the space is a social area for change that occurs through the ‘dynamic interaction of activity sets’ in which participants ‘act in conjunction with others who also act in that space’ (p.90).

The third space described by Reeves and Forde posits a tension created by participants’ exposure to different points of view. Progression to new practice comes about through participants interacting to challenge the status quo in different activity sets (p.90). In the third, ‘social space for change’ (Reeves & Forde 2004, p.98), the externalisation of learning interacts with personal reflection and is then applied in the workplace to enable changed practice. The research presented in this report is taking place in a third space of its own. The methodology designed in this chapter sets out to identify the relevant activity sets of international student expectations, and to then join these with the discourses in international education.

Activity theory and individual and social transformation

From the standpoint of the new perspectives considered so far in this chapter, a useful space has opened for selecting a research methodology free from the

constraints of any one particular tradition (Kemmis 2000). A link has been created between the levels of high policy and local action (Beckett & Hager 2002), and the opportunity of opening a third space in which the learning from the research might be positioned (Reeves & Forde 2004).

It is within the space thus opened that the work of Engeström (1999) positions activity theory as a methodology to bridge general theory and specific practice (p.36). Engeström utilises ‘activity as a principle of explanation’ (p.26). By viewing the research field as a ‘multilayered network of interconnected activity systems’ (p.36), it is possible to investigate the dualities of business and pedagogy in international education. Engeström describes a heuristic cycle (Pólya 1945) for studying activity. Each phase of the cycle progresses from an appreciation of ‘opposition’ (Engeström 1999, p.33) or discontinuity to create tension for questioning, internalisation, and then external change. This, in turn, is questioned again, and then externalised into more change. As such, activity becomes ‘by definition a multivoiced formation’ (Engeström 1999, p.35) reorchestrated through the voices of participants in an expansive cycle of differing viewpoints and approaches.

Activity theory and a symposium approach to understanding practice therefore provide a methodological model for this research. The model is a developmental process of transformation as described, for example, by Scribner (1985). The model typifies a cyclical four-step process of observation, reconstruction of context, the development of change, and finally new practice.

Research methodology and interpretative methods

In the previous section of this chapter it was shown that by associating the meaning of practice (Kemmis 2000) and the different ways of studying it (Beckett & Hager 2002) within the twin conversations of pedagogy and commerce (Reeves & Forde 2004), it has become possible to link high-level conversations in the discourse in international education (Engeström 1999) to the daily activity of international

students and teachers in an Australian university campus. The outcome pointed the way to designing a methodology for this research effort.

The way suggested is an interpretive symposium research approach (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000, p.14) combined with activity theory (Engeström 1999). This methodology is therefore applied to the research effort in order to bring together the rich diversity of opinion and information emerging from the literature review.

Research instruments

In the context of this research, the key issue presented by this appreciation of Engeström is its immediate applicability. The research can adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigating the expectations of international students in an Australian university. To do this, two instruments are selected to gather data in the workplace. These two instruments are:

1. An anonymous voluntary questionnaire that is designed to explore the extent to which a gap exists between two dimensions of student expectations in terms of how students learn now in their home countries and how students will be expected to learn in an Australian university.

The questionnaire structure developed later in this chapter is grounded on similar gaps that have been identified in the findings of earlier research in Australia and overseas in the area of international students' expectations based on previous learning experiences in their home country and the reality of undergraduate university learning overseas.

The project methodology and questionnaire construction allow for data collection across the undergraduate cohort to serve as a source for comparative analysis at a later date, and to avoid any potential issues of a perceived exclusion of one group of students in favour of another. The data collected by this process could also serve for comparative analysis at a later date of students in varying stages of their student journey in the university, for example at the start of their second year of study and at the commencement of their final term.

The second instrument is:

2. Follow-up in-depth interviews with volunteer student participants.

Following analysis of the questionnaire responses, a group of volunteer students who participated in the questionnaire and expressed interest in participating further in the research were invited to be interviewed for up to 1 hour to further explore issues that arose from analysis of responses to the questionnaire. The questions asked of interview participants were derived following analysis of questionnaire responses. The interviews were audio-taped for transcription.

Questionnaire design

Introduction

This section describes the process and rationale by which a research instrument was developed to investigate the question: how do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?

The process started with an analysis of the size and composition of the student cohort in the academy in which the study took place. This has been provided in Chapter 1 of the report, and is quantified in Appendix 1.

The next step towards designing the questionnaire was to review the learning expectations of Sub-continental students. This was also discussed in Chapter 1. A similarity was identified in students originating in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Also discussed in Chapter 1 was the nature of university pedagogy in Australia. This issue was examined in order to provide a comparison to the Sub-continental context in terms of the apprehensions that international students might entertain upon commencing university study in Australia. Whereas learning in Sub-continental secondary schools was identified as essentially a pedagogy incorporating lecture followed by memorisation and recall in examinations, the perception of practice in an Australian university was typified as a mixture of both lecture and exam, plus interactive, practice-oriented activity based on concepts of the generic

skills desired of university graduates. Comparison of the cultures of learning in both the Sub-continent and Australia were then used to identify a gap that may exist between learning outcomes.

In the next section of this chapter, these two dimensions of how students learned in their home countries and how they will be expected to learn at university in Australia are compared to relevant research findings on the learning expectations of international students generally. The comparison draws particularly on the findings of three relevant earlier research efforts (Kinnell 1990; Cooper 1998; Lixin Xiao 2006). Nine key issues identified by Cooper (1998) as significant in the undergraduate Australian context were used to structure a matrix template for the survey questions used in this research. Questions adapted from the other two key studies (Kinnell 1990; Lixin Xiao 2006) were then added to the matrix to provide a pool of potential questions for use in the questionnaire design.

In order to collect survey data that could help with statistical analysis of the responses to the main part of the questionnaire, a series of questions was also crafted to elicit anonymous information about the respondents in terms of their home country and the main language spoken at home, present program of study in Australia and stage of progress in their studies. Construction of this part was influenced by the measures of intercultural learning differences in the literature (for example, Deardorff 2006; Hofstede 1986; Volet & Ang 1998).

Whilst some observers (such as Gooderham & Nordhaug 2002, for example) criticise the cultural framework proposed by Hofstede in terms of the methodology used (Tayeb 1996), sample selection (Robinson 1983), cultural bias (Roberts & Boyacigiller 1984) and a possible lack of relevance in a globalised environment (Mead 1994), the demographic dimensions used in the questionnaire are sufficient to create a meaningful construct to uniquely identify the research cohort of Sub-continental students and to differentiate this sample from other students at the research site.

The final step in designing the research instruments was to craft a manageable series of questions into a trial questionnaire to investigate the gap in the expectations of

students arriving at university in Australia. The instrument is attached at Appendix 2: Questionnaire.

Rationale and assumptions

It is possible that certain attitudes and beliefs of international students regarding their expectations could have a notable impact on their learning in Australia (Tse 2000). This study therefore investigates the possible gap or mismatch caused by culture-based differences in perceptions and expectations of teaching and learning style preferences between international students and Australian teachers in the undergraduate university setting. The following section therefore presents a review of earlier research in the field to better inform an effective construct for the design of the survey questionnaire.

Student apprehensions on starting university study

Three earlier and significant studies are reviewed in this section. They form the basis for crafting the survey questionnaire as an instrument to investigate participants' expectations. The intent was to identify the implications of unmet student learning expectations, and thereby propose bridging strategies for use in the classroom. The three earlier studies reviewed are Kinnell (1990), Lixin Xiao (2006) and Cooper (1998).

Firstly, in attempting to reflect equal concern with 'how teaching is conducted as with what is taught', Kinnell (1990, p.47) undertook an in-depth assessment of how L2⁶ students in a university in the United Kingdom felt about learning in an international context (Kinnell 1990, p.19). The key findings of that study were that international students in the United Kingdom arrived with a high expectation of their future education (Kinnell 1990, p.1) and that their language proficiency in itself did not serve as a reliable predictor of academic success (Kinnell 1990, p.2). The real

⁶ A second language (L2) is any language learned after the first language (see, for example, Evers 2007 in relation to pedagogy and learners for whom English is L2). See also the section headed Definitionson page 22.

determinants of success were found to lie in the application of language to academic purposes, such as mastering the particular skills of ‘writing essays, speaking, and understanding lectures and tutorials ... self-study ... (and) discussion methods’ (Kinnell 1990, p.2).

Too often, Kinnell found, unsuccessful international students placed too much reliance on rote learning and ‘excessive deference to teachers’ (Kinnell 1990, p.2). Learning difficulties were found to ‘follow on logically from mismatches in expectations’ (Kinnell 1990, p.10), particularly when students’ expectations of teachers were misguided as to the nature of the system of learning used, and equally where staff expectations of international students were inappropriate for students who came from a non-British cultural and educational background (Kinnell 1990, p.10).

Observing that a solution to the so-called problem with overseas students might lie in the receiving institution rather than the student (Kinnell 1990, p.4), Kinnell’s response was to propose for staff an improved awareness of issues and strategies in cross-cultural education (Barker 1990, in Kinnell 1990, pp.107-122).

Lixin Xiao (2006) was selected as the second research item for review because that study, which drew on Hofstede (1986), investigated the nature of the mismatch in perceptions and expectations between teachers and international students caused by culture-based differences.

Set in the context of teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in Ireland, and using a sample of 34 Chinese student participants, the Lixin Xiao questionnaire, interview and class observations at two language institutes, identified a ‘mutual responsibility to gain intercultural understanding so as to ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes’ (Lixin Xiao 2006, p.1). In designing bridging strategies for the gap between students’ cultures of learning (Cortazzi & Jin 1996, p.74) and the learning styles and strategy used in the Irish school culture, Lixin Xiao concluded that students’ own beliefs about teaching and learning predisposed them to consider that the highly interactive Western pedagogy was ‘beyond the scope of their intuitive knowledge, and incongruent with their cultural background’ (Lixin Xiao 2006, p.5).

Lixin Xiao (2006, pp.9-10) significantly identified as a main cause of mismatch between native-English teaching styles and Chinese students' learning styles the different perceptions each has of what constitutes good teaching and learning. Cheng (2000) goes further. His view of the characteristics of the Chinese culture of learning observes that, in China, teachers have absolute authority in classrooms, students show great respect to teachers, and they also expect teachers to have thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach. The Chinese philosophy of modesty or face-saving also means that many Chinese students would not consider asking questions of teachers to be a good habit, resulting in classroom practice in China that resembles a form of 'knowledge transmission' from teacher to student (Cheng, 2000, pp. 47-48).

The research instrument used by Lixin Xiao could therefore be usefully adapted to the present research. The questions asked by Lixin Xiao are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mismatch in learning caused by culture-based differences (source: Lixin Xiao 2006, pp.7-8, Table 2)

Questionnaire Items (Lixin Xiao 2006)	
1.	I like to participate in group work consisting of 2-3 persons in class.
2.	I like to be active and to speak English when I am working in a group.
3.	I like teacher-centered teaching methods in English class.
4.	I like student-centered teaching methods in English class.
5.	I have enough confidence in improving my English to a desired level within 1 or 2 years in Ireland.
6.	I expect my teacher rather than myself to be responsible for evaluating how much progress I have made in L2 learning.
7.	When I am working in a group, I like to help keep the atmosphere friendly and harmonious.
8.	In the classroom, I do not like to 'stand out' by voicing my opinions or asking questions.
9.	In the classroom I see the teacher as somebody whose authority should not be questioned.
10.	I work especially hard when my own success will benefit my close relations (e.g., my family) as well as myself.
11.	I like activities in which I am part of a group when we are all working towards common goals.
12.	Sometimes I feel nervous answering questions in class because I am afraid of being wrong.
13.	I like to take part in group work with foreign students in a multicultural class.
14.	I like to take part in group work with only Chinese students in the classroom, e.g. classroom discussion, role-plays.
15.	I see knowledge as something that the teacher should pass on to me rather than something that I should discover myself.
16.	I like to learn English in a small class consisting of 7-10 persons.
17.	I like to learn English in a class consisting of Chinese learners only rather than in a multicultural class.
18.	I expect my teacher to give oral explanations on written texts, e.g. TOEFL, IELTS.

Thirdly, and within the Australian university context, the findings of Cooper (1998) were found to parallel and reinforce the earlier work of Kinnell (1990) in that unmet expectations suggested later problems with student participation and academic success.

Cooper (1998) found in a three-year study of beginning undergraduate students at university in Western Australia that the students experienced a fairly high level of anxiety at starting university study in Australia.

Cooper's work surveyed both L1 and L2 students at the end of their first semester. Three separate groups of students were identified: international students coming directly from overseas (mainly from Singapore and Malaysia), international students (mostly Singaporeans and Malaysians) who had previously studied for tertiary entrance in Australia, and local Australian students selected as part of an equity project.

Of all groups, the international students showed the greatest degree of concern about starting university in Australia. Overall, however, Cooper's data showed that although there were some variations from group to group and from year to year, there was quite strong agreement in the rank order of concerns that the three groups produced. The responses indicated a fairly high level of insecurity, and although this was deemed by Cooper to be natural and perhaps even beneficial, he concluded that students would benefit from explicit guidance on what was expected of them, especially in regard to what they should do to in their private study to complement the formal academic program (Cooper 1998, n.p.).

Students' main concerns related to their ability to keep up with the work, expectations of the extent of reading required, and the writing of essays and assignments. In terms of speaking up in class, participating in tutorials or seminars, and seeking help from teachers, the students appeared to show only minimal concern, prompting Cooper to conclude that a lack of understanding of the nature of these activities may be the reason. As participatory activity in class is considered to be a key element in university pedagogy in Australia (Scott 2005), the lack of understanding noted by Cooper (1998) forms a key area of interest in this research.

The questions used by Cooper (1998) are listed in Table 2. They were deemed appropriate for inclusion in this study as the key identifiers of any gap between students' present learning and the pedagogy in an Australian university (the 'areas of prior knowledge' and 'area of interest' noted by Rogers & Randall 1997).

Table 2: Student concerns on starting university in Australia (source: Cooper 1998)

Student concerns on starting university in Australia (Cooper 1998)	
1.	I'm afraid that I won't be able to keep up with the work.
2.	I'm not sure what I'm expected to do at lectures.
3.	I don't know how much I will be expected to read.
4.	I don't know what tutorials and seminars are for.
5.	I won't have the nerve to speak up in class.
6.	I would find it difficult to ask a tutor for help.
7.	I dread the thought of writing essays and assignments.
8.	I expect most people in my course will be smarter than I am.
9.	Is there some other concern that you feel is a worry for you on starting university in Australia?

Identifying deeper meaning

An effective construct for the design of a survey questionnaire for Sub-continental undergraduate students in an Australian university was therefore seen to evolve from combining the outcomes of the research questions and findings from Kinnell (1990), Lixin Xiao (2006) and Cooper (1998).

With permission from the owners of the Cooper survey (Cluett 2007), questionnaire items in the present study are sorted according to the nine concerns noted by Cooper (1998) as the most salient for international students when they start university in Australia. A survey instrument was constructed by taking the key concerns identified by Cooper (1998) and three additional questions per category adapted from the findings of both Kinnell (1990) and Lixin Xiao (2006), selected as best exemplifying the social dimensions of intercultural learning suggested by Hofstede (1986).

In an attempt to counter the generally negative connotations of the term “concern” that underpins Cooper’s (1998) instrument, the format and style of questions asked in this research (see Appendix 2: Questionnaire on page 178) deliberately excluded the

use of negative language. Instead, neutral action verbs were used to stimulate a considered, scaled, response from participants. For example, question 1 in Cooper (“I’m afraid that I won’t be able to keep up with the work”) is structured as question 35 in the research instrument more simply as “Keeping up with university workload”. The usefulness of this approach to questioning in terms of respondent engagement and thoughtfulness of response is discussed in Chapter 4.

A five-point bipolar Likert scaling instrument (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.253) was used in the questionnaire to measure attitudes in respondents to the way in which students presently cope with the learning methods in the university. To assist in student response and to aid later analysis, the scale measured the following distinct responses to each question:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Structure of the questionnaire

Five assumptions underpin the structure given to the questionnaire. The structure was designed so that these assumptions could be tested later during analysis in a heuristic approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp.23-27). As shown in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the analytical approach used the understanding which emerged from analysis of a preceding section of the questionnaire to identify deeper meaning in participant responses to subsequent sections. The five assumptions are summarised in Table 3:

Table 3: Assumptions to be tested in analysis of the data

Assumptions tested
1. High school study and IELTS are sufficient preparation for university.
2. Was high school study and IELTS sufficient preparation?
3. Being confident, how do you cope with problems?
4. If experience appears to match expectation, are there other factors to be considered?
5. Did the experience truly match the expectation?

The first assumption to be tested was that undergraduate international students probably presumed that their learning experiences at home prepared them for university in Australia, and that preparation for the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL testing was sufficient other preparation for study. This assumption was tested in analysis of questions relating to: How did you prepare for university in Australia? (Questions 11–32 in Appendix 2 on page 178).

The second assumption was designed to be tested in the questions relating to: Generally, how confident are you (Questions 33-56)? The questions posed were designed to elicit a response the question: How then does the experience at university match the expectation?

Should participants generally feel confident about their studies at university, a third assumption was selected for testing in the questions relating to: Generally, how do you deal with ...? (Questions 57-66). The assumption was: How do international students cope with the issues that confront them, and do they make use of the learning services available?

The first three assumptions proposed that, in the main, students perceived that they arrived in Australia well prepared in terms of English language skills and knowing what was ahead, expressed overall confidence of success, and in their ability to cope with and to meet the challenges of university in Australia. Two final assumptions were therefore designed to be tested in the questions relating to: General feelings about the experience (Questions 67-87).

The fourth assumption tested was: Presumably, the experience could be deemed to have matched the expectation. Or, were there other factors to be considered in determining what changes, if any, might be appropriate in order to better satisfy international students' expectations?

To investigate these possibilities, a fifth and final assumption was selected for testing: Did the experience truly match the expectation? The findings were analysed in the responses to the final three questions (85-87) headed: Is there anything else?

Research procedures

Collection of evidence and analysis

Questionnaire responses were tabulated for interpretation and statistical analysis as appropriate. Explanations supplied by participants in open-ended questions were rendered devoid of identifiers and used to uncover other expectations not revealed through answers to the closed questions.

Interview sessions were tape recorded and transcribed into written form. The material was then sorted into a tabular format for analysis and interpretation of themes. Explanations supplied by participants in the follow-up interviews were also de-identified.

Analysis was designed to elicit a better understanding of the gap that exists between the two dimensions of student learning expectations:

- How students learn now in terms of learning experiences in their home countries immediately prior to arriving at university in Australia, and
- How students will be expected to learn at university in Australia.

Questionnaire responses were analysed to identify student learning expectations and needs, and related to the background data collected in the questionnaire to identify and explore relationships between different aspects of studying at university, such as:

- How participants prepared for study at an Australian university.
- How confident participants felt about certain aspects of studying at university in Australia.
- How participants dealt with certain issues that students can experience at university in Australia.
- How participants felt generally about their experience at university in Australia.
- Issues explored in analysis include, for example, the relationship(s) between:
- Background (demographic) information, preparation(s) for study in Australia, and program of study/confidence/coping mechanisms/overall experience.

- Non/completion of high school in Australia and aspects of studying at university in Australia.
- Part-time work in Australia and aspects of studying at university in Australia.
- The extent of preparation for study in Australia and other aspects of studying now at university in Australia.
- Aspects of studying at university in Australia investigated in the closed questions compared with participant responses to the open-ended questions.

Interview records were analysed to identify patterns of perceptions and feelings as well as disparate impressions of learning expectations.

Analysis sought to identify consistency and inconsistency between students' learning expectations and perceived needs identified in results of the questionnaire and the subsequent interviews.

Selection of participants

Research participants were volunteer international undergraduate students at the research site, randomly selected via an open invitation to participate. Contact was made with research participants as follows:

Questionnaire

All undergraduate students at the site were invited to participate in the questionnaire. With the cooperation of lecturers and tutors, the research was first announced to students in class, with a brief explanation of the research intent, the planned date for administering the questionnaire, a description of what possible involvement entailed, and assurances regarding no relationship between the research and student grades, participant anonymity, and confidentiality.

Then at the time of administering the questionnaire during the next scheduled class one week later, participants again received a further explanation of what involvement entailed, were invited to complete consent forms before administration of the questionnaire, and were free to stop participating at any time. The questionnaire

responses of students who did leave the study were destroyed, and not used in later analysis.

Interviews

Potential interviewees were identified from questionnaire participants who had indicated on their consent form for the questionnaire that they were potentially interested in participating further in the follow-up stage. The cohort chosen for interview comprised volunteer students from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Volunteers were contacted through a broad email invitation to explain their possible further involvement, confirm the voluntary nature of the exercise, and to advise selection, venue, and other logistical matters. The in-depth interviews were planned to be conducted in a convenient and private venue on campus, thus enhancing an environment of confidentiality, and obviating any need for travel other than to or from the university.

At the time of interview, participants were provided further information regarding the nature and content of the activity, and were again required to provide informed consent in written form. Interviewees were again free to leave the study at any time. The interview responses of students who did leave the study were destroyed, and not used in later analysis.

Number of participants

To select participants for the questionnaire, the entire undergraduate cohort at the site was invited to participate. This amounted to about 1,500 students (May 2007 data). For the follow-up interviews, approximately 20 Sub-continental undergraduate students were invited to participate.

Selection and exclusion criteria

Questionnaire

The broad criterion for selection of questionnaire participants was intended to serve as a source of data for comparative analysis at a later date, and to avoid any potential issues of a perceived exclusion of one group of students in favour of another in the research.

Interviews

A narrow criterion for selection of follow-up interview participants was intended to focus the follow-up information on the specific cohort of Sub-continental students. The interviews were intended to provide an outlet for student voice in terms of themes and/or patterns in expectations that emerged from analysis of responses to the questionnaire.

A nominal group of 20 participants was considered to represent a meaningful yet manageable cohort for the administration, transcription and analysis of the follow-up interviews within the context and intent and a professional doctorate research study.

Ethical issues

In this research the participants were known to the researcher, and some had previously been under instruction with the researcher. The following precautions were therefore taken during the interviews to maintain anonymity, ensure confidentiality and prevent risk or harm to participants and/or others on the research site:

- No participant or other person was personally identified in the reporting of data. The research site and university was also de-identified.
- To maintain the confidentiality of information gathered, interviews were designed to be conducted by a non-teaching third party volunteer research

assistant that did not have any potential influence over student academic progress.

- To maintain the anonymity of interview participants, responses to the invitation to participate were similarly designed to be managed by the non-teaching third party conducting the interviews. That person was to allocate a de-identifying participant number at the time of response, and any subsequent data collected was to be linked to that number. Neither the researcher nor any person other than the interviewer was to have access to this information.
- To avoid the potential of risk or harm to the researcher, other academics and/or administrative personnel at the research site, all data gathered during the interviews was structured to be de-identified before transcription and viewing by the researcher.

Potential for risk or harm

Participants

Academic risk could be encountered by students participating in the questionnaire should their anonymity not be ensured. Ensuring the anonymity of questionnaire responses was intended to eliminate the likelihood of this risk. Administration of the questionnaire in class by scheduled lecturers/tutors (instead of by the researcher) was also done to reduce the likelihood of participants perceiving that their academic progress might be affected in later subjects.

Participants in the follow-up interviews could experience discomfort or become upset or distressed because of or during participation in a one-on-one interview with the interviewer. The interview methodology and questions adopted were designed to elicit information from participants, rather than to challenge their personal views. In addition, the interview situation was structured and managed with sensitivity. As with arrangements for the questionnaire, de-identifying participants before the event, ensuring the confidentiality, informed consent and right to withdraw were also incorporated into the methodology to eliminate the likelihood of this risk. Further actions to minimise risk to participants included:

- Questionnaire administrators were instructed and coached to treat all participants (and students declining to participate) with dignity and respect.
- Availability of student support and counseling services for student participants who might have experienced trauma or other negative sequelae as a result of their participation.
- No names of staff or students were used in reports, as all the information gathered was coded and themed.
- Student explanations and transcribed interviews were analysed for themes and patterns, rather than any personal information. Events described by participants were rendered devoid of identifiers before use as exemplars of themes that emerged from the research.
- Physical data storage was arranged in a locked filing cabinet, and electronic data stored in a secured virtual location on the researcher's space on the university file server.

Research site faculty and staff

There was a risk that responses to the questionnaire, or comments made during follow-up interviews could be detrimental to the reputation or integrity of individual or collective academics or administrative staff at the research site or its parent university. As with the process for de-identification of participants, responses to the questionnaires and interviews were edited before transcription and analysis to ensure that no individual member of staff could be identified in the data.

Similarly, the research site itself was de-identified in the report. The descriptor given was for the research to be conducted 'on the New South Wales campus of a teaching-intensive university that caters exclusively to full-fee paying international students'.

Commercial

The potential also existed for a loss of commercial privacy relating to the number of undergraduate students in the university at the time of the study, should that data become accessible by others. This could represent harm for the organisation in which

the investigation took place. The arrangements for de-identification of the research site and university were also intended to minimise the likelihood of commercial risk.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an explanation and justification for selection of a symposium approach to research methodology used in the study. Identification and analysis of a research cohort of Sub-continental students was premised on a uniform experience of passivity, rote learning and memorisation for exams that distinctly differs from the active engagement that is presumed to be typical in university learning in Australia today.

The exercise of designing a survey questionnaire for administration in the research site helped to produce a focus on the prime question that underpins this investigation: how do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?

Finally, a manageable series of questions was then crafted into a trial questionnaire to investigate the gap between the learning expectations of Sub-continental students arriving at university in Australia and the pedagogy in use in Australia. The questionnaire was crafted from an interpretation of three earlier research outcomes (Cooper 1998; Kinnell 1990; Lixin Xiao 2006) and the intercultural dimensions of learning identified in the research of Hofstede (1986).

The following Chapter 4 describes the piloting of the questionnaire and the test of its utility as an instrument for full data collection.

Chapter 4 Pilot of the Questionnaire

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the pilot questionnaire that was administered to a sample of the intended research cohort in October 2007. The pilot was intended to test the utility of the survey instrument, and to identify questions to be asked in the subsequent follow-up interviews.

Purpose of the pilot questionnaire

Full analysis of the data collected in the pilot, and the generalisability of results was not a specific intent in piloting the questionnaire. Instead, the analysis of data in this chapter focuses on the following issues:

- Were there any administrative or contextual issues arising in the pilot program?
- How did students engage with the questionnaire? Did they respond thoughtfully, or merely tick the box?
- Did respondents understand the questions?
- Where does the data of interest arise in the questionnaire responses? What, generally does it suggest? And,
- What improvements are required to the questionnaire before its administration in the main survey?

Summary

Ethics approval was granted in September 2007 by both the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) as supervising authority, and the university managing the research site. To preserve the anonymity of participants and the commercial sensitivity of operations at the research site, the identity of both participants and the specific site remain anonymous.

A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 2: Questionnaire on page 178.

One hundred and twenty three students in a Bachelor of Accounting cohort of 729 students at the research site volunteered to participate in the questionnaire pilot. Of these volunteers, 44 students (35.8% of the volunteers) were representative of the intended research cohort of Sub-continental students. Data gathered from these 44 respondents forms the basis of analysis in this chapter. An overview of the academy and the research population is shown in Appendix 1 on page 167.

Generally, the 44 respondents engaged well with the questionnaire, and provided thoughtful responses to the questions asked. The cohort surveyed was predominantly male (81.7%), Indian or Bangladeshi, aged 20 – 24 years, in their third or fourth term at the academy, with average GPA 3.4. Whilst only 6% of the cohort identified English as their main language at home, most had studied in the medium of English in their last school, which for all was not in Australia. More than two-thirds of the cohort had a part-time job in addition to their university studies.

Overall, the pilot questionnaire worked well and, with a minor change in terminology used in one question relating to language spoken at home, was found to be suitable for administration to a broad selection of the research cohort. Analysis of the data gathered in the pilot was used to create a meaningful series of questions for follow-up interviews.

Relevance of the data to the research question

The question that underpins this investigation is: how do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of studying in an Australian university? The questionnaire is designed to elicit data that could help identify any gap that might exist between two dimensions of student learning expectations, namely:

- How students learn now in terms of learning experiences in their home countries immediately prior to arriving at university in Australia, and
- How students are expected to learn at university in Australia.

Questionnaire responses elicit data relating to:

- Background information about the students, their home country, the main language spoken at home, and their present program of study in Australia;
- How these students prepared for study at an Australian university;
- How confident they felt about certain aspects of studying at university in Australia;
- How they dealt with certain issues when engaged in study at university in Australia; and
- How they felt, generally, about their experience at university in Australia.

Responses to the pilot questionnaire

Administrative issues

The pilot questionnaire was administered to a random selection of undergraduate classes across all programs of study. A time-frame of 30 minutes was scheduled for explanation of the project and administration of the questionnaire. Participation by academics to allocate class time and by students to complete the questionnaire was voluntary.

Data was gathered during the last teaching week of the academic term in October 2007. A total of 123 completed questionnaires were returned. Of these, 44 (36%)

were from Sub-continental students in the target research cohort. All returned questionnaires were numbered sequentially in order of collection (referred to in this chapter as Respondent Ident.) for later data analysis and storage.

Feedback from academics administering the pilot questionnaire indicated that the 30-minute time-frame was adequate, the longest time required by any respondent being 40 minutes. The Information Sheet, Consent Form and Questionnaire style and format appeared to be self-explanatory, and respondents did not require or seek any supplementary explanation.

Survey population as proportion of the Bachelor of Accounting cohort

Demographic data relating to the academy and research cohort at the time of the pilot is shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Pilot questionnaire responses compared with the B Accounting cohort

Pilot Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Pilot Questionnaire Responses	Response as % of Sub-continental Cohort	Response as % of Category
B. Accounting Cohort	729	123		6.0%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort	315	44	14%	36%
Female	50	8	2.5%	16.0%
Male	265	36	11.4%	13.6%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort Birth Country	315	44	14%	
India	135	23	7.3%	17.0%
Bangladesh	99	11	3.5%	11.1%
Nepal	44	6	1.9%	13.6%
Pakistan	19	1	0.3%	5.3%
Sri Lanka	8	1	0.3%	12.5%
Kenya	7	0	0.0%	0.0%
Australia	1	0	0.0%	0.0%
Fiji	1	1	0.3%	100.0%
Hong Kong	1	0	0.0%	0.0%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort Home Language	315	47⁷	15%	
Bengali	92	12	3.8%	13.1%
Nepali	45	6	1.9%	13.3%
Punjabi	44	11	3.5%	25.0%
Hindi	43	7	2.2%	16.3%
English	32	3	1.0%	9.4%

⁷ Includes three dual languages at home Hindi speakers responding to the pilot questionnaire.

Pilot Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Pilot Questionnaire Responses	Response as % of Sub-continental Cohort	Response as % of Category
Gujarati	30	4	1.3%	13.3%
Urdu	14	0	0.0%	0.0%
Sinhalese	4	1	0.3%	25.0%
Marathi	2	0	0.0%	0.0%
Pashto	2	1	0.3%	50.0%
Sindhi	2	0	0.0%	0.0%
Telugu	2	1	0.3%	50.0%
Tamil	1	0	0.0%	0.0%
No data	2	0	0.3%	0.0%

Engagement with the questionnaire

A detailed discussion of participant engagement with the pilot of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 4. Of the 44 questionnaires returned by Sub-continental students, the degree of thoughtfulness in responding to the questionnaire can be summarised as follows:

- Participation: 43 respondents (97.7%) attempted all questions;
- Engagement: 81 of the 84 questions attracted a response rate greater than 90%;
- Written comments offered: an engagement rate of 24.5%; and the
- Thoughtfulness in response and understanding of the questions asked in terms of the distribution of scaled responses on the forced-option questions: 95% of respondents attempted more than 90% of all questions.

Students were thus active participants in the survey, and interested in contributing further to the research effort. Of the 44 research cohort respondents, 43 (97.7%) students indicated on their Consent Form that they were potentially interested in participating in the subsequent follow-up interview/focus group activity. Three students later withdrew their consent, 16 were unable to be contacted, and half of the cohort (24, or 54.6%) agreed to be scheduled for interview in Teaching Week 5 of the following term (the week 10-14 December 2007). Selection of participants for the follow-up interview/focus group is discussed in Appendix 3.

Respondents also appeared to engage meaningfully with the questionnaire, and 35 (79.6%) of the 44 respondents attempted questions in all sections. A number of respondents went to some length to provide written comment in expansion of

questions asked. Of the 87 questions asked in the questionnaire, 18 questions (21% of all questions) also invited a written explanation in addition to a simple yes/no and/or scalar response. Three of the questions each provided three opportunities for comment. Each of the 44 respondents therefore had 24 opportunities to comment, creating a potential pool of 1,056 comment opportunities. A total of 259 written comments were returned. This represents an engagement rate of 24.5%.

The degree of thoughtfulness in responses was measured in terms of the distribution of responses in questions that included a 5-point Likert scale. Scaled responses were used to identify the degree of helpfulness, confidence, type of action taken, and overall experience of circumstances encountered at university in Australia.

A further test for thoughtfulness in responses was built into the questionnaire design. Four sections of the questionnaire investigated different aspects of studying at university, and invited a response using the 5-point Likert scale. To test if respondents merely ticked the boxes without thinking, the sense of questions in the third aspect (how students cope with certain issues that arise when at university) was mixed to include positive and negative actions, whilst the scale criteria remained similar to other questions. This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Likert scales used in the questionnaire

Likert Scales Used in the Questionnaire					
Qn.	1	2	3	4	5
11-32 Preparations: "I did this, and it was ..."	Most Helpful. A major factor in preparing for study in Australia	Helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Not Helpful	Most Unhelpful. A useless waste of my time and effort
33-55 Confidence: "About this issue, I feel ..."	Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Not Confident	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
57-66 Coping with issues: "I make a study timetable; I skip classes, etc"	I always do this	I often do this	I don't know	I sometimes do this	I never do this
67-82 Experiences: "Cost of living; exams; etc"	Very Good	Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Bad	Very Bad

The following conclusion was reached relating to the utility of the questionnaire in terms of participant engagement:

- Overall, the combined contribution of comments and the distribution of responses on the Likert-scaled questions suggested that respondents did exhibit a degree of thoughtfulness in responding to the questionnaire.
- This further suggested that data of interest emerging from analysis of the pilot questionnaire was suitable as a basis for the selection of questions for the subsequent follow-up interviews/focus group.

To investigate student engagement with and understanding of the questionnaire, non-responses to questions were analysed in terms of both non-response by question and non-response by participant.

Generally the response rate to questions was very good, with a low non-response rate of only 4.6%. When the non-response rate by participant was analysed, the extent of participation in the 44 pilot questionnaires was found to be:

- Eight respondents (18.2% of the sample) withdrew part-way through the questionnaire.
- Twelve respondents (27.3%) answered all questions.
- The remaining 24 participants (54.5%) all answered more than 90% of the questions asked.

Overall, with 95% of respondents attempting more than 90% of all questions, it was concluded that participants understood the questions being asked.

Data of interest

Analysis of responses to the pilot questionnaire identified six key points as data of interest for later investigation. These were:

1. Where and in what language did students complete their high schooling? This could illuminate issues in L1/L2 and the type of teaching and learning to be expected at university in Australia.

2. Was home-country preparation for university learning in Australia meaningful in terms of learning expectations from the point of view of the university? For example, was preparation predominantly language-based, as in IELTS/TOEFL preparation to meet a regulatory need for a student visa (DIAC 2007b), or was the preparation more in terms of learning and study practices aimed at minimising earlier exposure in school to surface learning and passive non-participation (such as is discussed in Chalmers & Volet 1997, for example)?
3. Based on experience, what really were the hardest aspects of starting university in Australia? Conversely, what was easier than expected? Were these issues academic in nature, or did they relate to some other factor?
4. Is the workload for an international undergraduate student reasonable? Does the university expect too much, or too little, from students; and how do they cope with this?
5. Based on experience, what do international students perceive as the best, and worse, aspects of studying at university in Australia?
6. Overall, how in the opinion of international students could the experience be made better, in terms of both academic learning and life generally in Australia?

These key issues were used to inform the questions asked in the follow-up interviews/focus group, as shown in Appendix 3.

Patterns emerging from the data in the pilot questionnaire

An overall pattern started to emerge from the data. This pattern introduced five broad themes to be investigated in analysis of the full data sample as follows:

Emerging Data Pattern 1: Getting along with others may not be an issue

- Getting along with others, teachers, staff and fellow students does not present an issue for respondents, with the exception that some staff appear uninterested in the needs of international students.

Emerging Data Pattern 2: Academic matters may be an issue

- Academic matters, in terms of a perceived excessive workload.

Emerging Data Pattern 3: Library and Internet equipment and staff may be an issue

- Library research and Internet access, in terms of insufficient equipment and unresponsive staff.

Emerging Data Pattern 4: University administrative matters may be an issue

- University administrative matters, in terms of regulations, student support and the recognition of prior learning (exemptions). And

Emerging Data Pattern 5: The perception of 'value' may be an issue

- Other matters affecting the overall experience, particularly the perceived value for money in an international education.

Apparent contradictions in the data

The data also revealed a number of minor contradictions, or apparent contradictions, in the respondents' perception of how to deal with certain academic issues that students can experience at university in Australia. The plan for subsequent follow-up interviews was designed to allow further investigation of these matters.

Of particular concern was the apparent major contradiction in the discourse on international education in Australia that emerges from the data, namely Q.74 regarding students' perceptions of what constitutes value for money in an international education experience.

Unexplained results that form the basis for follow-up questions

A number of unexplained results also emerged from analysis of the pilot questionnaire data. These matters were also structured into the follow-up interview questions. Principally, the unexplained results identify that further investigation was justified in the areas of:

- Schooling and language proficiency prior to arriving in Australia;
- Work-life balance;
- Difficulties faced in settling-in and coping with life in Australia; and
- Identifiers of good and bad aspects of the overall experience when compared to expectation.

Improvements

The administration of the pilot questionnaire, its content, and the responses to the pilot questionnaire were satisfactory, and no significant changes were considered necessary before administration of the main questionnaire. One minor change in terminology was considered appropriate: the word “Chinese” as an option for main language spoken at home was amended to read “Other Chinese Language” as an alternative to the language options of Cantonese and Mandarin already included in the question.

Preferred sample size

Table 4 on page 92 shows that the population of the pilot survey did not constitute a sufficient sample size for confidence in or generalisability of the results of the pilot survey. As shown in Table 6 below, the preferred sample sizes to attain a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval .05 for the various research groupings of birth country and language at home were not attained in the questionnaire pilot.

The lack of a sufficiently representative sample size in the pilot meant that it was not prudent to comment on the generalisability of the results of analysis of the pilot survey sample until such time as a reliable research population was attained.

Table 6: Preferred sample sizes (source: Creative Research Systems 2003)

Preferred Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B. Acc. Cohort	Pilot Questionnaire Responses	Preferred Sample Size	% of Cohort
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort	315	44	173	55%
Female	50	8	44	88%
Male	265	36	157	59%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort Birth Country				
India	135	23	100	74%
Bangladesh	99	11	79	80%
Nepal	44	6	40	91%
Pakistan	19	1	18	95%
Sri Lanka	8	1	8	100%
Kenya	7	0	7	100%
Australia	1	0	1	100%

Preferred Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B. Acc. Cohort	Pilot Questionnaire Responses	Preferred Sample Size	% of Cohort
Fiji	1	1	1	100%
Hong Kong	1	0	1	100%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort Home Language				
Bengali	92	12	74	80%
Nepali	45	6	40	89%
Punjabi	44	11	40	91%
Hindi	43	7	39	91%
English	32	3	30	94%
Gujarati	30	4	28	93%
Urdu	14	0	14	100%
Sinhalese	4	1	4	100%
Marathi	2	0	2	100%
Pashto	2	1	2	100%
Sindhi	2	0	2	100%
Telugu	2	1	2	100%
Tamil	1	0	1	100%

Conclusion: Utility of the pilot questionnaire

Given the generally good response to the pilot and the need for only one minor change in terminology for language at home, the data gathered in the pilot was included in the analysis of the data gathered in administration of the main questionnaire. Administration of the main questionnaire was therefore adapted to ensure that students who participated in the pilot did not also participate in the main questionnaire.

Chapter 5 following provides an analysis of the evidence gathered in responses to the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews to derive answers to the research questions.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Data

Introduction

This chapter presents an interpretation of the findings from the analysis of data gathered during administration of the research questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The research was designed to answer two questions posed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The process used in this chapter is similar to the construct used in the literature review to present thematic heads of findings (Schofield 2003).

Two data sets were gathered for analysis. The first was voluntary responses to a survey questionnaire. The second was the transcripts of interviews with survey respondents who also volunteered to participate in the follow-up interviews. Of 186 Sub-continental students who were studying at the university at the time of data collection, 125 survey questionnaire responses were gathered for analysis, equivalent to 67% of the potential research cohort.

Analysis of questionnaire responses described a research cohort of international students who were:

- From India, Bangladesh and Nepal (67.2%), predominantly male (80%), and aged between 20 and 24 years old (66.4%);
- Studying the Bachelor of Accounting program (98.4%), in their first or second year at the academy (71.2%), and returning an average academic GPA of 2.568 (Table 20, page 175).

Data from the questionnaire was supplemented by student voice in the follow-up interviews with the researcher. Twenty five survey respondents also participated in these interviews, representing around 13% of the potential research cohort and 20% of survey respondents. Interviewees were selected to provide a mix of home country, gender, age, first term of study at the university, and overall academic progress at university in Australia. Two students participating in the interviews were in their first term of study at the university, and two further students had just started their second term. Interviewees⁸ in their first term of study were:

- No.11, a 21-year old male from Ta Dheri, India; and
- No.33, a 21-year old male from New Delhi, India.

Just starting their second term at the university were interviewees:

- No.27, a 19-year old female from Hoshiarpur, India; and
- No.28, a 30-year old female from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Appendix 3 presents a discussion of the rationale and methodology used in the selection of interview questions and the choice of participants. Interview participants were de-identified to ensure confidentiality. Their comments are presented throughout the analysis in this chapter to illustrate the learning that emerged during analysis.

The data presented in this chapter is distilled from the detailed analysis and discussion of each survey question. That detailed analysis of both the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews is presented at Appendix 5. The sequence of presentation demonstrates how the research findings emerged heuristically as analysis progressed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000; Irvine 1998; Marginson & Rhoades 2002).

⁸ A description of all interviewees is presented in Table 23 on page 190.

Analysis

The analysis that follows presents an interpretive view of the issues facing this cohort of Sub-continental international students. The analysis serves as a prelude to discussion later in the chapter of the patterns that emerged in relation to each hypothesis. Eight major themes were evident in analysis. These were:

- Theme 1 - Background tensions regarding English language and balancing commitments.
- Theme 2 - Word of mouth advice from family and friends is the main form of preparing for university study in Australia.
- Theme 3 - Participants were confident about living and studying in Australia but concerned about receiving value for money.
- Theme 4 - University learning in Australia has not been a great challenge.
- Theme 5 - The overall university experience has matched expectation but the perception of value has not.
- Theme 6 - The cost of living and work-study balance has been harder than expected.
- Theme 7 - Student voice reinforces the concept of students as consumers.
- Theme 8 - Students in their first term were generally less confident than others.

Theme 1 - Background tensions regarding English language and balancing commitments

The first major theme emerged during analysis of the first section of the questionnaire (Q.1–10). These questions were designed to gather background information and create a broad demographic view of the research cohort, particularly their home countries, main languages spoken at home, previous study, and the participants' present work-study balance in Australia. The data gathered from this section was also intended to supplement the university-sourced data presented in Appendix 1.

From the outset, two tensions became apparent in these students' perceptions of learning in an 'international-only' university campus in Sydney. These tensions related to the medium of English language usage, and the challenges faced in balancing study and part-time work. For this cohort of international students English language was not an issue, and this influenced their perceptions of 'difference' between themselves and domestic students. Further, the need for these students to undertake part-time work in addition to their university studies created an onerous burden. Evidence of the impact of these dual tensions on students' perceptions of their experience in an Australian university was to emerge further as analysis progressed.

English, L1 and L2

For this cohort, languages spoken at home were predominantly Bengali 30.4%, Punjabi 17%, Nepali 13.3%, Gujarati 11.1%, and Hindi 11.1%. Whilst only 5.2% of the cohort responding to the questionnaire identified English as one of their main languages spoken at home, most had studied in the medium of English in their last school (84.8%), which for all but 2.4% of the sample population was not in Australia. Of the respondents who completed high school overseas, 92.4% studied in a country recognised as favouring a rote-learning pedagogy (Raina & Dhand 2000).

The data revealed that issues relating to the use and understanding of the English language are not matters of serious concern to this particular cohort of international students. This finding appears contrary to notions of difficulties with English reported in other literature (for example Barthel 2007; Rifkin et al. 1997). The issue of the extent of English language usage, and particular difficulties experienced upon arrival in Australia, was considered in the follow-up interviews, with participants offering extensive and insightful comment as shown below. As far as possible, student comments have been transcribed to retain the original grammar and spelling.

The problem is it's the accent that we don't understand. It's more of an Asian accent ... it's very hard for us to understand.

My home country in Kenya. We normally start studying in the English ... most of it was in English.

Some teachers we can't understand them, they pronounce and stuff ...

I have grown up with English. My high school Qatar, from Doha ... English I started in kindergarten. Home language is Bengali ... sometimes in French or sometimes Bengali, some English, it's all mixed ... yes, a mix it all with English.

In Chittagong in Bangladesh ... basically we studied accounting in bachelor, in English, in my home country. Basically the language thing is my problem ... accent is totally different ... I attended the classes, listened, and talked with the people, and slowly ... it took me about one year I think.

English [medium of instruction] throughout. Right from KG [kindergarten]. Yeah.

In Nepal. In Kathmandu. We are taught English from preschool ... all in English.

What annoys me most is, it's not like we don't understand English, we don't speak English, we do but we are not much used to it eh, sometimes you don't get exact words and sometimes I think, I just think, for example what about this one and other person that talks to you, you might think she doesn't know how to speak English. It's not that I don't speak English. I just don't get the words, the exact words and the dialect. Speak differently.

If you are going to Australia you should have separate thoughts for like Australia. They like speak this way.

I work in checkouts ... it was a bit difficult. After I started work, two or three months I got used to it. Because I had to listen.

So, just a bit of difference with accents here.

These comments indicate that it is not so much knowledge of or competence in the use of English that presents a difficulty to international students, but dialect differences, particularly in relation to pronunciation.

The issue of language as a factor of difference in international education is discussed further in Chapter 6 in relation to students for whom English is L1 and those classified English L2. The data in this research shows that the cohort studied was predominantly English L2 in terms of main language spoken at home, yet 84% of the students surveyed had completed high school study in English, and did adapt to the colloquial use in Australia.

This finding reinforces the position of some observers (for example, Volet & Ang 1998; Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999; Marginson & Rhoades 2002) that when English language is not an issue for international students, then distinctions in learning strategies based on language background alone may not need to differ between domestic and international students.

Balancing study and part-time work

Almost three-quarters of the cohort (73.6% of responses to Q.10) had a part-time job in addition to their university studies. The university's expectation is that students will commit to a 48 hour per week study load during term time. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: B Accounting program planner 2007 (source: university handbook and course profiles)

B Accounting Program Planner 2007			
Course	Recommended Study Commitment (H.P.W.)	Course	Recommended Study Commitment (H.P.W.)
Term 1		Term 2	
Using Accounting for Decision Making	12	Principles of Accounting	12
Foundations of Business Computing	12	Organisational Behaviour	12
Marketing	12	Introductory and Contract Law	12
Principles of Economics	12	Essential Statistics	12
Total	48		48

Visa regulations also allow up to 20 hours work per week while a program is in session, with no restrictions on working hours during term breaks (DIAC 2009c). Given these twin circumstances, it is conceivable that students might engage in up to 68 hours each week of “work” in the form of classes, study, and part-time job.

By comparison, when considering the balance between work and family life in Australia, the then Acting Sex Discrimination Commissioner, The Hon. John von Doussa QC (in vonDoussa 2007), identified an average of 46 hours worked per week as being ‘unacceptably long’, further noting that:

Employees and employers acknowledge that working long hours doesn't necessarily equate with extra productivity. Some admitted that working long hours actually reduces a person's productivity.

(vonDoussa 2007, p.4)

The issue of the tensions between university study and the imperative of part-time work was therefore considered in the follow-up interviews, with interview participants offering comments such as:

Usually [to work] two to three days. I keep the two things separately, today I got uni, I never go to work. I stop work at least two weeks before exams.

I was working three days, six hour shift every day. Two days at university. I spend around 10 to 12 hours at uni. I just sit in the library doing my assignment.

I feel a bit overloaded. Four days [at university]. Weekend [work] actually three days Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I work in the morning. I get a bit tired, but Saturday night I'll have some time for myself.

Four days [to university]. Five days [to work]. I am doing a part-time job. Yes. I'm tired.

I work in supermarket three days. Once the term is finished I take off from my work and then I just concentrate on my studies.

[Work] Three days. Two days are the same [as university] and one is different ... sometimes six or seven hours in a day. Yeah, it's difficult working and studying.

These opinions also broadly reflect those of “Edward”, the twenty-year-old ELICOS student from Taiwan (reported in Ahern 2009, pp.3-5) and also studying in the same city at the same time as the research cohort. Edward’s ‘bleak cautionary tale’ advised against students working and studying, in the strongest possible terms:

If you fail, even you work very hard in the course, you still fail. Same thing. So they better not to work.

(Ahern 2009, p.4)

Work participation by this cohort represented a level similar to the national average for international students (Nyland et al. 2008). Of interest in analysing the issue of balancing study and part-time work was the absence in these participants of the feelings of vulnerability and exploitation described in Nyland’s report.

Theme 2 - Word of mouth advice from family and friends is the main form of preparing for university study in Australia

The second theme to emerge during analysis related to the power of word of mouth advice (for example, DalGLISH & Chan 2005). Questionnaire data and student voice in the follow-up interviews revealed that word of mouth advice from family and friends was the dominant source of information for this cohort in preparing for a university education experience in Australia.

The preparations section of the questionnaire (Q.11-32) set out to test the assumption that high school study and a satisfactory IELTS result was considered by participants to be sufficient preparation for university. The assumption was that students considered their learning experiences at home to be enough preparation for university in Australia, and that satisfactorily passing the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL test was the only further form of academic preparation that they needed to consider.

The questions in this section asked participants to respond with a YES or NO answer regarding possible preparation activities, and then go on to quantify just how helpful the type of preparatory experience had been. As well, respondents were asked to specify the type of research activity undertaken, and evaluate its usefulness as preparation for university study in Australia.

The questions related to research in the form of reading, internet searching, talking with others, preparatory language courses, and a number of other types of preparation that could be expected of a person about to set out on an expatriate learning experience. The relative usefulness of these aspects of preparation became evident when responses were sorted in descending order of how helpful a particular aspect was perceived to be. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Preparations

Preparations for University Study in Australia – Ranked Responses								
Qn.	Content	1 Most Helpful	2 Helpful	3 Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	4 Not Helpful	5 Very Unhelpful	No Response	Total
23	IELTS/TOEFL language course.	54	33	4	0	1	33	125
17	Talking with parents or family.	47	41	5	0	0	32	125
18	Talking with other students.	31	45	3	1	0	45	125
19	Talking with university recruiters.	22	33	14	2	2	52	125
14	Searching online about university life.	21	39	5	0	0	60	125
13	Other reading.	12	29	6	1	0	77	125
16	Other online research.	12	26	5	0	1	81	125
15	Searching online about learning expected.	12	23	0	0	2	88	125

Preparations for University Study in Australia – Ranked Responses								
Qn.	Content	1 Most Helpful	2 Helpful	3 Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	4 Not Helpful	5 Very Unhelpful	No Response	Total
24	Language courses <u>other</u> than IELTS/TOEFL.	12	5	3	0	0	105	125
22	Talking with other people about studying at <u>this</u> university.	11	10	1	0	0	103	125
21	Talking with university lecturers.	10	9	3	0	1	102	125
32	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	10	9	2	0	0	104	125
11	Reading about university life.	7	29	6	2	1	80	125
20	Talking with Australian Government representatives.	6	10	7	0	1	101	125
25	University preparatory course <u>in home country</u> .	6	6	5	0	0	108	125
12	Reading about learning expected.	5	20	4	0	0	96	125
26	Pre-departure briefing by this university.	5	10	7	0	0	103	125
31	Previous visits to Australia.	5	6	1	1	0	112	125
29	<u>Other</u> types of preparatory courses.	5	5	4	1	0	110	125
27	University preparatory course <u>in Australia</u> .	4	8	5	1	0	107	125
28	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	2	6	6	1	0	110	125
30	Audit (sit in on) university classes.	2	5	2	1	0	115	125
	Total	301	407	98	11	9	1924	2750
	% of Total Responses	11.0%	14.8%	3.6%	0.4%	0.3%	70.0%	100%

The pattern that emerged showed that preparation for study in Australia focused on five areas: completing an IELTS/TOEFL course (69.6%, Q.23); word of mouth advice from family, other students already studying in Australia and university recruiters (58.4% of responses in Q.17, Q.18, and Q.19), and internet searching (48% in Q.14).

Word of mouth information was used more than either print or Internet data in preparing for university learning in Australia. University-published materials (both print and online media) were of limited relevance as a source of information. In the

case of this research, word of mouth was used 25% more than print or Internet media. This is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Reading and the Internet compared with Word of Mouth

Sources of Information – Reading & Internet Compared with Word of Mouth					
Qn.	Content	Yes	No	No Response	Total
11-16	Reading & Internet research.	309	413	28	750
17-22	Word of Mouth preparations.	412	302	36	750
Difference between Word of Mouth preparations and Reading/Internet preparations		103			
% Difference		25%			

All other forms of preparation canvassed in the questionnaire generally were either not undertaken or if they were respondents were uncertain as to their usefulness.

Two key issues were therefore investigated in the follow-up interviews. The first was the high dependence on word of mouth advice from persons other than the university. The second related to English language usage, particularly the utility of the IELTS/TOEFL test as an indicator of preparedness to live and study in an English speaking country such as Australia.

During interviews, volunteer participants discussed the power of word of mouth advice when making a decision about where to study, and the challenges they faced in dealing with new domestic arrangements upon arrival in Australia. They gave voice to this as follows:

Information I got from my friends who are here earlier, from the same country as well. So I was asking them too, like how is the study over there? What subjects should I need to do? I got information from the bigger students.

My mum give it to choose. She told me ... and I said 'Alright, I have to do that' whatever she said.

My friends. They told me to do it like this. That's easy way.

A couple of my friends said that there's a good opportunity in Australia ... so, better to go to Australia.

In considering English language usage, two matters were investigated. One was the impact of the participants' ability to 'understand Australian colloquialisms' (Kukec 2006, p.53). The other was the perception in the literature that the IELTS and

TOEFL tests possibly are ‘not sensitive enough to indicate language preparedness for specialised uses’ (Hirsh 2007, p.206).

Interview questions were structured to allow comparison between responses to the question ‘Before you started at this university, did you do anything special to prepare ...?’ and ‘Looking back, what one suggestion would you have ...?’ The intent was to investigate through an interpretative approach (Allan 2005) if participants’ assumptions concerning English language competency before leaving home matched their experiences upon arrival in Australia.

The outcome was that most interviewees felt that an IELTS course and/or test was sufficient preparation. Despite some early difficulty, interviewees recalled adapting to language differences within a reasonable period of time. Participants in this research were engaging not only with dialect differences between the English spoken in their home countries and the local Australian usage, but also with other students and staff at the university for whom English is L2. They recounted experiences on their adjustment to Australian colloquialism, with remarks such as:

Even the first day, I can't forget it, first day the train, what he said over the speak, he was saying something about the closing doors that were opening, and I can't understand what they were saying [laughs] I could just understand the door.

The accents are totally different. All the accents here is totally different. I really had so much problem with this Aussie accent, even in my work I couldn't understand what the customer was saying.

The lecturer, those are from China ... but they speak too fast. It's like English but the pronunciation is totally different ... it takes time, like three months I think.

Similarly, when commenting on their English language preparedness for university study interviewees observed:

Yeah the IELTS course, IELTS exam, IELTS preparation. [When asked what advice, upon reflection, would be given to an intending international student:] Choosing the right university, choosing the right subject.

Special; like what? yes ... I proceeded like for UK I did my IELTS in UK, then I was accepted here ... [When looking back on their experiences with hindsight in responding to a further interview question:] Try to know what you want in your future.

I'm not aware ... I went to one tutorial for a week, for the preparation of that IELTS test. But it's not an exam. [Was there anything else?] No. [Hindsight:] Don't come here.

I just prepare myself in British Council for IELTS test and finish the IELTS test and come back in here. [Hindsight:] Yeah, before you come organise yourself.

IELTS for one month. [Hindsight:] Here there are assignments.

Then I was prepared for English ... British Council ... three months ... then I do all the IELTS with them.

No nothing, just IELTS.

The students' perception that an acceptable IELTS result presumes sufficient competency in English language preparedness was further reinforced during the interviews. This was evident when none of the interviewees referred to or commented on the adequacy of the mandatory Australian government requirement for issue of a student visa that potential international students demonstrate 'a specific minimum standard of English language proficiency' (DIAC 2007b, n.p.).

Instead of concern with English language usage as noted by Cooper (1998), most apprehension appeared to take the form of financial preparation, better choosing in advance of universities and courses, or making the decision to leave home in the first place. For those who do come to Australia, the best preparation was summarised by interviewee No.33, a 21 year old male from New Delhi in his first term at the university. His view was, quite simply:

Get your shoes ready.

Theme 3 - Participants were confident about living and studying in Australia but concerned about receiving value for money

Adding to participants' earlier tensions relating to colloquial language and balancing study and work, the third theme to emerge during analysis was the perception that participants were not confident they received value for money in their Australian experience. This finding emerged from responses to the confidence section of the questionnaire. The confidence section (Q.33-56) had set out to test the assumption that if the two principal modes of preparation were talking with parents and other international students, and undertaking a course for the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL

test, then how did the experience of starting university in Australia match this expectation?

Participants were asked to respond to 24 questions with a scaled answer regarding how confident they were with certain aspects of living and studying at university in Australia. The final question in the section (Q.56) was an open-ended question designed to elicit additional information and monitor the utility of the questionnaire in identifying and canvassing issues in the preceding questions of the section.

Questions related to aspects of university life such as settling-in, keeping up with workload, participation in class and understanding the material presented, and specific undergraduate tasks such as research, assignments and examinations. Ranked responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: How confident are you?

Confidence at University in Australia								
Qn.	Content	1 Very Confident	2 Confident	3 Neither Confident nor Not Confident	4 Not Confident	5 Very Unconfident	No Response	Total
38	Understanding lectures.	46	63	5	4	0	7	125
45	Explaining in English.	44	65	8	1	0	7	125
33	Settling-in.	44	53	11	7	0	10	125
40	Lecturers and assignments.	42	59	15	2	0	7	125
46	Asking tutors questions.	42	59	13	2	1	8	125
41	Asking lecturers' questions.	41	59	14	3	0	8	125
34	Settling-in to university.	40	56	10	8	1	10	125
43	Group activities.	39	65	12	1	1	7	125
36	Mixing with other students.	39	56	16	5	1	8	125
44	Tutorial input to assignments.	38	65	14	0	0	8	125
48	Solving	38	63	13	3	1	7	125

Confidence at University in Australia								
Qn.	Content	1 Very Confident	2 Confident	3 Neither Confident nor Not Confident	4 Not Confident	5 Very Unconfident	No Response	Total
	problems.							
54	Doing assignments.	37	68	10	1	1	8	125
42	Answering questions.	37	62	15	4	0	7	125
55	Doing exams.	36	64	11	5	1	8	125
52	Online searching.	35	66	10	2	2	10	125
47	Learning past exams.	34	67	14	2	0	8	125
39	Taking notes in lectures.	34	64	18	2	0	7	125
53	Writing in English.	33	74	8	2	0	8	125
49	Applying theory.	32	64	16	4	1	8	125
37	Ability to succeed.	30	67	15	4	1	8	125
51	Library searching.	25	66	18	3	4	9	125
50	Thinking critically.	22	67	22	3	3	8	125
35	University workload.	17	72	19	8	1	8	125
	Total	825	1464	307	76	19	184	2875
	% of Total Responses	29%	51%	11%	2%	1%	6%	100%
56	Anything else?	Yes	66	No	40		19	125

Generally, the responses showed that the group enjoyed a high to very high degree of confidence in their ability to study successfully at university in Australia. Responses of very confident and confident ranged from a maximum of 92.4% regarding listening to and understanding in lectures (Q.38) and explaining in English what I know about a subject (Q.45), to 76.1% who felt confident about thinking critically (Q.50) and in keeping up with the university workload (Q.35).

On the subject of settling-in and coping with domestic arrangements in Australia, interview participants reinforced the generally positive expression of confidence that was evident in questionnaire responses. Comments were offered by interviewees such as:

Well, we are away from home, and we have to cope.

It wasn't very difficult.

I don't suffer any things.

Best thing I have found is I have become independent.

At first time nothing was easier, nothing. All hard, new country, different culture, different religion, everything is different. That's right. I need time to adjust ... one year.

Everything was learning for me. Everything is learning. ... What I found it was really very tough over here to settle without any of your relatives ... in India ... my parents were there ... so it was very difficult for me in the beginning but then it was alright since I started learning and everything, and then things were easy.

The hardest thing is lifestyle is totally changed for me. Whereas in my country everything – my parents do everything for me and when I come here I have to exist with fast life.

This cohort appeared, therefore, to have satisfactorily undertaken a transition to life in Australia, and to the teaching practised in an Australian university. The challenging and problematic gap in learning expectations arising from the literature relating to perceived differences in pedagogy between the Sub-continent and Australia as discussed in Chapter 1 was not evident for this cohort.

This finding supports the choice of methodological approach and questionnaire design discussed in Chapter 3. It also lends support to the view of Marginson that students who are the product of an education system shaped by British colonisation can be 'readily slotted in to Australian universities without much change to curriculum and pedagogies' (Marginson 2002, p.34).

The free-text comments in the questionnaire and follow-up interviews probed more deeply. The intent was to tease out of respondents and then further explore the nature of any true concerns that might exist. An interesting trend emerged that started to illuminate a relationship between the two conversations of risk in business and risk in learning that frame the second research question. That trend was the perception of

value for money in the cost of an international education. Participants telegraphed the issue with comments such as:

My [subject named] tutor dose [sic] not teach any single word for whole term. He just sitting in front of the class doing nothing.

Racist people.

Very Commercial.

For international students, university's fees accommodation are quite expensive for them. Therefore they always need to work part time it makes burden for them to study and the job together.

"Fraud". There is no one to listen to international student.

These comments started to illuminate the dichotomy of perceived value for money and a quality product (as reported in Smith 2007, for example) particularly in terms of the increased pressure on international students as their course nears completion, given their visa, employment and family expectations (Dhesi 2001; Nyland et al. 2008). Analysis lent support to the observations in New Zealand of Sherry and associates that international students are:

Not confident that they are getting value for money, or that the skills they are being taught will get them good results both academically and for future employment. They are also unsure of lecturers' knowledge in their subject area and do not feel that an adequate range of support services are being offered to them.

(Sherry et al. 2004, p.9)

The issue of perceived value for money in an international education was further explored in subsequent sections of the questionnaire and in follow-up interviews, as reported later in this chapter.

Theme 4 - University learning in Australia has not been a great challenge

The study also set out to explore the way in which participants coped with the learning issues that confronted them at university in Australia, and the fourth theme to emerge from analysis was that the students' experience had matched their expectation in this regard. This finding emerged from analysis of the coping section of the questionnaire, which comprised 10 questions (Q.57-66).

Overall, the data in this coping section suggested that, contrary to the negative perceptions identified in the literature in Chapter 1, settling-in to university did not appear to be too great a challenge for the students in this survey. A positive response to settling-in to life and study in Australia was also evident in the follow-up interviews, with participants commenting as follows:

Can't really think about it. I think everything is done to make our life better.

The environment here. Because teachers are very cooperative, that's why.

It was alright since I started learning and everything and then things were easy.

We want our tutors and lecturers to show us the door, but it's us we have to go through it but if you show us the wrong door we'll be lost.

In Australia they need people and if you can get into Australia you can get good education for universities.

In the coping section of the questionnaire participants were asked to respond with a scaled answer describing how often they did something, or sought the assistance of a university service. The first three questions (Q.57-59) investigated issues of time management and plagiarism. Seven subsequent questions (Q.60-66) investigated the extent to which international students accessed university services that are seen as cost centres by some managers in a business-driven academic enterprise.

Respondents engaged well with the questions, with 93.8% attempting each question in the section. Responses are summarised in Table 11. The sequence of question numbers in the Table has been arranged to rank the degree of action or inaction in descending order.

Table 11: Coping

Coping with Issues at University in Australia								
Qn.	Content	1 Always	2 Often	3 Don't Know	4 Some Times	5 Never	No Response	Total
57	Making a study timetable.	33	49	3	19	10	11	125
63	Asking Faculty.	32	33	12	20	18	10	125
62	Asking Client Services.	32	29	10	18	26	10	125
61	Asking Learning Skills Unit.	29	37	10	26	14	9	125
66	Using home language.	20	31	14	24	27	9	125
64	Using TECC employment.	18	19	22	14	41	11	125
60	Asking friends.	14	19	10	24	46	12	125

Coping with Issues at University in Australia								
Qn.	Content	1 Always	2 Often	3 Don't Know	4 Some Times	5 Never	No Response	Total
58	Skipping classes.	11	19	11	30	45	9	125
65	Keeping quiet in class.	11	10	15	21	59	9	125
59	Copying chunks of text.	8	37	13	27	31	9	125
	Total	208	283	120	223	317	99	1250
	% of Total Responses	17%	23%	9%	18%	25%	8%	100%

Analysis revealed that students perceived that they did in fact cope satisfactorily with the learning issues that confront them. The group perceived that they were well organised and sought help when needed. Sixty-five percent of responses indicated a positive approach to issues such as making a study timetable; asking faculty, client services and the learning skills unit for help; not skipping class; not keeping quiet or using home language in class; and not 'copying large chunks of text'. The exception was the free employment and career coaching service, which was accessed by only 29% of respondents (Q.64).

Plagiarism

A test for thoughtfulness had been built into this section of the questionnaire. To test if respondents merely ticked the boxes without thinking, the sense of some questions investigating how students cope was mixed to include positive and negative actions, whilst the scale criteria remained the same as for other questions. Only 11% of responses were indicative of a donkey vote, the others providing variable responses to the ten questions in this section of the questionnaire.

The data revealed that 45% of respondents always or often copied large chunks of text (Q.59), and that 45% only sometimes, or never, asked the learning skills unit for help with assignments and English (Q.61). These two interrelated issues of plagiarism and the perceived usefulness of the learning skills unit were considered in the follow-up interviews. The matter was introduced obliquely in terms of how helpful friends might be. No mention was made by interviewees to either plagiarism or to the usefulness of the learning skills unit, except for one comment:

I just take help off those guys [my friends] and I just ask them for the previous assignments to have a look how they prepare, how to reference and all that so I just do that way ...

Keeping quiet in class

Discussion of the literature on learning styles in Chapter 3 raised the proposition that a quiet learner need not necessarily be a passive learner, and degrees of quietness may instead be a matter of cultural difference. Question 65 was therefore intentionally designed as a leading question to examine the issue of keeping quiet in class. The words *because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student* was added to the end of the question. Cohen and colleagues (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.122) make a case for such questioning in cases where it is suspected that certain information might otherwise be withheld.

In this case, the suspicion lay in the perceptions surrounding the individualism-collectivism debate (Tan & Goh 2006) present in the literature on pedagogy in international education (for example Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999; Hellmundt 2000; Raina & Dhand 2000; Tanaka 2002). The data that emerged from responses contradicts the preconception that international students, stereotypically, are quiet in class. Instead, the Sub-continental students in this research cohort presented as more verbally engaged in class than what research has shown to date about students from east Asian non-English speaking backgrounds.

Tatar's (2005) exploration of anxiety in international students' classroom interactions suggests that participation relates more to educational and environmental factors such as cultural background and classroom dynamics than to language proficiency. A generally positive aspect of classroom interaction emerged from the data. Only 16.8% of respondents (Q.65) indicated that they often or always kept quiet in class. To investigate further, the nature of international students' acclimatisation to an Australian style of pedagogy in the early weeks in class was further investigated. The result is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Keeping quiet in class: The first term experience

65. Coping: keeping quiet in class and not asking for help, because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student.							
	1	2	3	4	5		
	Always	Often	Don't Know	Some Times	Never	No Response	Total
Total responses to question	11	10	15	21	59	9	125
Students in other terms	9	9	13	18	52	9	110
%	8.2%	8.2%	11.7%	16.4%	47.3%	8.2%	100%
First term students' responses	2	1	2	3	7	0	15
%	13.3%	6.7%	13.3%	20.0%	46.7%	0.0%	100%

The interest in responses to this question arises in the “never keep quiet” dimension, with students reporting a similar attitude (46.7% and 47.3% respectively) across all terms of study. However, in the “always keeping quiet” dimension first term students reported themselves as around twice as inclined to keep quiet as others (13.3% vs. only 8.2%). This may be indicative of the time taken by international students in adjusting to an Australian classroom, which could be as brief as the first term only.

Theme 5 - The overall university experience has matched expectation but the perception of value has not

Overall, the students' experience as a difference from their home environment emerged as a good experience for most, as had the experience of university learning in Australia. Significantly however, a fifth major theme emerged from analysis. Responses to the questionnaire and student voice in the follow-up interviews started to reveal that the students' perception of value for money in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of their degree had not been a good experience.

The perception of value as an issue emerged from the next section of the questionnaire, which set out to test the assumption that there might be other factors to be considered apart from university learning in Australia. The intent was to open the way to consideration of recommendations that might be appropriate in order to better satisfy international students' expectations.

The overall experience section comprised 16 questions (Q.67-82). Participants were asked to respond with a scaled answer regarding how good their experience of something had been. The issues canvassed included assessment, living and working as an international student in Australia, the usefulness of what was learnt, and the general success of the university as a service provider. The sequence of questions was deliberately randomised in an attempt to avoid any bias or sequential leading of responses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp.128-129).

Respondents engaged well with these 16 forced-option questions, with all 116 respondents who completed the preceding section continuing their participation in the survey. Aggregated responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 13. The sequence of question numbers has been arranged to rank from high to low the degree of quality perceived in the overall experience.

Table 13: *Quality of the overall experience*

Quality of the Overall Experience				
Qn.	Content	1 Very Good + 2 Good	Total	% of Total
			> 80% Agreement with the quality of the overall experience	
72	Studying in English.	108	125	86.4%
75	Courses studied.	104	125	83.2%
71	Studying at university.	103	125	82.4%
69	Students from other cultures.	102	125	81.6%
			< 80% Agreement	
78	Usefulness of my course.	98	125	78.4%
79	Course structure.	93	125	77.4%
67	Continuous assessment.	90	125	72.0%
68	Doing exams.	90	125	72.0%
80	The way courses are taught.	90	125	72.0%
70	Balancing study and work.	88	125	70.4%
82	Working in groups.	88	125	70.4%
77	Support from staff.	83	125	66.4%
81	Tourism and recreation.	75	125	60.0%
			< 60% Agreement	
76	Differences AUS and home.	70	125	56.0%
			< 50% Agreement	
73	Cost of living.	38	125	30.4%

Quality of the Overall Experience				
Qn.	Content	1 Very Good + 2 Good	Total	% of Total
74	Cost of degree.	34	125	27.2%

Overall, the pattern that emerged from the data showed that the experience of university study in Australia had been very good or good for two-thirds of the cohort. Except for the key issue of perceived value for money, the student experience had matched the expectation. A number of patterns emerged from the data. They can be summarised as follows:

Overall, the university experience in Australia appears to have been good (Q.71), with students displaying a generally positive outlook toward the overall experience, including the tourist and recreation opportunities available (Q.81). Balancing study and part-time work (Q.70) does not appear to have been an unsatisfactory experience, and learning in groups (Q.82) with students from other countries and cultures (Q.69) had been a positive experience.

Respondents found the experience to be an overall positive difference from studying in their home country (Q.76), with the experiences of studying in English (Q.72), continuous assessment in the form of assignments during the term (Q.67), and examinations (Q.68) not appearing to be a bad experience. The majority of students (74.4%) reported finding it easy to follow what was being taught (Q.79), and found satisfaction in the way it was taught (Q.80). They were similarly satisfied with both the courses studied at the university (Q.75), and their usefulness (Q.78), which represented a very good or good experience.

However, a significant number of students appeared to again take issue with the twin aspects of the cost of living (61.6% in Q.73) and reported an overall low level of satisfaction with customer service (24.8% in Q.77) at university in Australia. This last finding represents a dichotomy between the positive overall usefulness of what is being studied (78.4% in Q.78) and its perceived low value as a quality product (44.0% in Q.74).

These findings support several recent studies. For example:

The incidence of high levels of anxiety in international student experiences reported earlier by Cooper (1998) may now have been overcome through experience. It was to test this assumption that the questionnaire used in this research was based in part on the short questionnaires administered by Cooper to gauge students' perceptions of difficulties in international education in Australia a decade earlier.

The findings also tend to suggest that the English language difficulties identified in international students from Asia by Sawir (2005) may not apply to Sub-continental students. The findings also support in part the contention of Asmar and Peseta (2001) that peer interaction and a student-centred learning environment supports the success of international students.

This outcome was similar in part to the 'not language' contentions of Volet (Volet 2001; Volet & Ang 1998) and Tanaka (2002) that the problems of international students are more associated with academic issues. The 'not language' contention supports the findings of Hellmundt (2000) that the experience of intercultural teaching and learning generally is a positive one. Hellmundt also proposes that for international students it would be more productive to address issues in teaching practice that stimulate a student-centred institutional culture, rather than focussing on perceived deficiencies. Further, Leask (2006) has also suggested that international students' perceptions of the ideal transnational classroom include a teacher who will engage students from different cultural backgrounds in discussion and group work.

An example of this form of student-centred culture could be the cultural mediation upon first arrival at university proposed by Magalh (2005) for Asian-born university students starting at an English-speaking university in the United States. Magalh has proposed a practice in which peer networks of international students assist in the assimilation process as an alternative to later, and costly, institutional mediation when academic difficulties become evident.

The findings also support the earlier work by Owens (2005) at the same research site of this study that practitioners there are developing an intercultural awareness of international students and its relationship to pedagogy.

Generally, the patterns that emerged from the data summarised in Table 13 show that in this survey sample the overall pedagogic experience of studying in Australia has been good or very good. Most respondents (ranging from 81% to 86% of the sample) valued the university life and the courses studied, as well as the experience of learning in English with students from other cultures. The usefulness of courses, and the manner in which they were structured, taught, assessed and supported by university staff, had been a good experience for many (with a very good or good experience identified by 60% to 79% of responses). Also a good experience for many (60% to 79% of responses) had been the challenge of balancing their study and work, and participation in the recreational services available to them. For around half of the group (56% of responses), the overall experience as a difference from their home environment had been good or very good.

Significantly however, the perception of value for money, in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of a degree had not been a good experience for most. Less than 25% of respondents identified value for money as very good or good. These results tend to confirm the findings of Sherry and associates (Sherry et al. 2004) in New Zealand that international students are not confident that they are getting value for money. The data also reflects the notion of 'self-interest causes such as tuition fees' (Rodan 2007, p.1) as a new manifestation of dissent in international student experiences at university in Australia.

The concept of value for money, or obtaining maximum benefit from an educational service (see for example University of Cambridge Secretariat 2008) may be a subjective and intangible perception. Whilst Sahney and colleagues note 'the ambiguous nature of *quality*' (Sahney, Banwet & Karunes 2004, p.145, italics in the original) as a value in the perceptions of Sub-continental students, research in Australian universities of the experience of Sub-continental undergraduate students (Arambewela 2003; Arambewela & Hall 2006; O'Neill 2003) has shown that it is the overall perception of *service quality* (as measured in the SERVQUAL construct proposed by Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1991, 1993; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988) that is primary.

The issue of what constitutes value for money in an international education experience in Australia is a central theme in the discussion that follows in Chapter 6.

Theme 6 - The cost of living and work-study balance has been harder than expected

The sixth theme to emerge from analysis reinforced the students' perception that matters of cost and working part-time whilst studying were issues of concern. The next section of the questionnaire had continued an exploration of the overall experience matching expectation, and comprised two questions (Q.83-84) that invited participants to compare what they found to be easier or harder at university in Australia than they had expected. The themes of cost of living and work-study balance were identified by teasing out of respondents through open-ended questions some illustrations of their earlier forced responses in the closed questions 67-82. Overall, both the questionnaire and interview responses supported the earlier finding that students' experiences had matched their expectation. Significantly however, negative comments and feedback in interviews on the two matters of cost and part-time work exceeded threefold the positive responses on other matters.

In Question 83, participants were asked to nominate three things that they found to be easier to do at university in Australia than they had expected. A total of 87 participants (69.6%) provided an average of 2.2 comments per respondent. Following a reflection on aspects of university life that students found to be easier than expected, in Question 84 participants were next invited to comment on things found to be harder than expected. The intention was to allow a balance in response options, and to also provide a final test of engagement and thoughtfulness in respondent participation. Seventy-nine participants offered a total of 170 comments on matters found to be harder, which again represented a response rate of 2.2 comments per respondent. Five broad contexts emerged. These were:

- Getting along with others;
- Academic matters;
- Library research and Internet access;
- University administrative matters; and

- Other matters that did not fall within the above themes.

In comparing responses to the two questions, meaning was inferred as shown in Table 14. The sequence has been arranged to rank the number of comments offered in descending order.

Table 14: Comparing what's easier and what's harder

Comparing What's Easier and What's Harder - Summary						
Context	Total	% of Total	Q.83 Easier	% of Total	Q.84 Harder	% of Total
Academic matters.	166	46.0	91	54.8	75	45.2
Other matters.	64	17.7	17	26.6	47	73.4
Library research and Internet access.	49	13.6	37	75.5	12	24.5
Getting along with others: teachers, staff and fellow students.	47	13.0	33	70.2	14	29.8
University administrative matters.	35	9.7	16	45.7	19	54.3
Total Comments	361	100%	194	54%	167	46%

University administrative matters were not considered to be a significant concern to these students. Eliciting 35 comments, university administrative matters comprised only 9.7% of responses to the two questions. As such, they constituted the least significant aspect of what students perceived to be easier or harder than expected. Both positive and negative comments were broadly similar (16 or 45.7% of the comments being good and 19 or 54.3% bad).

In terms of getting along with others (teachers, other staff and fellow students), the experience had generally been a positive one for this cohort. Easier or positive aspects of university life in Australia included communicating, friendliness of colleagues and staff, and a generally helpful environment. Around three times as many comments were positive (33 or 70.2% of comments in this category) than were negative (14 or 29.8%). The latter cited perceived discriminatory practices and difficulties with language. Together, comments relating to relationships comprise only 13% of all comments.

Opportunities for library research and Internet access within the campus were considered by respondents to have been, generally, favourable. The good-bad proportions of comments in this area significantly favoured a good experience, with 37 or 75.5% of responses describing a good experience. Positive comments related to easy accessibility of services, whilst the 12 negative comments (3.3% of all comments) related equally to deficiencies in IT equipment and poor service by staff. However, when issues in library research and Internet access (13.6% of comments) were combined with academic matters, the combined response constituted almost two-thirds (59.6%) of all comments.

Academic matters were of concern to these students. Respondents expressed concern about their studies, but broadly were matched in their opinion as to whether these studies were easier or harder than expected. Comments on academic matters constituted almost half (166 or 46%) of all comments. Of these, the proportions of easier and harder were about the same, with 91 or 54.8% finding academic matters to be easier than expected and 75 or 45.2% harder. Issues with matters such as studying, teamwork, assignments and examinations generated similar volumes of comment in both the easier and harder categories, suggesting that probably there was a balance in the degree of difficulty in academic work. In only three instances out of the 75 harder comments in this theme is there any allusion to less than helpful service:

Lectures: sometimes lecturer not supportive.

Sometimes when the lecturers or tutors are not qualified enough it's very hard to learn the course and then it requires to depend only on self studies.

University [named]. Bad quality teaching methods. So that hard to pass.

In terms of other matters identified in the analysis as not falling within the above specific themes, the cost of living and balancing study with part-time work were a concern for these students. Other matters in the two free-text questions elicited 64 comments or 17.7% of the total responses to the two questions. Most related primarily to matters of cost and working part-time whilst studying. The negative comments in this category exceeded positive responses threefold.

Theme 7 - Student voice reinforces the concept of students as consumers

Noting that analysis of data supported the contention that for these students their experience of studying at university in Australia had matched their expectation, the final context of the experience section, and the last three questions in the survey (Anything else Q.85-87), set out to identify any further matters of concern to respondents that might not have been adequately covered in the previous 84 questions. The seventh theme to emerge from analysis was that of generating customer satisfaction (Prasongsukarn 2005) for these students in their role as consumers (Baldwin & James 2000; Gabbott, Movondo & Tsarenko 2002, as discussed in chapter 1 of this report).

Each question forced a YES – NO response, and offered an opportunity for unprompted free-text comment. The matters canvassed were:

- Is there any other issue or problem that you would like to tell us about?
- Overall, has your experience met your expectation?
- And finally, is there anything else that you would like to tell us about?

A total of 72 free-text comments were offered in response to Q.85-87. The comments were collated and sorted according to the same five heads of findings identified in earlier analysis of comments. When considered in terms of the number of comments offered in each context, the responses to the meeting of expectations overall are as shown in Table 15, with the total number of comments ranked in descending order.

Table 15: Overall expectations: Issues

The Overall Expectation – Response Rates by Issue					
Context	Total	No. of Positive Comments	% of Total	No. of negative Comments	% of Total
University administrative matters.	25	3	12.0	22	88.0
Academic matters.	21	9	42.9	12	57.1
Other matters.	15	3	20.0	12	80.0
Getting along with others: teachers, staff and fellow students.	7	4	57.2	3	42.8

The Overall Expectation – Response Rates by Issue					
Context	Total	No. of Positive Comments	% of Total	No. of negative Comments	% of Total
Library research and Internet access.	4	0	0.0	4	100.0
Total Comments	72	19	26.4%	53	73.6%

For the 125 questionnaires analysed in this research, the three questions 85-87 provided a total of 375 opportunities for response and comment. The distribution of the positive and negative comments offered was as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Overall expectations: Response rates

The Overall Expectation – Response Rates by Question					
Question	Total	No. of Positive Comments	% of Total	No. of negative Comments	% of Total
Q.85. Some other issue or problem?	19	0	15.2	19	60.8
Q.86. Overall, has your experience met your expectations?	27	13	50.4	14	30.4
Q.87. Is there anything else?	26	6	23.2	20	58.4
Total Comments	72	19	26.4%	53	73.6%

When the data in these three final questions was compared with results elsewhere in the questionnaire, an interesting pattern emerged. That pattern reinforced the concept of students as consumers (Gabbott, Movondo & Tsarenko 2002). Whilst more respondents perceived a positive outcome of experience meeting expectation in Q.85-87, returning 63 or 50.4% positive results versus 38 or 30.4% negative, it was the dissatisfied customers who tended to comment more (53 or 73.6% dissatisfied comments versus only 19 or 26.4% satisfied comments). Dissatisfied customers therefore represented the potential to do more damage to reputation than did satisfied customers to reinforce its benefit.

This issue of international students displaying positive or negative traits of customer satisfaction (see for example Goodman 1999; Liu & McClure 2001; Goodman & Newman 2003; Goodman 2006; Lerman 2006) was introduced in Chapter 1. In particular, Goodman's description of known complaints as the 'tip of the iceberg' (Goodman 1999, p.5) suggest that the 53 negative comments offered by respondents

to the questionnaire could affect as many as ten times that number of customers (Goodman 1999, p.2).

Additionally, noting that ‘on average, twice as many people are told about a bad experience than they are about a good experience’ (Goodman 1999, p.2), as well as the finding earlier in this analysis of a high dependence on word of mouth advice from persons other than the university, analysis found that the potential effect of negative word of mouth in terms of the student population at the research site at the time of the survey could be as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: The complaints ‘iceberg’ (interpreting Goodman 1999)

The Potential Effect of Negative Comments				
	No. of Students in the Academy Now	Potential Future Customers Affected	% of the Present Student Cohort	Comment
Negative comments	53 negative comments * ‘Goodman multiplier’ of 10 potential customers affected per negative comment = 530 potential future Sub-continental BAcc customers affected.			
B.Accounting Sub-continental cohort	186	530	285%	The potential negative effect of these adverse comments could reach almost 3 times as many people as were in the Sub-continental B.Accounting cohort at the time of the study.
B.Accounting cohort	491	530	108%	The potential negative effect of these comments could also adversely influence the buying decision of a customer base of around the same size as the entire B.Accounting cohort at the time of data collection.
Undergraduate Cohort	774	530	68%	The ‘iceberg effect’ from just 53 negative comments could also adversely affect a potential customer base of around 2/3 the size of the present undergraduate cohort.
The Academy	1701	530	31%	And, the potential adverse effect of negative comments returned in this survey is broadly equivalent to affecting a potential customer base of 1/3 of the entire UG and PG student body at the research site at the time of the survey.

Theme 8 - Students in their first term were generally less confident than others

Analysis of responses across all sections of the questionnaire also revealed that students in their first term at the university were generally less confident than students who had progressed beyond first term. This finding represented the eighth and final major theme to emerge from analysis.

Administration of the main questionnaire had taken place during the third teaching week of term in November 2007. Fifteen (12.0%) of the 125 respondents to the survey were in their first term of study at the university at that time. Their responses to the main sections of the questionnaire are shown in comparison to overall responses in Table 18.

Table 18: Responses by students in their first term of study at the university

Questionnaire Responses – First Term Student Responses								
Qn.	Responses to Questions	1 Very Confident	2 Confident	3 Neither Confident nor Unconfident	4 Not Confident	5 Very Unconfident	No Response	Total
	33-55. Confidence about living in Australia and studying at university.	825	1464	307	76	19	184	2875
	Responses by students in terms other than their first term	794	1231	235	69	19	182	2530
	%	31%	49%	9%	3%	1%	7%	100%
	Responses by students in their first term	31	233	72	7	0	2	345
	%	9%	67%	21%	2%	0%	1%	100%
Qn.	Content	1 Always	2 Often	3 Don't Know	4 Some Times	5 Never	No Response	Total
	57-66. Coping with issues experienced at university in Australia.	227	283	120	223	317	99	1269
	Responses by students in terms other than their first term	184	247	90	199	285	95	1100
	%	17%	23%	8%	18%	26%	8%	100%
	Responses by students in their first term	24	36	30	24	32	4	150
	%	16%	24%	20%	16%	21%	3%	1

Questionnaire Responses – First Term Student Responses								
Qn.	Content	1 Very Good	2 Good	3 Neither Good nor Bad	4 Bad	5 Very Bad	No Response	Total
67-82.	How students feel generally about their overall experience at university in Australia.	448	906	296	94	95	157	1996
	Responses by students in terms other than their first term	422	764	249	84	80	157	1756
	%	24%	44%	14%	5%	4%	9%	100%
	Responses by students in their first term	26	142	47	10	15	0	240
	%	11%	59%	20%	4%	6%	0%	100%

Generally, it emerged that for students in their third week at the university, those who did feel very confident or confident about living in Australia and studying at university represented the same proportion of respondents as their longer-enrolled peers. However, the proportions of those who remained undecided outnumbered their peers two to one (21% of first termers vs. 9% of other respondents). The latter group did, however, share an equal belief with other students in their ability to cope with the issues they experienced at university in Australia, and generally felt equally as good about their overall experience.

Follow-up interviews were conducted two weeks after administration of the questionnaire. Two students participating in the interviews were in their first term of study at the university, and two further students had just started their second term⁹. Like students in later terms of study, these four students reported similar experiences in preparing for university study in Australia, and in studying in the medium of English. They also appeared to have satisfactorily made the transition to university in Australia. In reflecting upon preparations and life at university in Australia generally, the four offered comment as follows:

Language at high school

11. Yes, four languages. English maybe since first.

33. Basically in English.

27. In my mother language Punjabi. Some of my subjects were in

⁹ See interviewees Nos. 11, 33, 27 and 28 in Table 23 on page 190.

- English, like chemistry and physics.*
28. *My home language, but I have another two subjects I did in English. English, mathematics; in Bangalore.*
- Preparations for learning at university
11. *Actually I am here four months [studying] English for Academic Purposes at [school named].*
33. *I choose accounting as my base course because I like to do mathematical. I didn't even bother to think about [special preparation for university] because I know it's all the same everywhere.*
27. *IELTS one month.*
28. *After high school I go to Australian university. At first I was coming, I plan, I make my plan to go abroad for a study and I choose the country, then I know that English is very much useful, like English country. Then I was prepared for English. Then I am thinking about whose place it would be better for learning English.*
- Study routines and work
11. *Just come for classes. Time is not suitable for me, its morning 9 to 5. Takes more than an hour from work to uni.*
33. *[Study] Sunday about two or three hours; on Monday I spend five to six depends on the study load ... A couple of my friends we stay here [at university after classes] because we don't have work. After, we finish in the labs and library, searching through the books and studying.*
27. *No work. Study at home about three hours a day, five days. School four hours on the three days of the week. On other two days of the week study another three hours or so.*
28. *Five days I am doing a part-time job. Yes. I'm tired.*

The experiences of the four first-term students were also investigated in relation to four themes regarding international student concerns that have emerged in the literature during the past decade. These themes include student safety, accommodation, social inclusion, support and protection from exploitation.

IDP Education Australia (1997), for example, in discussing the issues and challenges facing international students in Australia suggested that perceptions of racism needed to be addressed. In considering the pastoral care needs of international students in New Zealand, Butcher and McGrath (2004) identified issues in the health, safety and financial needs of international students as being in need of better and proactive response by governments. Deumert and colleagues (Deumert et al. 2005) also identified significant gaps in the governance of international students' rights, classifying international students as individuals deserving of social and economic

security. They advocated a student security regime that incorporated better university practices and more integrated civil society networks, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations.

The data in this research was collected in November and December 2007. More recently, issues of safety for Sub-continental students have escalated (for example, Gillard 2009b; Hodge 2009; Rudd 2009). Now, international students in Australia are being described in terms of a new vulnerable workforce (Forbes-Mewett, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Sawir, 2007; Marginson, et al., 2010; Nyland, et al., 2008), open to exploitation and sometimes experiencing severe financial problems. Drawing on the work experiences of 200 international students studying in Australian higher education institutions, and citing other observers of “the dark side to working while studying” (for example, CHSICL 1998; McDonald et al. 2007), a case has been presented for national policy reform to strengthen the position of international student workers. That case for improved practice has been reinforced by Trounson and Slattery (2009) who identify the need for some form of financial safety net for international students.

These themes in the discourse appear to be coming full circle. In mid-2009, the Australian Prime Minister and other Ministers (Evans 2009; Gillard 2009; Rudd 2009) gave prominence to international student concerns. Reinforcing Australian Government support for international education in the light of a series of negative issues (for example Hodge 2009; Ross 2009; Sawir et al. 2009) the ministers undertook to further improve student experiences by announcing the creation of Senate inquiries into education agents, student safety, adequate and affordable accommodation, social inclusion, student visa requirements, adequate international student support and advocacy, employment rights and protections from exploitation (Parliament of Australia 2009).

Whilst only comprising around 3% of students surveyed in this research, the interview comments offered by the four first-term students on the themes of student safety, accommodation, social inclusion, support and protection from exploitation

present a perspective that is topical in recent literature. Comments offered from a first term perspective are shown below.

Student safety was a concern to one of the four students. The others expressed concern about the time taken to travel to and from university or work:

11. Really frustrating ...yes, scary ... I live in Strathfield, maybe 20 minutes, half an hour [to university] ...it takes more than an hour from work to uni. It's in Northmead, near Parramatta.

33. About an hour; I live too far.

27. About an hour [to university – no mention of concerns regarding personal safety].

28. About 35 minutes [to university]. I live in Mascot. [Again, no mention of concerns regarding personal safety].

For the two students in their third week at university, issues in accommodation were not mentioned. For the other two, finding suitable accommodation was a concern:

27. Living expenses are very high here, needs are very expensive and its difficult for a single person to come and live here alone and then work and study and make the money for the tuition fees. Because semester is only four months, so its very difficult to collect the money for next ...

28. Starting in Australia, we have much expense from here ... so much expenses ... my life is so [sigh ... inaudible] because I have so much expense and everybody and my family depend on me.

Only one interviewee felt unhappy after three weeks in Australia. For the others, issues in social inclusion represented a range of experiences and attitudes, such as:

11. Don't come. I think life in home country is much better. Yes. Or if you want to come, come after finishing your study, not for a student. I am only son; I miss my family.

33. The first thing is the different culture and all the different peoples from different countries; and trying to make friendly relations just to make friendly environment for study.

33. They should have some activities, like sports activities and some physical training rooms, so that if students get mentally pressured they can go and relax ...

33. If the students have any problems, they [the university staff] ask them to come in and even they provide counseling so they can even sort that out if the students have any kind of problem; they're just friendly to everyone, they just want to sort out the problem.

27. Language problem. I have problems speaking English.

27. I think you [the university] should know the background of the students from where he comes and in which situation he is living here. Because if we would know the mentality of the person, what he thinks, it's very easy for us to You are understanding what I want to say yes? Living expenses are very high here,

needs are very expensive and it's very difficult for a single person to come here and live alone and then work and study and then make the money for the tuition fees. Because semester is only for four months, so it's very difficult to collect the money for next ...

28. It's okay; it's good ... Come abroad to study; it's a good idea. I think there is the best opportunity ... I don't suffer any things ... I have a brother-in-law, he was studying in Australia ... [he] is very assistant ... now he is doing a business in Bangladesh ... he gives the most information for me. [Yet, the worst thing about being at university in Australia] I think this is so boring and busy. I just like to finish my course.

Support and protection from exploitation did not appear to represent a critical concern for these four first-term students. Whilst one student was still 'struggling' after three weeks, the others presented a positive attitude towards work and opportunities in Australia:

11. Mmm ... struggling life. Struggling student life.

33. So, get you shoes ready to study, because you have to run all the time from your house to work, from work to study.

27. Jobs for students ... there are so many opportunities here to work. In my country it's difficult to find the work ... we can only find the teacher job ... because population is very high.

Considered together, these comments reflect the everyday issues of concern to first year undergraduate students in general (Cooper 1998). The themes in their comments also reflect current literature on issues relating to student safety, accommodation, social inclusion, support and protection from exploitation (for example, Hodge 2009; McDonald 2009).

Summary of the analysis

Generally, the 125 respondents engaged well with the questionnaire, and provided thoughtful responses to the questions asked. The cohort surveyed was predominantly male, from India, Bangladesh and Nepal, aged 20 – 24 years, and in their first or second year at the university. Whilst only 5.2% of the cohort identified English as their main language at home, most (84.8%) had studied in the medium of English in their last school, which for all but 3 (2.4% of respondents) was not in Australia. Almost three-quarters (92 or 73.6%) of the cohort had a part-time job in addition to their university studies.

Analysis of responses revealed that for half the cohort the student experience had matched the expectation, with the pedagogic experience of studying in Australia being favourable. The group surveyed reported a very high degree of confidence in their ability to study successfully at university in Australia, with 92.4% of responses listing very confident and confident in listening to and understanding in lectures (Q.38), 76.1% confidence in explaining in English what they know about a subject (Q.45), and 76.1% confidence about thinking critically (Q.50) and in keeping up with the university workload (Q.35).

The data revealed that respondents had satisfactorily undertaken a transition to the teaching practised in an Australian university, perceiving that they coped satisfactorily with the issues that confront them. They felt confident and relaxed about the key foundations of academic life at university in Australia, were well organised, planned their study, and generally sought help from the services available to them. Free-text comments in the questionnaire included:

Accent Problem but become familiar after 2 or 3 months.

Feel good: cultural diversity.

Good way of teaching.

Helpful lecturers & tutor to succeed in the subject.

Doing assignments are really good job and I enjoy in doing so.

Teachers all good & cooperative.

They are good & friendly and clear to us.

[The academic skills unit] has been very helpful.

Your confidence level increases tremendously.

Interviewees summed-up the situation as follows:

At the beginning I was a bit stressed, but later I got used to it.

Well the thing is everything is well organised, the time management is good then it's good to understand. [Study] maybe four or five hours. That's during term. Once term is finished I take off ...

The exception was students in their first term at the university who were generally less confident than their peers. In the interviews, one commented:

The first thing is the different culture and all the different peoples ... different teachers with different accents. I try to understand what they're teaching us; if we don't get anything, we just ask them, "Can you please repeat?" They always

do; whenever any students get stuck they always sort it out; they go back and go slow.

Another interviewee, when asked what could be done to make learning at university in Australia better, suggested:

Teaching; maybe small class; maybe 10 students in that class. Yes; scary.

A very strong perception emerged from the data that whilst international students perceive their experience has meet their expectation, it does not meet their perception of value for money in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of a degree. For 44% of the questionnaire respondents, the overall cost of a degree had been a bad or very bad experience. Participants in the follow-up interviews gave voice to this concern as follows:

All my expenses ... my rent, my foodstuff, groceries, all those things, I just get it from my work ... a 12 hour job every day. It's very hard for my parents because they're not financially strong.

Student, they are very poor, they run out of money and they don't have time for study. So you have to take these into your account as well.

Too expensive. Life is really hard. You have to struggle sometimes. No work; no money.

The thing is we are in here for part of business from Australia. For the government, they need to take care of us. They almost don't care ... but the thing is about the expense ... they should do something for the overseas student.

Starting in Australia we have much expense from there. If we don't get a job after my degree, I will be frustrated and I will be demonstrated other ways.

These comments demonstrate the need to create for international students a good experience in Australia, and for universities, a truly sustainable market. Whilst more respondents perceived a positive outcome of experience meeting expectation (50.4% positive versus 30.4% negative perception), it was dissatisfied customers who tended to comment more, and therefore do most damage to business reputation. For example, comments of dissatisfaction were offered in the proportion of 73.6% to only 26.4% expressing satisfaction. Some of these negative perceptions were expressed in open-ended questionnaire responses as follows:

University [name]: Bad quality teaching methods. So that hard to pass.

[University name] & Business Colleges are looking for business and money rather than student.

University has to have humanity (feelings). Business at 2nd place. And should not create threat in students about policies.

More business than education provider.

University's (all staff) looks to me like robot. (Machine man) no feelings

[Referring to the on-campus career service] Provide more support towards getting jobs and employment. There should be some university cadet program for "hands on experience".

University need to earn but looks to keep student's Benefits first & Business 2nd.

University representatives in India are leading students in wrong way. They don't tell student about anything about university life and courses.

One final piece of advice on the value of an international education experience in Australia, offered by a first-term participant in the follow-up interviews was:

Don't come. I think life in home country is much better. Yes. Or if you want to come, come after finishing your study, not for a student.

This general finding of the study suggested that the original premise which first prompted the research effort may be found to stand yet, namely "good teaching makes good business".

Patterns of data for each research question

This section presents an appreciation of the patterns that emerged from analysis of the data discussed earlier in this chapter.

Analysis was intended to answer two questions by exploring the way in which the twin conversations of risk in business and risk in learning are played out in a university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students. The heuristic methodology that was used to test the assumptions underpinning the research enabled a sequential appreciation of the research findings and their relevance to the research questions. The two questions were:

1. How do Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university?
2. How can we relate these perceptions to the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives?

Patterns started to emerge from analysis of the data. In the detailed transcription of data presented in Appendix 5 of this report, these patterns of emerging data are positioned at 55 locations within the analysis (see Table 35 on page 210). The patterns of emerging data contribute to the heuristic analysis and interpretation of results. When considered in the context of the analysis, they reveal that the prime expectations of this group of international students relate to:

- The question of what constitutes value for money in an international education experience in Australia; and
- The issue of customer satisfaction in terms of an international student's role as consumer-student, and the opportunity for universities to consider improved customer relationship management in their business with international students.

Question 74 (cost of degree) investigated participants' perceptions of what constitutes value for money in an international education experience. Analysis of data collected by this question (see Table 145, page 314) revealed that only 27.2% of the 125 responses perceived their degree represented value as a quality product. Issues arose in questionnaire responses and in the interviews about the construct of a quality product, and the way in which word of mouth complaints are dealt with by university staff.

The issue of customer satisfaction was also investigated in both Q.73 (cost of living in Australia, see Table 144, page 314) and Q.77 (support from university staff, see Table 148, page 317). A significant number of students appeared to take issue with the twin aspects of the cost of living (61.6% in Q.73) and an overall low level of satisfaction with customer service (24.8% in Q.77). These two issues of value for money and customer satisfaction in an international student as consumer-student underpin answers to the research questions and discussion that follows in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an interpretative analysis of the data gathered in the research questionnaire and subsequent follow-up interviews. A heuristic approach

was taken in analysis so that the significance of the findings might emerge question by question, and thus shape the overall appreciation of the two research questions. Overall, the analysis suggested that this cohort of Sub-continental international students perceived their experience to have met their expectation, but did not represent customer satisfaction or value for money in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of their degree compared with the level of service received.

The research methodology had been structured about an assumption of concern relating to differences expected between the cultural aspects of international students studying in their home country, and then in Australia where pedagogy was perceived to be different. The analysis set out to identify factors that could demonstrate this concern or problems that could arise due to factors of difference between international and domestic students, such as previous educational experience or language ability. Yet, when the data was considered in relation to the two research questions, a significant and different finding emerged, and this has altered the final approach of the research.

As a result of the range of quantitative and qualitative methods employed in data collection, it emerged that most students had completed high school in their home countries through the medium of English. The study participants should therefore not normally be classified as L2 or English as second language learners (Evers 2007; Study Queensland 2007; ANU 2009; UNSW 2009) in terms of language requirements for university entry in Australia.

Also, it became apparent that participants did not find the pedagogic situation in Australia to be significantly different from their past experiences. Overall, most students reported a positive outcome of their experience at university meeting their expectation and, although concerned about their studies generally, they also appeared to be significantly confident about their ability to cope and to succeed at university in Australia.

It emerged that when language is not an issue of difference, then learning expectations for international students may not differ significantly from those of

domestic students. It also suggested that distinctions between descriptors such as international and domestic were more administrative than pedagogic. The data illuminated the expectations of international students as relating to something other than language or pedagogy.

Questions in the follow-up interviews probed more deeply into this issue. The results identified a real concern to be that of customer satisfaction in terms of the students' role as consumer-student. What emerged was an opportunity for universities to consider improved customer relationship management in their business with international students.

In the following chapter, the research questions are discussed and answered in terms of the two issues of value for money and customer satisfaction for an international student as a consumer-student. Chapter 6 also considers the implications of these answers for the theory and a practice of international education in Australia. The intent is to derive a research outcome that might create for international students a good experience and for universities a sustainable market that was introduced in Chapter 1, as "good teaching is good business". Also presented in Chapter 6 is a series of conclusions and recommendations to suggest how the findings might be applied in practice and contribute to further research in the field.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

This concluding chapter of the report is intended to demonstrate how the research makes a contribution to the body of knowledge and practice in international education. It does so by presenting answers to the research questions and the resulting conclusions about the research problem that was introduced in Chapter 1. The implications and recommendations arising from these research conclusions next invite practitioners to perceive the discourse as an interconnected knowledge base that offers reflective insight into the parent discipline of international education.

In an attempt to further extend the learning that has evolved during the research effort, also presented is a consideration of the limitations in the research findings and the opportunities for further research that emerged during analysis. Building from these research conclusions and implications the report, lastly, offers a new classification model based on the research outcomes that foregrounds student voice in the field of study in international education and offers to universities an opportunity for improved market position and sustainability.

Initially, the research set out to identify the expectations that a group of Sub-continental undergraduate international students bring with them to university in Australia and the problems they encounter. The research literature suggested that concerns or problems could arise due to factors of difference between international and domestic students, such as previous educational experience (passivity and rote

learning) or language ability (international students as L2 and not L1). The study was consequently structured on an assumption of concern (Cooper 1998) about difference.

Analysis therefore set out to identify factors that could explore this concern. First, it emerged that most students had completed high school in their home countries through the medium of English. The study participants should therefore not normally be classified as L2 or English as second language learners (Evers 2007; Study Queensland 2007; ANU 2009; UNSW 2009) in terms of language prerequisites for university entry in Australia. Second, it became apparent that participants did not find the pedagogic situation in Australia to be significantly different from their past experiences. Most students reported a positive outcome of their experience at university meeting their expectation and, although concerned about their studies generally, they appeared to be significantly confident about their ability to cope and to succeed at university in Australia.

The appreciation emerged that when language is not an issue, then learning strategies of international students may not differ from those of domestic students (Volet & Ang 1998; Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999). It also emerged that distinctions between descriptors such as international and domestic (as in Lukic, Broadbent & Maclachlan 2004, for example) were more administrative than pedagogic.

The data revealed that the expectations of this cohort of international students relate to something other than language or pedagogy. Their primary concern was one of customer satisfaction. Of particular concern to this cohort were the fees charged by the university, plus the economic consequences of coming to Australia from a poorer economic background and having to work long hours to meet expenses in Australia.

Answers to the research questions

The discourse in international education explored in Chapter 2 identified a theoretical foundation of twin conversations relating to risk in business and risk in learning. Two questions arose to explore the way in which these conversations were played

out in a university site catering exclusively to full fee paying international students. Interpretation of the research results identified the following answers to those questions.

1. How Sub-continental international students perceive their experience of study in an Australian university

Most of the students in this research reported a positive pedagogic outcome as a *student-consumer*, but were concerned with issues of satisfaction in their role as a *consumer-student*. It was found that if issues relating to the cost of a degree and the cost of living in Australia (risk in business) are not adequately addressed, then the overall expectation of value in an educational experience in Australia (risk in learning) will not be satisfied. Viewed from the perspective of the twin conversations, the perceptions of these Sub-continental students point the way to a better understanding of what constitutes value in an international education experience in Australia.

For this cohort, the construct of ‘value for money’ was seen to derive firstly from delivering satisfaction to students in their role as consumer-students. That role of consumer-student encompassed the students’ total investment, from costs of preparing for study in Australia, to travel and accommodation, cost of degree, and other costs in terms of time spent at work and study when viewed against the outcome of a degree qualification. This perception as consumer-student was seen to shape the perception of value in the role of student-consumer, regardless of the university’s pedagogic quality and reputation.

This finding expands our understanding of the costs and benefits of the internationalisation of education (Kinnell 1990) and further informs an appreciation of what might constitute an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education that is both good teaching and good business.

2. The relationship between student perceptions and the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives

The second research question related to the relationships between the four theoretical perspectives in the discourse in international education and the twin conversations of educational and commercial risk. The outcome confirmed that, in practice, both teaching and business are interdependent. The twin conversations of risk were seen to play out to reveal that, when significant investment in finance, status and future opportunity are at stake, then it is satisfaction of the commercial role of consumer-student that drives student perceptions of satisfaction in their learning role of student-consumer.

The implication of this is that actors in the discourse of international education, who presently represent conversationalists in a ‘fractured discourse’ (Harman 2005, p.119) of diverse, competing, and yet potentially equally valid constructs, might instead perceive a unity of purpose across all the theoretical fields, and thus stimulate a more informed conversation that can address the value expectations of students as a source of both learning and business. By first addressing the expectations of international students in terms of student perceptions of value, practitioners might improve practice and also strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in the competitive global market for education services.

Acknowledging the nexus between the conversations of risk in business and risk in learning enables the subsequent conclusions, recommendations and opportunities for further research that are discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

Conclusions about the research problem

This section presents conclusions derived from the answers to the two research questions presented in the preceding section. A summary of the conclusions is shown below, and provides the structure for the discussion that follows.

1. Value in an international education experience derives from delivering satisfaction to the student-consumer.
2. Language need not be an issue of difference in an international education experience.
3. The relationship between student perceptions of value and the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives represents an opportunity for both good teaching and good business.

Later in this chapter the implications of these research conclusions are further discussed in terms of recommendations for stakeholders, and the opportunities for further research that arise from these conclusions and recommendations.

1. Value in an international education experience derives from delivering satisfaction to the student-consumer

Value in an international education experience derives from student satisfaction. That construct of value comes, firstly, from delivering to students an acceptable level of satisfaction in their role as consumer-student.

In the discourse of international education, the four theoretical fields of globalised international education, literacy and critical thinking, commercial practice, and policy constitute twin conversations of risk in business and risk in learning that impact on both academic values and the commercial pull of business controls and cost management in the international market for education services.

The scenario of an interconnected discourse of international education suggests an alternative perception of both teaching and business that can improve practice and strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in a global market of services. The twin conversations of risk in business and learning interact, and the role of consumer-student drives value perception.

In practice, these conversations play out to reveal that, when significant investment in finance, status and future opportunity are at stake, then it is satisfaction with the commercial role of consumer-student that drives student perceptions in the learning

role of student-consumer. In this study, Sub-continental students felt, overall, that their experience of learning in Australia had matched their expectations (Table 159: Comparing what's easier and what's harder – Comments, page 326). However, it was a group of dissatisfied consumer-students who tended to complain the most, and who could do the most damage to the business reputation of the institution (see Emerging Data Pattern 54 Dissatisfied customers comment more, page 347).

This potential impact of international students displaying traits of negative customer satisfaction is discussed in Chapter 5. Table 17 on page 129 showed that the potential negative effect of student dissatisfaction within this cohort could be enough to discourage a new clientele equivalent to one-third of the academy's student population at the time of the survey. Dealing with student complaints within a services purchase decision context (Bansal & Voyer 2000) can lessen the potential impact of negative comments (Goodman 1999; Goodman & Newman 2003). Providing good service that accords with the desires of customers, and ensuring that student support activities are client-centered can build effective relationship marketing (Bansal & Voyer 2000, p.176). Relationships of this nature can then build 'tie strength' (p.168), which in turn can result in consumers being more predisposed to selective exposure to the word of mouth message.

Associated with the process of word of mouth is the effect of the sender's expertise. The greater the sender's expertise, the greater the influence of the sender's word of mouth on the receiver's purchase decision (Bansal & Voyer 2000, p.169). Universities could leverage this by engaging in word of mouth marketing at the point of service with existing students in the academy so that they, in turn, might positively impact the decisions of potential future students (see Emerging Data Pattern 12, page 252).

2. Language need not be an issue of difference in an international education experience

This research has revealed a complexity which runs counter to the broad categorisation of students as being either domestic or international, and demonstrates that more information is needed about specific cohorts. One contribution of this

thesis is that it adds to the literature that examines the context of Sub-continental international students living and learning in Australia.

For this cohort of international students from a postcolonial Indian subcontinent, previously schooled in an English language medium, and now studying at an ‘international only’ university campus in Sydney, there were no significant differences in learning styles and expectations. Instead, any construct of difference regarding this particular cohort may be administrative rather than pedagogic. This study suggests that the apparent paradox in assumptions relating to difference is a result of “domestic” misperception, both of international students’ approaches to learning, and of the environments in which they are taught in Australia.

Two matters arise, both of which relate to the construct of difference and its implication that international students such as this cohort merit some form of attention different from that shown to domestic students. The two matters are:

- The effect of the use of the terms domestic and international; and
- The effect on practice of assuming that international students with English officially classified as L2 stereotypically are different in language and learning ability from students with English as L1.

Domestic and International

The use of words such as domestic or international to describe students in an Australian university implies a difference which may be associated with or presumptive of culture shock (Neuliep 2006; Nisbett et al. 2001) and need for adaptation (Giroux 1991; Harrison 2003). Such a distinction can therefore affect the perceptions of “domestic” teachers and administrators regarding perceived differences in academic ability between domestic and international students.

The issue of difference impacts expectations regarding pedagogy. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 suggested that Sub-continental students arrive from a learning culture (Lixin Xiao 2006) which is typified by passivity and rote learning (for example, Alexander 2001; Raina & Dhand 2000) and that this learning culture is

somehow less than effective (Becker & Watts 2001; Keller 2007; Samuelowicz 1987). Interactive and independent learning, the supposed situation for the practice of pedagogy in Australia (for example Krause & Coates 2008; Marshall 2007; Vardi & Ciccarelli 2008; Zhou et al. 2003), would suggest that Sub-continental students need to adapt from one learning culture to another in order to be successful at university in Australia.

Yet some, such as Wainwright (2005) and Guest and Duhs (2002) have disputed the prevalence of a constructivist pedagogy in Australian universities, and others, such as Biggs (1994) also take exception to the view of rote-based learning as surface learning, suggesting this can be a useful strategy to stimulate deeper learning in some circumstances. Biggs (in Biggs et al. 1999) also points out that in the case of students writing in a second language, a more didactic form of pedagogy is warranted. Hwang and colleagues (Hwang, Lui & Tong 2008) further point out that cooperative learning pedagogy can happen in a teacher-centred learning environment, and can also enhance students' learning outcomes.

The significance of this discussion of difference and learning style influences the conclusions arising from the research effort. A quiet learner need not necessarily be a passive or surface learner. Instead, quiet learning may be a matter of cultural difference. Also, given the teacher-centred learning environment that is reported to characterise at least the teaching of economics in Western universities (Becker & Watts 2001), the perceptions and expectations of Sub-continental students combined with their own form of cultural learning might suggest that these students expect a teacher-centered learning experience in Australia (see, for example Messineo et al. 2007), and that the traditional lecture style represents a reasonably effective pedagogy (Hwang, Lui & Tong 2008) for students who were educated in such an environment.

Learning in L1 and L2

In the case of the second matter relating to difference, the terms domestic and international were also perceived to relate to a difference in learning between L1 and L2 speakers of English.

Universities in Australia set their own English language requirements for entry (Study Queensland 2007; ANU 2009; UNSW 2009, for example). For international students, if high school study has not been completed in the medium of English, then an IELTS or TOEFL equivalent test score prerequisite is established. Whilst the cohort studied in this research was predominantly English L2 in terms of main language spoken at home, 84% had completed high school study in English.

This research therefore raised for investigation the option that when English language is not an issue for international students (for example, Volet & Ang 1998; Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999), then learning strategies may not differ between domestic and international students. As indicated above, the Sub-continental students in this study were generally not L2 in terms of previous education, and the difficulties they encountered at university in Australia related to issues other than language, most notably perceptions of value in relation to costs and service delivery by the university.

An alternative: cultural proficiency

The students in this study did not identify English language as a problem in their Australian university study. Instead, it was the implicit assumption within the university of a difference in learning between international and domestic students that was at issue. This perception of difference, if left unchecked, can lead to a continuation of interpreting cultural differences between students as ‘deficits’, and lead to generalisations about such students, or to reading their behaviours and expectations negatively, evident in comments such as ‘they never speak’, ‘they plagiarise’, ‘they want too much support’, ‘they take too much of my time’, and so on (Carroll & Ryan 2005, p.28).

The implication for teachers is that in the classroom all students are equal, and bring with them diverse learning expectations. Instead of a cultural deficit, students’ needs could perhaps be better described as exhibiting a lack of training. This research has shown (see Emerging Data Pattern 20: Stereotyping Sub-continental students as ‘different’ may be problematic on page 281) that in contrast to a culture deficit, or learning the answers from past exam papers as discussed in Q.47 (see Table 104 on

page 279), student responses relating to problem solving and applying theory to problems challenged the stereotype of international students as surface or rote learners.

The data lends support to the alternative cultural-proficiency discourse proposed by Ninnes et al. to describe international students who are ‘not passive with a focus on rote learning, but are active, struggling to attain deep understanding of course content’ (1999, p.325). The data also supports the view of Marginson that students who are the product of education systems shaped by British colonisation can be ‘readily slotted in to Australian universities without much change to curriculum and pedagogies’ (Marginson 2002, p.34).

Such a view is supported by the findings of Hellmundt (2000) and Leask (2006) that the experience of intercultural teaching and learning in an Australian university is generally a positive one, and that rather than focussing on perceived deficiencies in international students, it is more productive to address issues in teaching practice that stimulate a student-focussed institutional culture. The position of Carroll and Ryan lends support to this contention. They posit that teachers are just as much ‘carriers of culture as incoming students’ (Carroll & Ryan 2005, p.27). Therefore, if teachers are to effectively work with their international students, they must become ‘more knowledgeable about their own academic culture, [seeing their] academic culture as systems of belief, expectations and practices about how to perform academically’(p.27).

Cultural differences are therefore not deficits or generalised expectations of negative behaviour. Instead, they represent for practitioners an opportunity for greater intercultural awareness (Owens 2005), and to engage differently with students, communicating in explicit ways about the teaching methods, assessment, and the different teacher-student relationships practiced in an Australian institution (Carroll & Ryan 2005, pp.30-34).

3. The relationship between student perceptions of value and the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives represents an opportunity for both good teaching and good business

The scenario of an interconnected discourse has been described in this report as an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education that represents both good teaching and good business. A vision for attainment of a scenario that represents both good teaching and good business could be realised through the development of criteria of governance that describe and quantify the constructs of equity, ethics and sustainability in an international education experience in Australia.

In essence, the relationship between student perceptions of value and the twin conversations of risk lays the groundwork for a better interaction between institutions and international students. By premising interaction in socially just ways (see, for example, Fraser 2000, p.109), student perceptions of value might be understood from the standpoint of the three separate yet interrelated dimensions of equity, ethics and sustainability that have been used in this report to represent the distribution of resources, recognition of the unique contributions of Sub-continental students, and their linguistic representation within the university.

Such an approach depends on how recognition in terms of social justice is approached. It does not advocate a wholesale acceptance of the 'global left' or the politics of 'recognition' (Abraham 2010, p.968). The conclusion in this report instead proposes a way of rethinking the construct of recognition of international student expectations in a way that can help to solve, or at least mitigate, their concerns of value and the need for assistance in coping with the challenges faced in starting study at university in Australia. This means re-conceptualising international students' expectations in a way that they can be integrated with the university's quest for the internationalisation of education and business performance. The re-conceptualisation of the nexus between pedagogy and business in international education is similar to the reciprocity, expressed as moral respect and asymmetry (Young 1997, p.39) that arises from people's varying life histories and social positions (LaCaze 2008, p.118).

Such a re-conceptualisation also means further developing cross-cultural professionalism in university teachers and administrative staff so that development can have positive effects in altering and expanding both educators' pedagogical knowledge and service delivery (Burroughs et al. 2009, p.61; Owens 2005). In this way, a socially just practitioner will engage in professional reflection and judgment using both an individual and a structural orientation to analyse the full spectrum of international students' needs, and determine the cause and the solution to these, realising that both individual and structural realities affect students' learning (Chubbuck 2010, p.197) and overall perception of value. Professional development of this nature is not simply learning to take the other's point of view, but more a case of 'considering the standpoint of differently situated others' (Ford 2009; Young 1997, p.22) to promote equality among socially and culturally different groups within an international campus and empower groups of students to develop their own voice. (Herr 2008, p.39).

Implications and recommendations arising from the research conclusions

This section discusses the implications of the research conclusions as they affect theory and practice within the domain of international education. The intent is to propose that international education cannot continue to be seen as isolated streams in the discourse (Harman 2005). Instead, it is proposed that theorists and practitioners take an holistic view of the discourse when considering local interpretation and action. The aim is to present a conclusion that positions this research effort within the broad canvas of internationalisation that was developed in Chapter 2. To do this, three recommendations are offered to stakeholders to advance the practice of international education in Australia, as are four recommendations for further research.

Implications

The theoretical implications of the research findings can offer the beginning of an alternative conceptual frame for theorising agendas in international education. If the

body of knowledge in international education is viewed holistically, instead of being seen as isolated streams in the discourse, then an alternative script exists for interpreting internationalisation at the level of enactment in the workplace. Making sense intuitively, this implication offers a bridge for others to investigate how this alternative script could unfold, and illuminate questions such as:

- If the motivation of an international student is more extrinsic than the qualification offered by a university, such as permanent residency for example (Jackling 2007, p.37; Tan & Laswad 2006, p.173), then what is the responsibility of the university in addressing student perceptions of value?
- Does acknowledgement of an extrinsic student motivation justify a university campus that caters exclusively to full-fee paying international students?
- If the outcome of an international education experience is perceived by students to be more the accumulation of human or social capital than a specific qualification, then how does the perception of value for a consumer-student interact with the mission of a university to provide value to the student-consumer?
- For whom are the constructs of equity, ethics and sustainability really intended?
- What should a university do with the surplus created from the sale of an international education experience?

The implications for policy and practice stem from an appreciation that both business and pedagogy in international education in Australia can work in concert to build student perceptions of value. Despite a 'perfect storm' (Universities Australia 2010a) of recent setbacks in student numbers occasioned by a global financial crisis, increased international competition, national policy change (DIAC 2010a) and issues in student security (Marginson et al. 2010), international students will presumably continue to choose Australia in significant numbers. Forecast data on growth suggests that enrolments in Australia may have recovered by 2020 (Johnson 2010). The present issues of international students' disquiet regarding value and changes in migration policy therefore still need to be addressed. One action can be to further disconnect migration policy from education (Burch 2008; Jackling 2007). Recent

changes to student visa conditions (DIAC 2010b) and the ESOS Act amendments in 2010 (Baird 2010) have started this process.

Another action can be to consider the business in comparative terms, and adjust promotion and marketing accordingly. In 2008, international education generated \$15.5 billion and supported 125,000 jobs (Gillard 2009a; HTA 2009), whereas the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 generated around \$1.7 billion and 24,000 full-year-equivalent jobs (NSW Treasury & CREA Tasmania 1997, p.6). Comparatively, international education as a national enterprise could produce around nine times the revenue per year as an Olympic event and support around five times as many jobs. Promoting an Olympic event engenders massive support from all sectors over a number of years, whilst international education is only now starting to prepare for the integration of responsibility for the international promotion of education (Evans 2010).

An opportunity therefore exists to take an holistic approach to the promotion of education as an industry. For example, tourism in Australia is a revenue generator of around one and a half times that of international education (Tourism Australia 2010b). That industry engages in large-scale promotional events such as the annual Australian Tourism Exchange (Tourism Australia 2010a), and attracts the brightest marketers (DDB 2008) to create global campaigns on the scale of the three-year \$150 million (The Age 2010) *There's Nothing Like Australia* tourism campaign featuring word of mouth personal experiences (Tourism Australia 2010c). The global promotion of Australian international education has yet to approach this level of engagement and leverage of satisfied student voice.

A further implication for policy makers is that equity in international education should be evident, transparent and ontological in nature. Just like other marginalised groups in Australia (Gillard 2009c) from rural, regional, Indigenous, or other under-represented socio-economic backgrounds, participation by international students deserves recognition for the different social and human capital that students both invest in and harvest from their experience at university (Hutchison 2009). International students perceive that they pay more than their domestic counterparts,

and expect value in return. Yet, the true cost for domestic students may well be the same (Universities Australia 2010b, p.8) when the veil of hidden grants and subsidies is removed. The construct of value reverberating in the student voice expressed in this research effort could be similar to an as yet unheard expectation held by domestic students. Policy makers and sector managers could redress this imbalance. One way to do so would be to embrace a transparent regime of governance that demonstrates equity for all participants.

A third action can be for the industry as a whole to develop a uniform and transparent system of governance (see, for example, Gurría 2009) that can be seen globally as a benchmark for best practice in international education. Transparency in governance also impacts the issue of what to do with the surplus from international education. Should it be diverted into revenue to support research and other sectors of a university's operation, or should universities consider their global as well as their domestic responsibilities? The implication to be addressed is the assertion that participation in global rankings should be commensurate in some way with effort in equity globally (pers. comm. Gale 2010). The OECD indicators on equity issues in higher education (OECD 2009b) provide an option for Australian governments and universities to consider the disbursement of revenue generated by international education operations.

For practitioners at the local level, the implications of these research conclusions represent an opportunity to respond differently to the twin challenges of service and pedagogy. Experience in teaching international students has generally improved pedagogy and research in international education in Australia (Arkoudis 2006, p.8), yet the notion of international students as different persists in both practice and in the literature. The challenge is to minimise this notion of difference, and replace difference with alternate proficiencies. The challenge to administrative personnel in service delivery is to recognise the validity of international students' perceptions of value as an holistic expression, and offer support commensurate with need. Demonstrating that this need is common to all students regardless of origin or socio-cultural status will reinforce equity and transparency. Transparency and building tie-

strength through the power of positive word of mouth can leverage existing student voice to build a stronger, more sustainable market.

Recommendations for stakeholders

This section presents a series of recommendations for practitioners that arise from the research conclusions and their implications. These recommendations are:

1. Recognise that for Sub-continental students their expectation as a consumer-student shapes the overall experience.
2. Leverage word of mouth relationships to minimise notions of difference between international and domestic students.
3. Conceptualise excellence as a triple bottom line.

1. Recognise that for Sub-continental students their expectation as a consumer-student shapes the overall experience

For fee-paying Sub-continental international students, their role as a consumer-student is very strong, and this shapes their perception of value in their role as student-consumer.

In this research, the participants perceived that they coped satisfactorily with the academic issues that confronted them. They felt confident and relaxed about the key foundations of academic life at university in Australia, were well organised, planned their study, and generally sought help from the services available to them (Table 132: Overall Experience – Summary (Q.67-82) page 301). The opportunity therefore exists for universities to build on this as a strength to reinforce reputation (Lee 2005).

Building on the reputation of an Australian education experience as one of high regard for student experience and value for money will build the tie-strength between students and their friends and further enhance perceived value. In this way, universities can capitalise on the reality of a quality university education in Australia to enhance market awareness of Australian education services.

The power of word of mouth from relatives represents an opportunity to universities that accept the recommendation that an international student's role as consumer-student predominates. Tie-strength can be built through word of mouth from relatives and students already studying in Australia (see Table 56: Interview comments: The power of word of mouth advice, on page 244). A university can leverage reputation to reinforce in existing students the value of their international education experience. Then, through word of mouth, existing students and their relatives can in turn transmit the message of goodness to reinforce the purchase decision of a new student. Action in this regard increases the importance to universities of a triple bottom line interaction with the student experience.

2. Leverage word of mouth relationships to minimise notions of difference between international and domestic students

In a manner similar to using word of mouth to capitalise on positive aspects of the international student experience in Australia, universities can also leverage word of mouth to minimise the notion of difference that permeates issues on language and learning in the discourse. For practitioners who accept the conclusion that cultural differences are not deficits or expectations of negative behaviour, the opportunity exists for greater intercultural awareness and to engage differently with students.

One aspect of a different engagement can be to further build tie-strength through word of mouth from students already studying in Australia. By demonstrating that an educational experience in Australia is truly international and multicultural a university can further leverage reputation and reinforce in existing students the value of their international education experience. Through downstream word of mouth existing students can then again transmit the message of transparency and goodness. Action in this regard also further increases the importance to universities of a triple bottom line interaction with the student experience.

3. Conceptualise excellence as a triple bottom line

Chapter 1 introduced the balancing act or triple bottom line (Foran, Lenzen & Dey 2005, p.9) terminology that is used in accounting and sustainability reporting to

identify constructs that are ‘linked, but not necessarily interchangeable’ (CPA Australia 2004, n.p.). Expressed in such terms, the conceptualisation of an interconnected discourse in international education could be described, in the first instance, as an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education that represents both good teaching and good business.

The construct of a triple bottom line (TBL) conveys to the twin practices of business and pedagogy in international education in Australia an ethic of uncompromising practice (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) that will advance continuing improvement in the quality of education services available to international students in a commercial education marketplace (see, for example, World Bank 2008). This interpretation of TBL also relates the descriptors of risk and equitable, ethical and sustainable practice to the manner in which this cohort of Sub-continental international students perceived their experience of study in an Australian university.

There remains, however, a need for the further development of criteria that could better describe and quantify these constructs of equity, ethics and sustainability as they apply to an international education experience in Australia utilising a triple bottom line interaction between students, educators and business to derive acceptable benchmark criteria for the governance of international education in Australia.

Limitations

Chapter 1 outlined the assumptions and limitations that bounded this research effort. Chapter 3 further discussed the assumptions that underpinned construction of the research instruments and the methodology for interpretation of results. This section discusses other limitations that became apparent during the progress of the research. The three specific comments offered in this section are intended serve as a prelude to the following section of the report which offers suggestions for further research.

Firstly, the research and its findings are positioned within explicit boundaries. The research was grounded in the discipline and business of international education and

university practice in Australia. The primary focus of the research was one discrete cohort of fee-paying Sub-continental undergraduate students who were enrolled in a Bachelor of Accounting degree in the ‘international student only’ city campus of a regional Australian university.

The conclusions about the research findings are therefore principally relevant to a Sub-continental cohort of this nature. They are also relevant to the context of an exclusively international campus that does not enrol domestic students. For more generalisability of the research conclusions, the survey questionnaire administered to the Sub-continental students in this study could at a later date be completed by students of other nationalities. The findings in this present study could then possibly serve as a source for comparative analysis.

Second, some conclusions in this study may be generalisable across the undergraduate student population in Australia. Implicit in the appreciation of difference in relation to issues in language and pedagogy for international students was the identification of a commonality among both international students and their domestic counterparts. Similarly, other issues relating to the potential for improved customer relationship management may also be applicable to other students in other universities across Australia.

Third, the concept of “how you learn now” in high school in the Sub-continent as described by Rogers and Randall (1997) was used in this study as a determinant of difference in framing the research questionnaire. This descriptor appears to conform to the rote-learning, memorisation and passivity described in the study of learning cultures and learning styles of adult Hong Kong Chinese learners conducted by Kennedy (2002, p.430). The utility of the findings in the present research effort is constrained by this limitation.

Recommendations for further research

A number of results which emerged from analysis justify further investigation. They remain unresolved in this report because of limitations occasioned by the focus, method, available time, and the site of this research.

In the detailed transcription of data and analysis of results presented in Appendix 5 opportunities for further research were developed heuristically at 16 points throughout the analysis. This is shown in Table 36 on page 212. Considered globally, these opportunities encompass four broad themes in international education, and this section offers ideas to other researchers for the selection and design of further related research in the field of international education. The challenges arising in these opportunities represent significant dimensions in the discourse of international education in Australia, and are yet to be explored by educational researchers. The four ideas relate to issues in the areas of:

- Identifying what constitutes the positive and negative aspects of an overall experience as an international student in Australia could be used to develop guidelines for students and practitioners to better manage that experience. A research outcome could be to identify ways in which a balance might be enabled in the holistic student experience, and attain a vision of value for money in terms of both investment and quality of learning outcome.
- Obtaining a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural issues in source countries, including an improved appreciation of schooling and language proficiency prior to an international student arriving in Australia. A deeper understanding of these issues in source countries and reconceptualising equity (Dooley 2003) could premise classifications of learning background in terms of the socio-cultural scenarios in source countries. Understanding better the ways in which these scenarios manifest themselves could increase our knowledge of, for example, different learning styles, interactivity, mutual respect, authority consciousness, hesitation, fear and gender sensitivity (Kumar & Bhattacharya 2007). An outcome of the research could be to propose teaching strategies based on learning

needs arising from socio-cultural issues, and how students learn as a result (Tickle 2001).

- A deeper understanding of the socio-cultural issues in source countries is also a double-sided issue. For example, this research demonstrated how little the research cohort knew about Australia before they set out. Word of mouth information from family and friends already studying in Australia comprised the main source of information for decision-making. The question to be asked in this regard could be: Do intending university students conduct meaningful research, and how does students' research affect their perceptions? The research outcome could be used to develop better marketing, orientation and other intervention strategies by universities.
- Conducting further exploration of the construct of a triple bottom line interaction between students, educators and business to derive acceptable benchmark criteria for the equitable, ethical and sustainable governance of international education in Australia. Grounded in social justice and relational theory (for example Fraser 2000; Young 1997), the economic benefits to be gained from satisfying international students' expectations in an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction of business and education could result in improvements to the governance and sustainability of the market for international education in Australia beyond the scope of industry reforms presently underway (for example Baird 2010).

Conclusion

Unless you conduct yourselves with more restraint and moderation towards them, they will be driven into abandoning their studies and leaving the country, which we by no means desire.

(Attr. Henry III 1231, in Kinnell 1990, p.i)

Such an early and fine appreciation of the costs and benefits of the internationalisation of education provides a focus for this concluding section of the report. In this report, international education in Australia has been positioned as a nexus between pedagogy and business. It has been grounded in the development of a

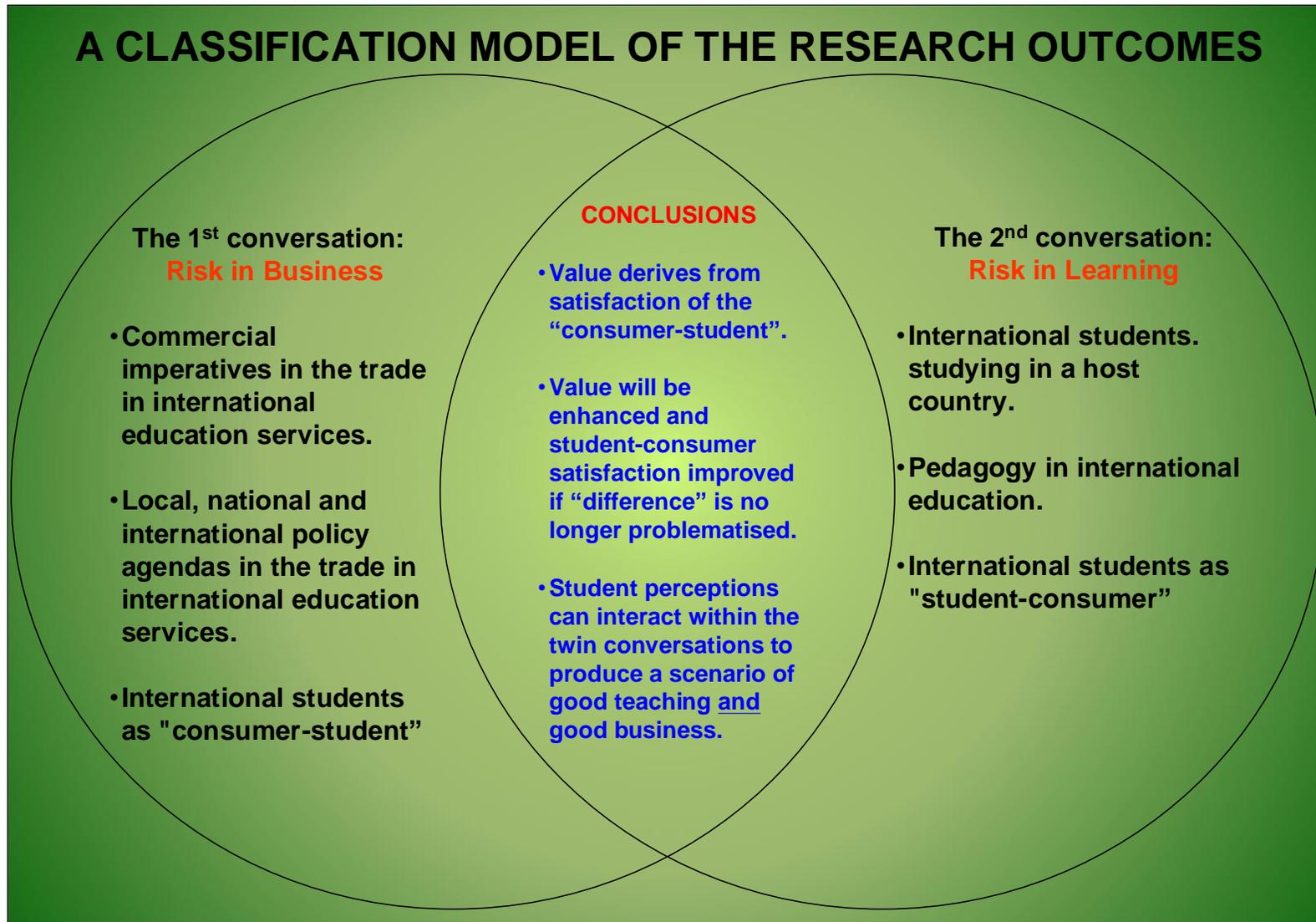
significant market in international education in Australia today, coupled with national policy agendas that have, in effect, started the privatisation of university education (Marshall 1998; Pick 2006) and aligned universities with market-driven interests (Rhoads & Torres 2006, p.167). This nexus between pedagogy and business has brought into sharp focus the issue of commercial sustainability in education and its effect on good practice.

To investigate the twin issues of commercial sustainability and practice, this research set out to explore how a cohort of full-fee paying Sub-continental international students perceived their experience of studying in an Australian university. To do so, the discourse in international education was rescripted to present a unified theme of two conversations in educational and commercial imperatives. That reconceptualisation of the discourse as representing a unity of purpose was then used to apply an interpretative research approach to examine how the conversations interacted with student experiences at the local level to produce a construct of value.

The finding that emerged from student voice was that the international students surveyed in this study, as such, were not significantly different from other students in an academy. Their perceptions of value in an educational experience related to a feeling of satisfaction that consumer needs as well as pedagogic needs were met by the university. The relationship between student perceptions and the twin conversations of educational and commercial imperatives was thus seen to create a scenario of both good teaching and good business on the part of universities.

From these findings emerged the realisation that the research offers the beginnings of an alternative conceptual frame for theorising agendas in international education. That frame points the way to the subsequent development by others of a triple bottom line construct for the governance of international education that delivers equitable, ethical and sustainable practice that is successful in pedagogic, societal and economic terms, and could improve practice and strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in a global market of services.

A classification model of these research outcomes is shown in Figure 5 below.



*Figure 5:
Undergraduate student voices in an Australian university: The relationship between the research questions and outcomes (adapted from Perry 1995, pp.14-15)*

This research effort thus offers to researchers and practitioners in international education a foundation for further improvement in the practice of international education. That foundation is represented by positioning student needs in the foreground of the discourse to strengthen the prestige and commercial position of Australian universities in the global market for services. Diagrammatically, the outcome of this research and its relationship to the broad field of study is shown in Figure 6 below, which reinterprets the background to this research effort that was presented in Figure 1 on page 2 of this report:

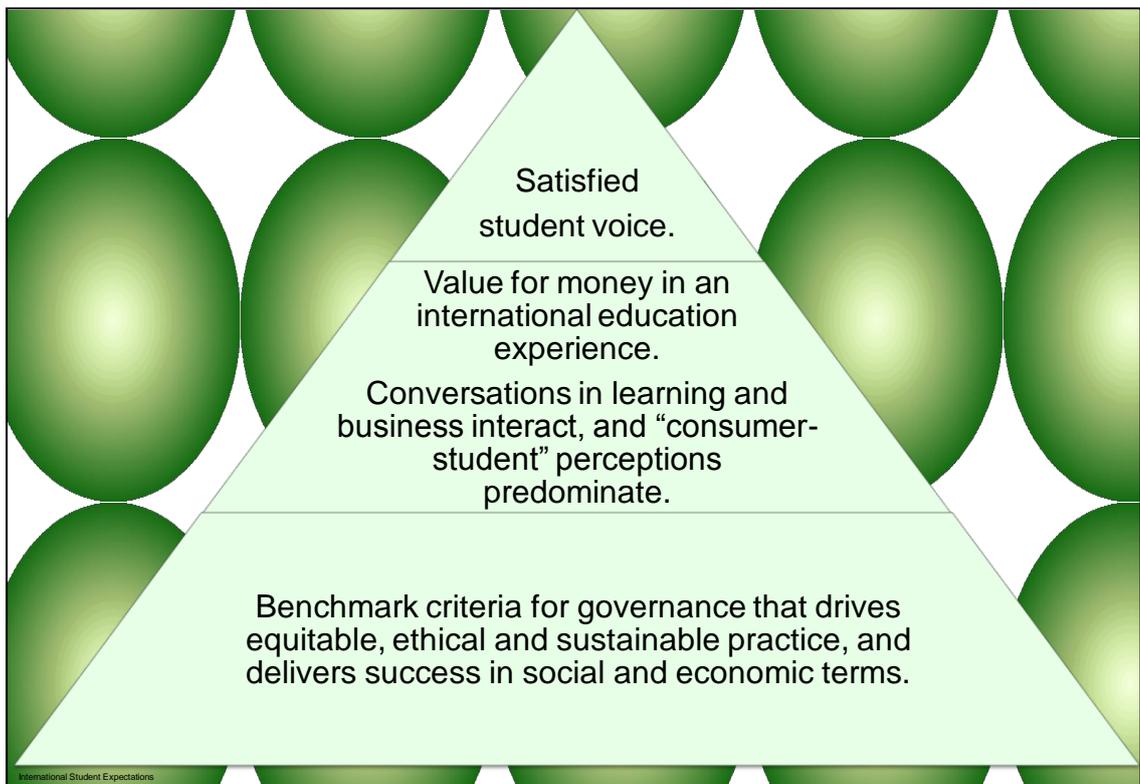


Figure 6: Foregrounding the research outcomes within the broad field of study in international education

The research outcomes have thus positioned the work into an opening for new learning, and point the way to further consideration of the benefits to be gained from the satisfaction of international students' expectations for an equitable, ethical and sustainable interaction between business and education that also offers to universities an opportunity for improved market position and sustainability in the market of international education.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Research Cohort Data

The data in this Appendix describes the survey sample used in the research. The information was drawn, with permission, from the university's customer relationship management database system, called PeopleSoft Higher Education (PSHE Report 2007a), which is used by the university to manage all of the interactions between students, alumni, staff, and faculty (Oracle Corporation 2005).

The academy

The academy selected for study was the researcher's workplace, the city campus of a regional Australian university that caters exclusively to the education service needs of full-fee paying international students. At the time of administering the questionnaire, the student population at the campus comprised 1,701 international students, of whom 46% were undergraduate students, as shown in Figure 7:

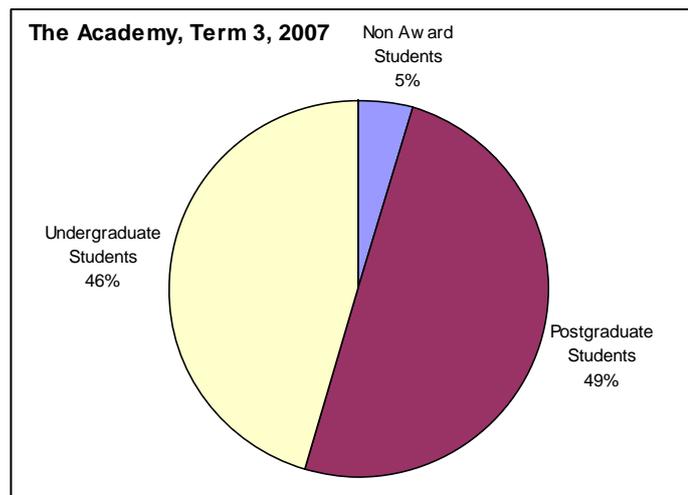


Figure 7: The academy in December 2007 (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The data presents a representative cross-section of the student population in December 2007, and includes students with entry term into the academy ranging from Term 1, 2005 until Term 3, 2007.

The undergraduate cohort

The undergraduate cohort of 774 students constituted slightly less than half of the academy student population. Undergraduate programs of study included degrees in

accounting, business, electronic commerce, hospitality, information technology and multimedia, as shown in Figure 8.

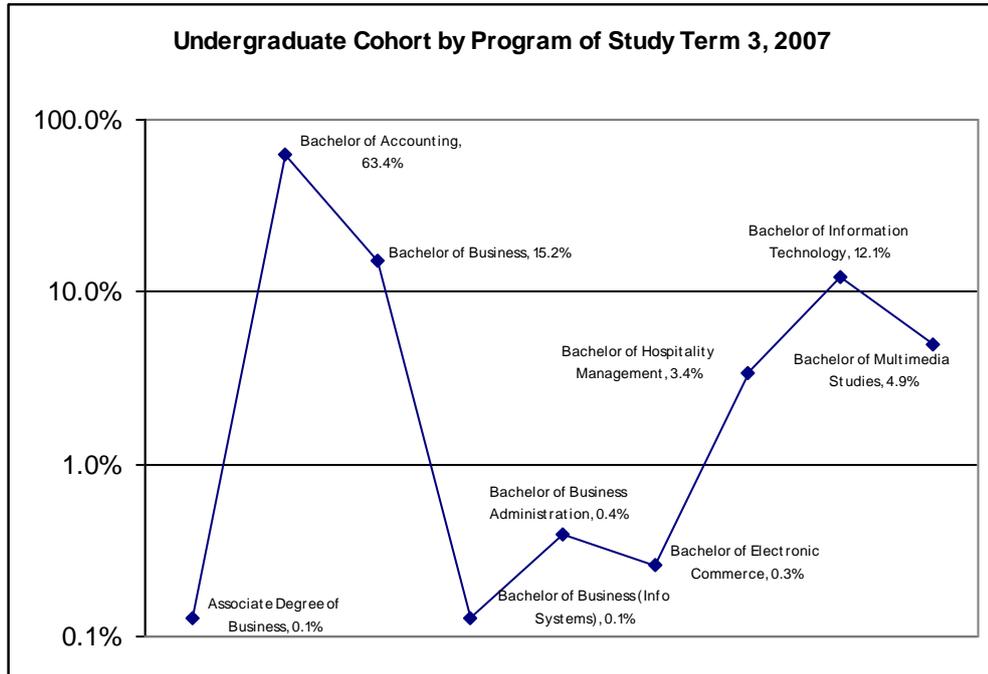


Figure 8: The undergraduate cohort by program of study (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The Bachelor of Accounting cohort

Within this undergraduate contingent of 774 students, 491 students (around 63.4% of the undergraduate population) were participants in the Bachelor of Accounting program (see Figure 8), and were representative of 32 different countries of birth from all five continents. Students from 17 of these 32 countries, each country representing a contribution to the cohort population of 0.5% or greater per country of birth, constituted 95.8% of the Bachelor of Accounting cohort as shown in Figure 9.

Within the Bachelor of Accounting cohort, the largest overall contingent was that with China as birth country, and counted at 198 or 40.3% of the 491-strong cohort. By contrast, students with languages at home representative of the Indian subcontinent counted at 186, or 37.9%. Distributing these two populations by term of entry reveals a relative shift in population of the cohort as shown in Figure 10.

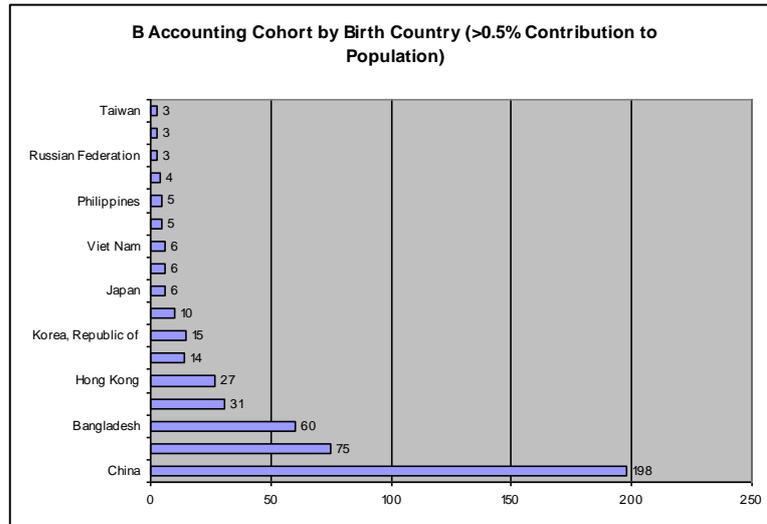


Figure 9: Bachelor of Accounting students by birth country (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

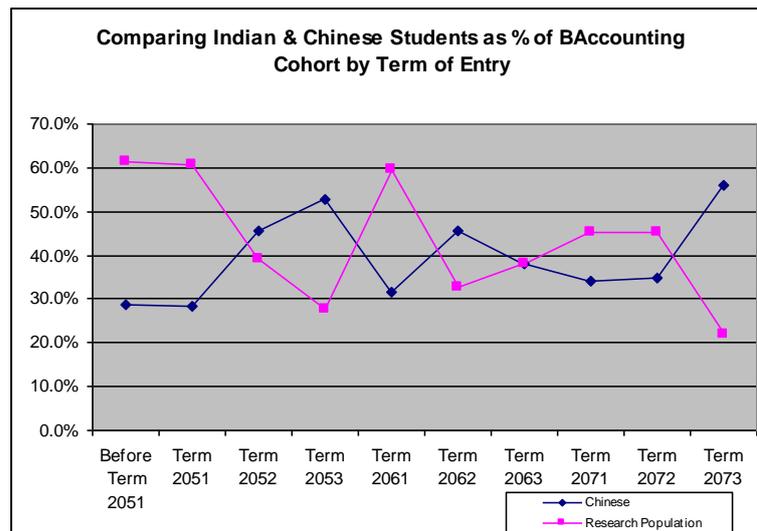


Figure 10: The relative shift in B. Accounting student population 2005-2007 (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The overall trends in student demographics shown in Figure 10 thus demonstrates both the volatility of the market for international education, and the desirability of better understanding the main concerns of the student population.

The research cohort: undergraduate Sub-continental Bachelor of Accounting students

For the purpose of this study, the Indian subcontinent was taken to include those students for whom:

- Nationality is Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka; and/or
- Language at home is equivalent to the languages identified with such people.

The countries of birth and gender of Sub-continental students as a percentage of the research cohort are as shown in Figure 11. The full data set is shown in Table 19 on page 174.

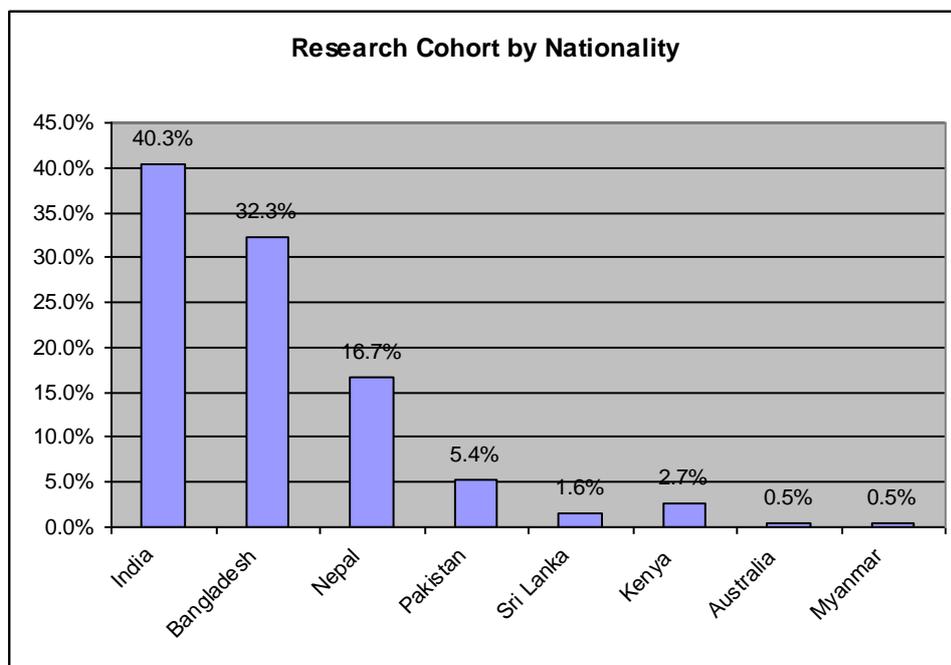


Figure 11: Research cohort by country of birth – Summary (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The potential sample for the study was therefore 186 Sub-continental students. Of these, 152 (81.7%) were male. See Figure 12 and Figure 13.

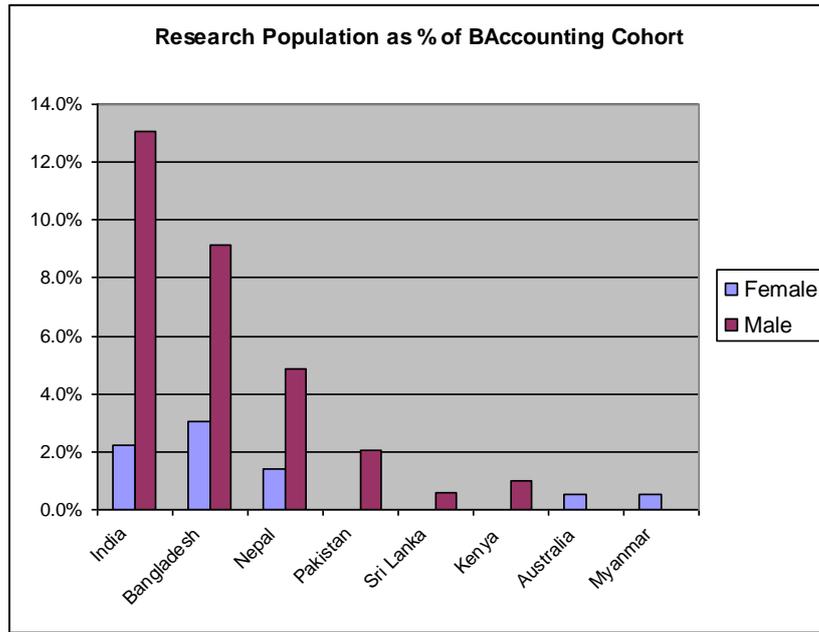


Figure 12: Research cohort by gender and country (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

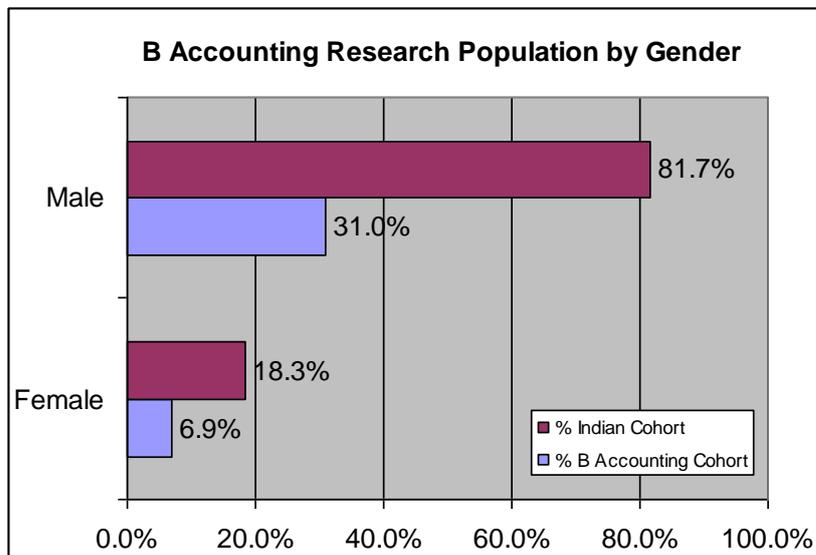


Figure 13: Research cohort by gender (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

To facilitate analysis of survey results in terms of possible learning expectations based on language spoken at home, Figure 14 below illustrates the range and relative magnitude of languages spoken at home by these Sub-continental students in the

Bachelor of Accounting program at the academy. The full data set is at Table 20 on page 175.

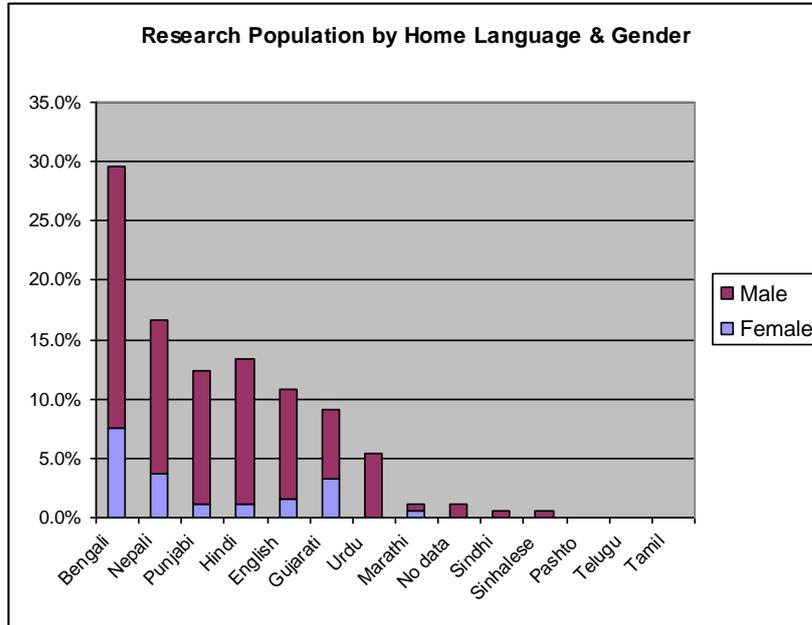


Figure 14: Research cohort languages at home (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

A description of the research cohort by age and term of entry to the academy is shown in Figure 15 and Figure 16.

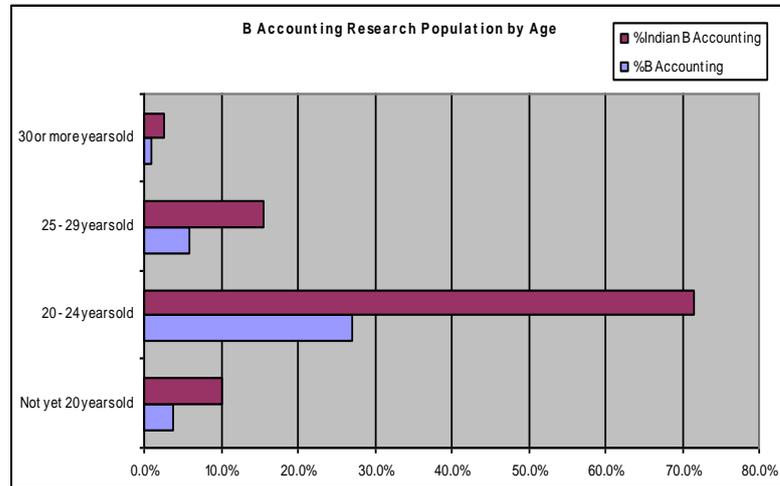


Figure 15: Research cohort by age (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

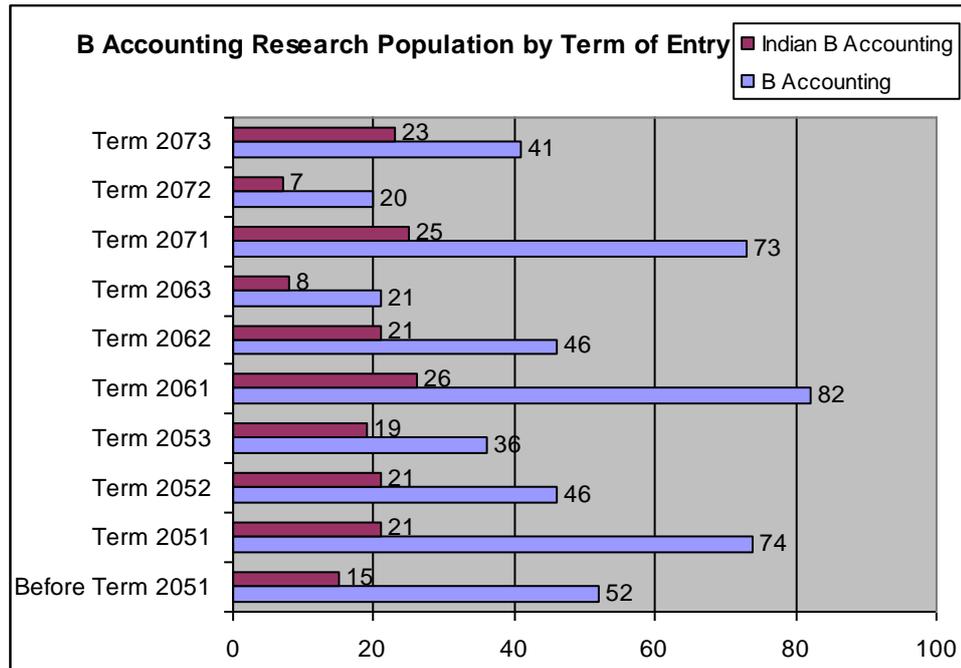


Figure 16: Research cohort by term of entry (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The research site operated on a three term year. Data relating to terms is tabulated against a four-digit identifier, such as Term 2051 which represents year 2005, term 1, or Term 2073 which signifies year 2007, term 3, and so on. The full data set describing the research cohort is presented in Table 19 - Table 22 following.

Table 19: Bachelor of Accounting cohort: December 2007 (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The UG B. Accounting Cohort in December 2007													
		Count	% Acad	% UG	% BAacct		Female	% BAacct	GPA		Male	% BAacct	GPA
Birth Country	China	198	11.6%	25.6%	40.3%		113	23.0%	2.924		85	17.3%	2.533
Birth Country	India	75	4.4%	11.3%	18.5%		11	2.2%	4.196		64	13.0%	2.935
Birth Country	Bangladesh	60	3.5%	8.3%	13.6%		15	3.1%	3.288		45	9.2%	3.117
Birth Country	Nepal	31	1.8%	3.7%	6.0%		7	1.4%	3.148		24	4.9%	2.583
Birth Country	Hong Kong	27	1.6%	2.6%	4.3%		12	2.4%	3.227		15	3.1%	2.765
Birth Country	Korea, Republic of	15	0.9%	1.9%	3.1%		7	1.4%	3.193		8	1.6%	3.623
Birth Country	Indonesia	14	0.8%	1.8%	2.9%		10	2.0%	3.433		4	0.8%	3.126
Birth Country	Pakistan	10	0.6%	1.3%	2.0%		0	0.0%			10	2.0%	3.612
Birth Country	Japan	6	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%		6	1.2%	3.179		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Malaysia	6	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%		2	0.4%	1.438		4	0.8%	3.474
Birth Country	Viet Nam	6	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%		2	0.4%	4.300		4	0.8%	3.319
Birth Country	Kenya	5	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%		0	0.0%			5	1.0%	4.104
Birth Country	Philippines	5	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%		1	0.2%	2.714		4	0.8%	3.413
Birth Country	Myanmar	4	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%		3	0.6%	3.555		1	0.2%	0.000
Birth Country	Russian Federation	3	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%		2	0.4%	4.523		1	0.2%	2.286
Birth Country	Sri Lanka	3	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%		0	0.0%			3	0.6%	1.512
Birth Country	Taiwan	3	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%		0	0.0%			3	0.6%	1.980
Birth Country	Australia	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%		2	0.4%	3.468		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Mongolia	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%		2	0.4%	3.000		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Singapore	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%		0	0.0%			2	0.41%	1.453
Birth Country	Thailand	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%		2	0.4%	3.125		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	United Kingdom	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%		1	0.2%	2.625		1	0.2%	3.333
Birth Country	Brazil	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		1	0.2%	4.750		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Czech Republic	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		1	0.2%	3.706		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	0.000

The UG B. Accounting Cohort in December 2007													
		Count	% Acad	% UG	% BAacct		Female	% BAacct	GPA		Male	% BAacct	GPA
Birth Country	Kazakhstan	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		1	0.2%	4.667		0	0.0%	
Birth Country	Lao People's Dem. Rep	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	2.000
Birth Country	Latvia	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	3.368
Birth Country	Portugal	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	3.765
Birth Country	Slovakia	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	5.429
Birth Country	United Arab Emirates	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		0	0.0%			1	0.2%	3.278
Birth Country	Uzbekistan	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%		1	0.2%	2.533		0	0.01%	
Total UG B. Accounting Students		491	28.9%	63.4%	100.0%		202	41.1%	3.381		289	58.9%	2.792

Table 20: Research cohort by language at home (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The UG B. Accounting Research Cohort by Language at Home in December 2007													
		Count	% Acad	% UG	% BAacct	% IND	Female	% Cohort	GPA		Male	% Cohort	GPA
Language at Home	Bengali	55	3.2%	7.1%	11.2%	29.6%	14	5.1%	3.439		41	22.0%	3.036
Language at Home	Nepali	31	1.8%	4.0%	6.3%	16.7%	7	2.5%	3.148		24	12.9%	2.583
Language at Home	Punjabi	23	1.4%	3.0%	4.7%	12.4%	2	1.0%	4.428		21	11.3%	3.228
Language at Home	Hindi	25	1.5%	3.2%	5.1%	13.4%	2	1.9%	4.430		23	12.4.7%	2.562
Language at Home	English	20	1.2%	2.6%	4.1%	10.8%	3	1.3%	3.247		17	9.1%	3.756
Language at Home	Gujarati	17	1.0%	2.2%	3.5%	9.1%	6	3.5%	3.915		11	5.9%	3.211
Language at Home	Urdu	9	0.5%	1.2%	1.8%	4.8%	0	0.0%			10	5.4%	3.052
Language at Home	Marathi	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%	1	0.5%	2.500		1	0.5%	1.143
Language at Home	No data	2	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%	0	0.0%			2	1.1%	4.428
Language at Home	Sindhi	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0	0.0%			1	0.5%	0.000
Language at Home	Sinhalese	1	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0	0.0%			1	0.5%	1.250

The UG B. Accounting Research Cohort by Language at Home in December 2007												
	Count	% Acad	% UG	% BAacct	% IND	Female	% Cohort	GPA		Male	% Cohort	GPA
Language at Home Pashto	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%			0	0.0%	
Language at Home Telugu	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%			0	0.0%	
Language at Home Tamil	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%			0	0.0%	
Total UG B. Accounting Research Cohort	186	10.9%	24.0%	37.9%	100.0%	35	18.8%	3.587		152	81.7%	2.568

Table 21: Research cohort by birth country (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The UG B. Accounting Research Cohort by Birth Country in December 2007												
	Count	% Acad	% UG	% BAacct	% Cohort	Female	% BAacct	GPA		Male	% BAacct	GPA
Birth Country India	75			15.3%	40.3%	11	2.2%	4.196		64	13.0%	2.935
Birth Country Bangladesh	60			12.2%	32.3%	15	3.1%	3.288		45	9.20%	3.117
Birth Country Nepal	31			6.3%	16.7%	7	1.4%	3.148		24	4.9%	2.583
Birth Country Pakistan	10			2.0%	5.4%	0	0.0%			10	2.0%	3.612
Birth Country Sri Lanka	3			0.6%	1.6%	0	0.0%			3	0.6%	1.512
Birth Country Kenya	5			1.0%	2.7%	0	0.0%			5	1.0%	4.104
Birth Country Australia	1			0.2%	0.5%	1	0.5%	3.250		0	0.0%	
Birth Country Myanmar	1			0.2%	0.5%	1	0.5%	2.500		0	0.0%	
Total UG B. Accounting IND Students	186			37.9%	100.0%	35	7.8%	2.340		151	30.85%	2.977

Table 22: Research cohort by term of entry (source: PSHE Report 2007a)

The UG B. Accounting Research Cohort by entry term, in December 2007 (Comparison with Chinese students)								
	BAcct	Research Cohort	% Term	% BAcct		China	% Term	% BAcct
Entry Before Term 2051 (Term 1, 2005)	52	15	28.8%	3.1%		32	61.5%	6.5%
Entry Term 2051	74	21	28.4%	4.3%		45	60.8%	9.2%
Entry Term 2052	46	21	45.7%	4.3%		18	39.1%	3.73%
Entry Term 2053	36	19	52.8%	3.9%		10	27.8%	2.0%
Entry Term 2061	82	26	31.7%	5.3%		49	59.8%	10.0%
Entry Term 2062	46	21	45.7%	4.3%		15	32.6%	3.1%
Entry Term 2063	21	8	38.1%	1.6%		8	38.1%	1.6%
Entry Term 2071	73	25	34.2%	5.1%		33	45.2%	6.7%
Entry Term 2072	20	7	35.0%	17.1%		9	45.0%	22.0%
Entry Term 2073 (Term 3, 2007)	41	23	56.1%	4.7%		9	22.0%	1.8%
Total UG B. Accounting Students	491	186		37.9%		228		46.4%

Appendix 2. Questionnaire

The Learning Needs and Expectations of Undergraduate International Students in an Australian University

This research is being undertaken to gain a better understanding of the learning needs and expectations of international students in an Australian undergraduate university setting. An anonymous questionnaire is being used to collect information, and you are not required to provide your name. The questions fall into 5 categories relating to different aspects of studying at university:

1. Background information - about yourself, your home country, the main language spoken at home, and your present program of study in Australia.
2. How you prepared for study at an Australian university.
3. How confident you feel about certain aspects of studying at university in Australia.
4. How you deal with certain issues that students can experience at university in Australia.
5. How you feel generally about your experience at university in Australia.

There is no *right* answer to any question; it simply depends on you and your own background, your experiences, or your opinion. So please answer each question as honestly as you can. Don't worry about trying to project a good image; your answers are ANONYMOUS. Do not spend a long time on each question: your first reaction is probably the best one. Please answer each item. You may use a checkmark like or in the box.

Background information	
1. What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
2. What is your age?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not yet 20 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 29 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 24 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 30 or more years old
3. What is your birth country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Japan <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladesh <input type="checkbox"/> Kazakhstan <input type="checkbox"/> Russian Fed. <input type="checkbox"/> Brazil <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya <input type="checkbox"/> Singapore <input type="checkbox"/> Cambodia <input type="checkbox"/> Korea, Republic of <input type="checkbox"/> Slovakia <input type="checkbox"/> China <input type="checkbox"/> Lao People's Dem. Rep. <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lanka <input type="checkbox"/> Colombia <input type="checkbox"/> Latvia <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan <input type="checkbox"/> Czech Rep. <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/> Thailand <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt <input type="checkbox"/> Moldova, Republic of <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Fiji <input type="checkbox"/> Mongolia <input type="checkbox"/> U.A.E. <input type="checkbox"/> Hong Kong <input type="checkbox"/> Myanmar <input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom <input type="checkbox"/> Hungary <input type="checkbox"/> Nepal <input type="checkbox"/> Uzbekistan <input type="checkbox"/> India <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan <input type="checkbox"/> Viet Nam <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia <input type="checkbox"/> Peru <input type="checkbox"/> Zimbabwe <input type="checkbox"/> Italy <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify)
4. In what country did you <u>last</u> study as a full-time student before starting at this university?	<input type="checkbox"/> Same country as above <input type="checkbox"/> Other:.....(Please specify)
5. Did you study in English at your last school?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If NO; in what language did you study at school?(Please specify)
6. Did you complete high school in Australia?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If NO; in what country did you complete high school?(Please specify)
7. What is the main language spoken by your family in your home country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Khmer <input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi <input type="checkbox"/> Bengali <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Russian <input type="checkbox"/> Burmese <input type="checkbox"/> Lao <input type="checkbox"/> Shona <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian <input type="checkbox"/> Sindhi <input type="checkbox"/> Czech <input type="checkbox"/> Malay <input type="checkbox"/> Sinhalese

Background information	
	<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak <input type="checkbox"/> Gujarati <input type="checkbox"/> Marathi <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Hakka <input type="checkbox"/> Mon-Khmer <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi <input type="checkbox"/> Nepali <input type="checkbox"/> Tamil <input type="checkbox"/> Hokkien <input type="checkbox"/> Other Chinese Lang. <input type="checkbox"/> Telugu <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian <input type="checkbox"/> Other Eastern Asian Lang. <input type="checkbox"/> Thai <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesian <input type="checkbox"/> Other Eastern Euro. Lang. <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> Pashto <input type="checkbox"/> Urdu <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Other:(Please specify)
8. What was your first term of study at this university?	<input type="checkbox"/> Before Term 1, 2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1, 2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1, 2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2, 2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2, 2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3, 2005 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3, 2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 1, 2006 <input type="checkbox"/> After Term 3, 2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 2, 2006 <input type="checkbox"/> Term 3, 2006
9. What is your program of study now at this university?	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree of Business <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Digital Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Electronic Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Business <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Hospitality Managt. <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Business (Spec.) <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Info. Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Business Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Bach. Multimedia Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Other:..... (Please specify)
• Do you have a part-time job while you are studying at university in Australia?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If YES; what is your Job Title:(Please specify)

How did you prepare for university study in Australia?							
For the following questions, please indicate YES or NO and HOW HELPFUL this aspect was for you, using the 5-point response scale		Most Helpful A major factor in preparing for study in Australia	Helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Not Helpful	Most Unhelpful A useless waste of my time and effort	
		1	2	3	4	5	
11.	Did you read any books or magazines about <u>Australian university life generally</u> ? Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Did you read any books or magazines about <u>the types of learning expected at Australian universities</u> ? Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Did you read anything else to prepare for coming to study in Australia? Please specify: Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How did you prepare for university study in Australia?							
For the following questions, please indicate YES or NO <u>and</u> HOW HELPFUL this aspect was for you, using the 5-point response scale			Most Helpful A major factor in preparing for study in Australia	Helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Not Helpful	Most Unhelpful A useless waste of my time and effort
			1	2	3	4	5
14.	Did you search online about <u>Australian university life generally</u> ? Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Did you search online about <u>the types of learning expected at Australian universities</u> ? Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Did you search online <u>anything else</u> to prepare for coming to study in Australia? Please specify: Please specify:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Did you talk with your <u>parents or family members</u> about studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	Did you talk with <u>other students</u> or graduates about studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	Did you talk with <u>university recruiters or their agents</u> about studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Did you talk with <u>Australian government representatives</u> about studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Did you talk with <u>university lecturers</u> about studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	Did you talk with <u>any one else</u> about studying at <u>this university</u> in Australia? Please specify: They told me:	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	Did you undertake a course for <u>IELTS/TOEFL</u> English language test before studying at university in Australia?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Did you undertake <u>any other type of English language course</u> to prepare for studying at university in Australia? Please specify: <u>How long</u> was that English language course?	YES NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 3 months <input type="checkbox"/> From 3 – 6 months <input type="checkbox"/> From 6 – 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months (Please specify:)				

How did you prepare for university study in Australia?								
For the following questions, please indicate YES or NO <u>and</u> HOW HELPFUL this aspect was for you, using the 5-point response scale			Most Helpful A major factor in preparing for study in Australia	Helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Not Helpful	Most Unhelpful A useless waste of my time and effort	
			1	2	3	4	5	
Who provided that English language course?			<input type="checkbox"/> A university <input type="checkbox"/> A government school <input type="checkbox"/> A private school <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify:)					
25.	Did you undertake a university preparatory course in your home country before coming to study in Australia?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	Did you undertake a pre-departure briefing or course provided by this university before coming to study in Australia?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	Did you undertake a university preparatory course in Australia before coming to study in this university?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	Did you undertake a university study skills course before coming to study in Australia?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	Did you undertake any other type of course to prepare for studying at university in Australia? Please specify:	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	Did you audit (sit in on) any university classes before enrolling in this university?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	Did you visit Australia as a tourist or student before studying at this university? Please specify:	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	Is there anything else that you did that you thought was important to prepare for studying in Australia at this university? Please specify:	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Generally, how confident are you about the following aspects of living in Australia and studying at university?						
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.		Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Not Confident	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
		1	2	3	4	5
33.	Settling-in to life in Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	Settling-in to student life at the university.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	Keeping up with the university workload.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	Mixing with students from other countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	Your ability to succeed at university compared with other students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Generally, how confident are you about the following aspects of living in Australia and studying at university?					
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.	Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Not Confident	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
	1	2	3	4	5
38. Listening to and understanding lectures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Taking notes in lectures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. Understanding what lecturers will tell me about assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Asking my lecturer questions when I do not understand something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Answering questions in tutorials in front of my classmates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Taking part in group activities and presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. Understanding what tutorials are all about, and what they will tell me about assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. Explaining, in English, what I know about a subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. Asking my tutor questions when I do not understand something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. Learning the answers from past exam papers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. Learning to solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. Applying the theory that I have learned to problem solving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. Thinking critically about material that has come from a number of sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. Searching for information in a library.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52. Searching for information online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. Writing essays and assignments in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. Doing assignments during the term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. Doing exams at the end of term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56. Is there anything else that you worry about, or feel good about, in studying at university in Australia? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Please specify:				

Generally, how do you deal with the following sorts of issues that students can experience at university?					
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.	I always do this	I often do this	I don't know	I sometimes do this	I never do this
	1	2	3	4	5
57. Making a study timetable so that I can balance my study time and my other work.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
58. Skipping classes, because all that I need to know is in the textbook or online.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Generally, how do you deal with the following sorts of issues that students can experience at university?					
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.	I always do this	I often do this	I don't know	I sometimes do this	I never do this
	1	2	3	4	5
59. Copying or rewriting in my own words large chunks of text or online material that is useful in my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
60. Asking someone from my home country when a real problem arises, rather than asking the university staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
61. Asking the LSU Learning Skills Unit for help with my assignments and English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
62. Asking the student Client Services people for help when I have a personal problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
63. Asking the Faculty service desk people for help when I have a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
64. Asking the TECC student employment service for help finding a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
65. Keeping quiet in class and not asking for help, because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
66. Speaking in my home country language with friends, because that way I can understand things better.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

What is your overall experience of the following?					
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.	Very Good	Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Bad	Very Bad
	1	2	3	4	5
67. Continuous assessment through assignments during the term.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
68. Doing exams at the end of term.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
69. Learning with students from other countries and cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
70. Balancing university study <u>and</u> doing part-time work.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
71. Studying at university in Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
72. Studying in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
73. The cost of living here.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
74. The cost of my degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
75. The courses that I am studying.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
76. The difference between studying in Australia and in my home country.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
77. The support I receive from university staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
78. The usefulness of what I am learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
79. The way courses are structured - it's easy to follow what is being taught each week.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

What is your overall experience of the following?					
Please indicate your response on the 5-point scale.	Very Good	Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Bad	Very Bad
	1	2	3	4	5
80. The way the courses are taught.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
81. Tourist and recreation opportunities available here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
82. Working in groups in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What's easier at university in Australia? What's harder?	
83. Please nominate 3 things that you find EASIER to do at university in Australia than you expected:	
Easier:	Why is it easier?
Easier:	Why is it easier?
Easier:	Why is it easier?
84. Please nominate 3 things that you find HARDER to do at university in Australia than you expected:	
Harder:	Why is it harder?
Harder:	Why is it harder?
Harder:	Why is it harder?
85. Is there some other issue or problem that you have experienced at university in Australia, and would like to tell us about? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If YES, please tell us:

Finally, is there anything else that you feel we should know about?	
<p>86. Overall, has your experience at university in Australia met your expectations?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>Please comment if you would like to tell us about your overall expectations and experience:</p>
<p>87. Is there anything else that you feel we should know about?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If YES, please tell us:</p>

THANK YOU for participating in this research. Please hand your completed questionnaire to the survey administrator.

Questions/Further Information/Concerns/Complaints

This project is being managed by Stephen Howlett. If you have any questions regarding this project, if you would like further information about the research, or if you would like to speak to someone about the study or the questionnaire itself, please contact: Stephen Howlett Email: [\[Researcher's email address provided\]](#)

This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: 02 9514 9615, Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 3. Follow-up interviews

This Appendix discusses the rationale and methodology used in the selection of questions, the interview format, role and status of the interviewer, and the selection of volunteers as interview subjects. The questions and format selected for the interviews is also presented.

Questions for follow-up

Introduction

Analysis of the data gathered in the pilot administration of the questionnaire as discussed in Chapter 4 suggested that further investigation was justified in the areas of:

- Schooling and language proficiency prior to arriving in Australia;
- Work-life balance;
- Difficulties faced in settling-in and coping with life in Australia; and
- Identifiers of good and bad aspects of the overall experience compared to expectation.

As an inducement for voluntary, and unrewarded, participation in the follow-up interviews, a commitment was made in the research plan to restrict the activity to a maximum of 30 minutes per interview event. For this reason, the total number of questions was limited to 13 questions.

Interview or focus-group?

The wording of questions needed to consider the issues of validity and reliability, particularly as attitudinal aspects of student experience were to be canvassed rather than facts. As well, the nature of the questions asked related to personal experiences and attitudes. Both these matters suggested the need for confidentiality as well as anonymity to elicit truthful individual experiences and recommendations.

One generally recognised way of controlling for these constraints is to have a highly structured interview, with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent to avoid transference by either interviewee or interviewer through the projection of feelings or attitudes onto another (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.121). For this reason, and to encourage freer responses, a one-on-one interview format was selected in preference to a focus group.

The interviewer

HREC approval for the research included acknowledgement of a pre-existing relationship between potential participants and the researcher. For this reason, the follow-up interviews were to be conducted by an independent third party to avoid any possibility of the researcher embodying the authority of a power ‘who can impose sanctions’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.121) on ‘powerless’ student respondents.

By the time of administration of the questionnaire in the first week of December 2007, the constraint of a pre-existing relationship had been removed. The researcher had ceased any relationship with the university and individual participants. The researcher was invited to return to the work site as an independent research student of the University of Technology, Sydney. It thus became possible for the researcher to both administer the questionnaire and conduct the one-on-one interviews with volunteer participants, although the “still known” relationship of the former association remained.

Selection of volunteers for interview

For completeness, it was considered necessary to ensure that the main administration of the questionnaire (and the follow-up interviews) took place early in a term, and included participants who were just starting their learning journey at university in Australia.

A series of 30-minute interviews was planned for teaching week 5 of the Summer Term 3, 2007 to allow new students time to settle into their studies and thus be in a position to better reflect on issues of teaching and learning. That week of term also preceded the due date for the first round of assignments that term, and also provided a clear week before the start of the end of year vacation, which in Summer Term occurs after teaching week 6.

Potential candidates for follow-up interviews were selected at random during the (Summer School) Term 3, 2007 enrolment period. Enrolment and selection took place during a four-week period in the two weeks immediately prior to the start of teaching, and during the first two weeks of teaching. In all, 491 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Accounting program in Term 3, 2007, of whom 186 (38% of the cohort) were from the Indian subcontinent. A total of 46 potential volunteers (25% of the Sub-continental research sample) were contacted by telephone and email with an invitation to participate.

An interview target of 24 volunteers (around 13% of the research sample) was set for the interview sample. The intention was to gather information from a minimum of 10% of the research population, or around 18 – 20 interviewees.

During the weeks leading up to the interview dates, volunteers were again contacted to confirm agreement to participate, and the list was refined to 25 persons to provide

a mix of country of origin, gender, age, first term of study, overall academic progress to date, and interviewee availability within the planned interview schedule.

To ensure confidentiality of information gathered, the interview participants were identified only by a coded identity number. Determinants that might ensure a useful variety of participants and facilitate meaningful interpretation of responses to interview questions were also noted from student records, as shown in Table 23 below.

Table 23: Follow-up interview volunteers

Interviewee Ident.	Birth Country, City	Gender	Age	First Term ¹⁰	Cumulative GPA ¹¹
1	Australia, Sydney	F	19	2071	4.000
2	Bangladesh, Chittagong	M	24	2052	4.211
4	Kenya, Nairobi	M	28	2061	3.600
7	Nepal, Mechi	M	30	2031	2.810
11	India, Ta Dheri	M	21	2073	0.000
14	Qatar, Doha	M	22	2052	2.421
16	India, Ludhiana	M	24	2052	3.375
18	Bangladesh, Nayayangong	M	23	2061	1.917
20	Bangladesh, Chittagong	M	29	2053	2.375
21	Bangladesh, Dhaka	M	26	2052	2.875
22	India, Haryana	M	24	2053	3.818
25	India, Rajkot	M	27	2053	5.000
26	Nepal, Kaski	F	22	2071	5.250
27	India, Hoshiarpur	F	19	2072	0.000
28	Bangladesh, Dhaka	F	30	2072	0.000
29	Bangladesh, Dhaka	M	22	2051	3.095
30	Nepal, Lalitpur	M	21	2071	4.500

¹⁰ First Term nomenclature reflects reporting conventions used in the university's data reporting system (PSHE Report 2007b, for example). First Term 2061 equates to Term 1, 2006; 2073 equates to Term 3, 2007; and so on.

¹¹ At the research site, cumulative GPA is calculated as an average of the weighted grade point averages awarded during all terms of study. Average grades indicative in Cumulative GPA are: HD = 7; D = 6+; C = 5; P = 4; SP (Supplementary Pass) = 3; PC (Conceded Pass) = 3; PT (Terminating Pass) = 2; F = 0 or a student in their first term of study and yet to be awarded a grade in any course. In the case of this research, the Cumulative GPA, when considered together with a student's first term of study, is indicative of overall attainment whilst at the university, and hence suggestive of the degree of difficulty that a student may be encountering in their studies.

Interviewee Ident.	Birth Country, City	Gender	Age	First Term¹⁰	Cumulative GPA¹¹
31	Pakistan, Karachi	M	21	2063	1.143
32	Bangladesh, Dhaka	F	23	2071	3.250
33	India, New Delhi	M	21	2073	0.000
34	India, Gujarat	F	21	2052	3.667
35	Nepal, Kathmandu	M	26	2063	2.000
36	Bangladesh, Dhaka	F	23	2051	3.650
42	India, Punjab	M	20	2053	3.579
43	Bangladesh, Dhaka	F	24	2062	0.800

Follow-up interview questions



The Learning Needs and Expectations of Undergraduate International Students in an Australian University

Introduction

Firstly, please do not be alarmed by the tape recorder. I am making a record of the interview so that I can go back over your comments in slow time to make sure that I really understand what you are telling me. Our research rules require that I make a copy, and that the information remains confidential. Only my Supervisor at UTS and I will know what you have said. No one at this university will be able to see or hear what you have said.

This is interview [insert Ident. No. of interviewee], taking place on [date] at [time] in [location].

Present at this interview are the interviewee [Ident. No., a Gender, Birth Country, from City, Age, whose first term of study at this university was First Term], and the interviewer Stephen Howlett, who is a student at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and is undertaking a Doctor of Education degree.

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to give me your opinions on some of the issues that have arisen in the research that I am conducting into the learning needs and expectations of international students in an Australian university. Your opinions can provide a valuable contribution to our work, and will add to the understanding that is arising from our analysis of the questionnaires that were completed earlier this Term.

Explain and hand out a copy of: Information Sheet for Interview.

Explain and complete: Consent form for Interview.

Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we start the interview?

Preamble

A number of issues relating to learning at university in Australia have arisen from our analysis of responses to an anonymous questionnaire that was completed by students earlier this Term. The questions that I am going to ask you now are designed to further explore these issues. Please understand that there are no “Right” or “Wrong” answers to these questions, just your own opinion; so please tell me what first comes to your mind when I ask the question.

Questions

1. Firstly, where did you finish your high schooling? ... And in which language did you study at high school?
2. Before you started at this university, did you do anything special to prepare for learning at university?
3. When you started university in Australia, what was the hardest thing that you had to do? ... How did you cope with this?
4. What was the easiest? ... Why?
5. Can you please briefly describe for me your weekly routine for study and work?
6. How many days each week do you come to university? ... To work?
7. How many hours each week does university study take up for you, lectures, tutorials, reading, assignments, and so on?
8. How long does it take you to travel to and from university? ... To and from work?
9. What is the best thing about being at university in Australia? ... The worst?
10. Before all else, what one thing do you feel we should do to make life at university better and easier?
11. Also, what one thing do you feel we should do to make learning at university better and easier?
12. Looking back at your experiences, what one suggestion or piece of advice would you have for students before they come to university in Australia?
13. One final question. Is there anything else that you feel I should know about?

Conclusion

Well, that's the end of the questions. Again, thank you for your time and the valuable insight that you have provided into our research. It really does help us to better understand what is coming out of the responses to the questionnaire.

A plain English version of the research results should be available as soon as possible, and I will make sure that you are able to see a copy of these results if you so wish.

Thank you; and my best wishes for your studies this Term, and for the seasonal break ahead. Interview [insert Ident. No. of interviewee] concludes at [time].

Questions/Further Information/Concerns/Complaints

This project is being managed by Stephen Howlett. If you have any questions regarding this project, if you would like further information about the research, or if you would like to speak to someone about the study or the questionnaire itself, please contact: Stephen Howlett Email: [\[Researcher's email address provided\]](#)

This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: 02

9514 9615, Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Interview comments

To ensure anonymity of data, the interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by an independent third party transcription service. A separate caption style was created for presentation of the interview comments made by participants in the follow-up interviews. A summary table is included in the relevant section of the report at Table 37 on page 213.

Appendix 4. Participant engagement with the pilot questionnaire

Summary

This appendix presents an appreciation of participant engagement with the research questionnaire at the time it was piloted to test the utility of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a random selection of undergraduate classes across all programs of study on the research site campus.

The data and analysis presented in this appendix focuses on the following issues:

- How did participants engage with the questionnaire? Did they respond thoughtfully, or merely ‘tick the box’?
- Did respondents understand the questions?

A total of 123 completed questionnaires were returned. Of these, 44 (36%) were from students in the target research cohort of Sub-continental students. Of 44 questionnaires returned, the degree of thoughtfulness in responding to the questionnaire can be summarised as follows:

- Participation: 43 respondents (97.7%) attempted all questions.
- Engagement: 81 of the 84 questions attracted a response rate greater than 90%.
- Written comments offered: an engagement rate of 24.5%.
- Distribution of scaled responses on the forced-option questions: 95% of respondents attempted more than 90% of all questions.

Participation

Students were active participants in the survey, and interested in contributing further to the research effort. Of the 44 research cohort respondents, 43 (97.7%) students indicated on their Consent Form that they were potentially interested in participating in the subsequent follow-up interview/focus group activity. Three students later withdrew their consent, 16 were unable to be contacted, and half of the cohort (24, or 54.6%) agreed to be scheduled for interview in Teaching Week 5 of the following term (the week 10-14 December 2007). Selection of participants for the follow-up interview/focus group is discussed in Appendix 3.

Overall, respondents appeared to engage meaningfully with the questionnaire, and 35 (79.6%) of the 44 respondents attempted questions in all sections. Of the nine students who did not fully complete the questionnaire:

- One respondent (Respondent Ident. No.116) a 20 year-old Bangladeshi male who was in his third term at the university, withdrew from the survey at the stage of seeking student feelings of confidence in dealing with aspects of living in

Australia and studying at university. Prior to withdrawing, this respondent provided meaningful background information (Questions 1–10) and a response to undertaking a preparatory IELTS/TOEFL¹² course (Question 23, to which a “Yes: most helpful” response was supplied). “No” answers were supplied in response to other questions (Questions 11–32 inclusive) relating to preparing for university study in Australia. This response pattern suggests that the student was engaging with the questionnaire until the time of withdrawal, and perhaps made no specific preparations for studying at university in Australia other than undertaking a language course in order to attain the mandatory IELTS standard for award of a student visa (DIAC 2007b).

- Another (Respondent Ident. No.100), a 20 year-old Indian male who was in his sixth term at the university, withdrew after completing five pages of the 8-page questionnaire.
- Three other respondents (Ident. Nos.19, 99 and 101) withdrew at the end of the Likert-scaled section of the questionnaire and did not offer any free-text comments (Q.83-87)¹³ regarding any other issues that participants might wish to raise. All these respondents were 20 year-old males; two from India and one from Nepal. They were in their ninth, sixth and fourth terms of study at the university, and one respondent had previously studied in Australia before starting at the university in which the research was conducted. Prior to withdrawing all three had engaged reasonably with the questionnaire, each providing a range of numerical responses to the Likert-scaled questions.
- Another respondent to withdraw (Ident. No.61) without offering any free-text comments (Q.83-87) was a 21 year-old Indian female who was in her third term at the university.
- Respondent Ident. No.115 (a 19 year-old Bangladeshi male in his first term at the university) withdrew a Q.85 (issues that are harder at university in Australia) after offering detailed comments on issues that are easier than expected.
- An eighth respondent (Ident. No.113, a 20 year-old Hindi-speaking Indian male from Fiji in his first term at the university) withdrew without completing the last two questions.
- The ninth and final respondent to withdraw was Ident. No.117, a 20 year-old Bangladeshi male student in his third term at the university. He declined to complete the last question, Q.87: Is there anything else that you feel we should know about?

¹² IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) are English language proficiency tests. Australian Student Visa Regulations require students to have sat an IELTS test prior to lodging their application (DIAC 2007b).

¹³ For convenience, the abbreviation (for example) Q.83-87 is used throughout to denote questions numbered 83 to 87 inclusive, and so on.

The lower response rate to the final series of “free text” questions (Q.83-87) relating to what is easier or harder at university, overall expectations and other issues, suggested that these matters should be further explored as questions in the follow-up interviews.

Written comments

A number of respondents went to some length to provide written comment in expansion of questions asked. Of the 87 questions asked in the questionnaire, 18 questions (21% of all questions) also invited a written explanation in addition to a simple yes/no and/or scalar response.

In all, these questions provided a total of 24 distinct opportunities for comment if a “Yes” response was offered. There was one exception to this arrangement in the questionnaire: “Final comments” in Question 86 invites a remark from both “Yes” and “No” responses. Three of the questions (Q.24 - Language training other than IELTS/TOEFL; Q.83 – What is easier; and Q.84 – What is harder) each provided three opportunities for comment. The degree of engagement by explanatory comment is summarised in Table 24.

Table 24: Respondent engagement with questions inviting comment – Pilot questionnaire - Summary

Respondent Engagement - Summary		
1.	Opportunities for comment: 15 questions * 1 comment + 3 questions * 3 comments =	24
2.	Number of completed questionnaires:	44
3.	Therefore, total opportunities for comment: 1*2 =	1056
4.	Total comments recorded:	259
5.	Therefore, engagement with the questionnaire in terms of comments offered:	24.5%

The degree of engagement via comment summarised in Table 24 therefore supports the conclusion that respondents, overall, engaged meaningfully with the questionnaire. Table 25 examines the extent of respondent engagement with each of the questions that invited explanatory comment.

Table 25: Respondent engagement with questions inviting comment – Pilot questionnaire - Detail

Engagement – Questions inviting comments						
Qn.	Content	No. of responses to question	No. of ‘YES’ responses	‘YES’ responses that included comment	‘YES’ responses <u>not</u> including comment	Comments regarding engagement with the question
Background Information						
10.	Part-time job.	44	30	23	7	Acceptable.
Preparing for university study in Australia						
11.	Reading about university life.	43	19	5	14	1 No response Low comment rate suggests either minimal recall or a greater

Engagement – Questions inviting comments						
Qn.	Content	No. of responses to question	No. of 'YES' responses	'YES' responses that included comment	'YES' responses <u>not</u> including comment	Comments regarding engagement with the question
						focus on how useful the reading was.
12.	Reading about learning expected.	44	13	2	11	Comment as above.
13.	Other reading.	44	21	14	7	Acceptable.
14.	Searching online about university life.	44	29	13	16	Again, low comment rate suggests either minimal recall or a greater focus on how useful the online search was.
15.	Searching online about learning expected.	44	12	4	8	Comment as above.
16.	Other online research.	44	14	6	8	Comment as above.
22.	Talking with other people about studying at <u>this</u> university.	44	14	10	4	Acceptable.
24.	Language courses <u>other than</u> IELTS/TOEFL.	44	12	11	1	Acceptable. Question provided 3 opportunities for comment relating to type, duration and provider of language training.
29.	<u>Other</u> types of preparatory courses.	41	9	4	5	3 No response. Acceptable.
31.	Previous visits to Australia.	43	7	4	3	1 No response. Acceptable.
32.	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	43	11	7	4	1 No response. Acceptable.
Confidence about living and studying in Australia						
56.	Anything else that you worry about or feel good about?	39	12	10	2	Acceptable.
What's easier/harder						
		NO. OF RESPONSES TO QUESTION		TOTAL NO. OF COMMENTS OFFERED		COMMENT REGARDING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE QUESTION
83.	What's easier?	30		61		Acceptable. 3 opportunities for comment.
84.	What's harder?	26		56		Acceptable. 3 opportunities for

Engagement – Questions inviting comments						
Qn.	Content	No. of responses to question	No. of 'YES' responses	'YES' responses that included comment	'YES' responses <u>not</u> including comment	Comments regarding engagement with the question
						comment.
85.	Other issues?	34	10	9	1	Acceptable.
Final comments						
86.	Does experience match expectation?	34	“YES” = 18 “NO” = 16	10 (Combined YES and NO comments)	24 (Combined YES and NO responses)	Acceptable.
87.	Is there anything else?	34	9	9	0	Acceptable.

The last sections of the questionnaire relating to what is easier and harder at university, and final comments (Q.83-87 inclusive), were designed to encourage a rich source of subjective comment and to check that all student concerns had been addressed in the earlier questions. By the time respondents reached these sections, the response rate had declined by around 25%, down to between 26 and 34 responses per question. This could be attributed to either “response fatigue” or earlier questions having extracted most of the significant data relating to student learning needs and expectations. Generally however, the continued high rate of comment until the final question suggested that the degree of engagement via comment shown in both Table 24 and Table 26 supports the conclusion that respondents engaged meaningfully with the questionnaire.

Thoughtfulness of responses

The degree of thoughtfulness in responses was also measured in terms of the distribution of responses in questions that included a 5-point Likert scale. Scaled responses were used to identify the degree of helpfulness, confidence, type of action taken, and overall experience of circumstances encountered at university in Australia. Scaled responses are summarised in Table 26.

Table 26: Thoughtfulness of responses – Pilot questionnaire

Thoughtfulness - Likert Scale Responses									
(* = Yes response, but degree of helpfulness not identified)									
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree				
Qn.	1	2	3	4	5	Yes*	No	No response	Total
11	2	10	5	0	1	1	24	1	44
12	2	7	4	0	0	0	30	1	44
13	6	11	2	0	0	2	23	0	44
14	11	12	1	0	0	5	15	0	44
15	4	3	0	0	1	4	31	1	44

Thoughtfulness - Likert Scale Responses									
(* = Yes response, but degree of helpfulness not identified)									
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree				
Qn.	1	2	3	4	5	Yes*	No	No response	Total
16	5	6	1	0	0	2	28	2	44
17	19	13	1	0	0	9	2	0	44
18	11	16	0	1	0	7	9	0	44
19	11	10	6	1	2	6	8	0	44
20	4	3	5	0	1	1	30	0	44
21	6	4	3	0	1	3	27	0	44
22	4	1	0	0	0	9	30	0	44
23	24	9	1	0	0	8	2	0	44
24	7	0	2	0	0	3	32	0	44
25	3	2	4	0	0	2	32	1	44
26	2	6	5	0	0	2	28	0	44
27	1	1	3	1	0	1	36	1	44
28	1	1	3	1	0	2	35	1	44
29	2	3	2	1	0	1	32	3	44
30	0	3	2	1	0	1	36	1	44
31	0	4	1	1	0	1	36	1	44
32	5	3	1	0	0	2	32	1	44
33	14	19	5	4	0			2	44
34	15	18	4	4	1			2	44
35	7	25	6	3	1			2	44
36	14	20	7	2	0			1	44
37	18	17	4	2	1			2	44
38	17	24	1	1	0			1	44
39	11	24	7	1	0			1	44
40	17	21	3	2	0			1	44
41	15	19	8	0	0			2	44
42	14	22	7	0	0			1	44
43	12	27	4	0	0			1	44
44	16	22	5	0	0			1	44
45	18	24	1	0	0			1	44
46	16	22	3	1	1			1	44
47	11	26	5	0	0			2	44
48	12	26	4	0	1			1	44
49	14	20	7	1	1			1	44

Thoughtfulness - Likert Scale Responses									
(* = Yes response, but degree of helpfulness not identified)									
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree				
Qn.	1	2	3	4	5	Yes*	No	No response	Total
50	10	22	6	2	3			1	44
51	10	23	4	1	4			2	44
52	16	21	2	2	1			2	44
53	16	24	2	1	0			1	44
54	16	25	1	0	1			1	44
55	14	22	5	2	0			1	44
56	No Likert Scale in this Question.								
57	12	14	2	10	4			2	44
58	2	8	6	13	13			2	44
59	2	15	6	9	10			2	44
60	4	9	4	6	19			2	44
61	12	13	1	7	9			2	44
62	14	9	3	5	11			2	44
63	13	12	3	7	7			2	44
64	6	6	5	6	19			2	44
65	3	4	7	8	20			2	44
66	6	10	6	12	8			2	44
67	11	22	8	0	1			2	44
68	13	20	6	2	1			2	44
69	17	18	4	0	1			4	44
70	9	22	7	3	1			2	44
71	15	22	3	0	1			3	44
72	25	15	1	0	0			3	44
73	1	9	10	10	12			2	44
74	2	6	8	12	13			3	44
75	16	23	1	0	1			3	44
76	9	16	12	2	2			3	44
77	9	16	11	2	2			4	44
78	13	22	4	0	2			3	44
79	5	28	6	1	2			2	44
80	7	23	9	0	3			2	44
81	10	16	8	5	2			3	44
82	14	15	7	1	4			3	44

A further “test for thoughtfulness” in responses was built into the questionnaire design. Four sections of the questionnaire investigated different aspects of studying at university, and invited a response using the 5-point Likert scale. To test if respondents merely “ticked the boxes” without thinking, the sense of questions in the third aspect (how students cope with certain issues that arise when at university) was mixed to include positive and negative actions, whilst the scale criteria remained similar to other questions. This is shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Likert scales used in the questionnaire

Likert Scales Used in the Questionnaire					
Qn.	1	2	3	4	5
11-32 Preparations: “I did this, and it was ...”	Most Helpful. A major factor in preparing for study in Australia	Helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Not Helpful	Most Unhelpful. A useless waste of my time and effort
33-55 Confidence: “About this issue, I feel ...”	Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Not Confident	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
57-66 Coping with issues: “I make a study timetable; I skip classes, etc”	I always do this	I often do this	I don’t know	I sometimes do this	I never do this
67-82 Experiences: “Cost of living; exams; etc”	Very Good	Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Bad	Very Bad

The nature of the distribution of responses shown in Table 26 on page 198, in conjunction with the mixing of “sense” as shown in Table 27 above, suggested that respondents actually “followed” the line of questioning, and provided a thoughtful response.

Conclusion

The significance of the data gathered is examined in detail in Chapter 5: Analysis of Data. For the purpose of deciding the utility of the questionnaire, the following conclusion can be offered relating to participant engagement:

Overall, the combined contribution of comments (Table 25, page 196) and the distribution of responses on the Likert-scaled questions (Table 26, page 198) suggest that respondents did exhibit a degree of “thoughtfulness” in responding to the questionnaire.

This further suggests that data of interest emerging from analysis of the pilot questionnaire is suitable as a basis for the selection of questions for the subsequent follow-up interviews/focus group.

Understanding the questions

Table 28 below shows the number of response opportunities, excluding the opportunities for multiple comments in certain questions, available in the questionnaire. Data in Table 28 is used to investigate student engagement and understanding of the questionnaire.

Table 28: Questionnaire response opportunities – Pilot questionnaire

Response Opportunities	
1. Number of questions	87
2. Total number of participants	44
3. Therefore, total response opportunities: $1 * 2 =$	3828

To test respondent understanding of questions, the number and distribution of questions unanswered was investigated. Table 29 below displays non-responses to questions, sorted by question. Table 30 on page 204 displays non-responses to questions sorted by participant.

Non-response by question

Respondents' understanding of the questions in terms of non-response to a particular question is presented in Table 29 below. Generally, the number of responses to questions suggests that students understood the questions being asked.

Table 29: Questionnaire non-response by question – Pilot questionnaire

Non-Response by Question								
Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response	Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response	Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response
1	0	100	31	1	97	61	2	94
2	0	100	32	1	97	62	2	94
3	0	100	33	2	94	63	2	94
4	0	100	34	2	94	64	2	94
5	0	100	35	2	94	65	2	94
6	0	100	36	1	97	66	2	94
7	0	100	37	2	94	67	2	94
8	0	100	38	1	97	68	2	94
9	0	100	39	1	97	69	4	91
10	0	100	40	1	97	70	2	94
11	1	97	41	2	94	71	3	93
12	1	97	42	1	97	72	3	93
13	0	100	43	1	97	73	2	94
14	0	100	44	1	97	74	3	93
15	1	97	45	1	97	75	3	93
16	2	94	46	1	97	76	3	93

Non-Response by Question								
Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response	Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response	Qn.	Non-Responses	% Response
17	0	100	47	2	94	77	4	91
18	0	100	48	1	97	78	3	93
19	0	100	49	1	97	79	2	94
20	0	100	50	1	97	80	2	94
21	0	100	51	2	94	81	3	93
22	0	100	52	2	94	82	3	93
23	0	100	53	1	97	83	14	68
24	0	100	54	1	97	84	18	59
25	1	97	55	1	97	85	10	77
26	1	97	56	5	89	86	10	77
27	1	97	57	2	94	87	10	77
28	1	97	58	2	94	Total Non-responses		177
29	3	93	59	2	94	Response opportunities		3828
30	1	97	60	2	94	Non-response (%)		4.6%

Generally the response rate to questions was very good, with respondents attempting most questions. The lowest non-responses by question relate to Q.83-84, things that students find easier or harder to do at university than they expected. Response rates were only 68% and 59% respectively. Three opportunities for comment were provided in each category, yet most respondents provided only one or two comments. This area of investigation was noted for further exploration in the follow-up interviews.

Similarly, when compared with the general response rate of more than 90% to most questions, the lower response rate (77%) to the final three questions relating to the overall meeting of expectations and concerns was also noted for further exploration in the follow-up interviews.

Non-response by participant

The extent of participation in the 44 pilot questionnaires analysed included:

- Eight respondents (18.2% of the sample) withdrew part-way through the questionnaire.
- Twelve respondents (27.3%) answered all questions.
- The remaining 24 participants (54.5%) all answered more than 90% of the questions asked.

This data is shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Questionnaire non-response by participant – Pilot questionnaire

Non-Response by Participant					
Respondent Ident.	Unanswered	% Response	Respondent Ident.	Unanswered	% Response
1	2	98	77	2	98
3	-	100	78	2	98
7	6	93	89	-	100
8	1	99	90	6	93
9	-	100	99	5 [withdrew after Q.82]	97
10	2	98	100	30 [withdrew after Q.57]	66
12	2	98	101	7 [withdrew after Q.82]	92
15	-	100	103	-	100
16	1	99	104	1	99
17	1	99	105	1	99
18	-	100	106	-	100
19	7 [withdrew after Q.82]	92	107	-	100
22	2	98	108	2	98
29	3	97	109	1	99
32	2	98	110	-	100
34	2	98	111	8 [did not attempt Q.25-32 - preparations for university study in AUS], but completed the questionnaire.	91
35	-	100	112	2	98
36	-	100	113	2 [withdrew after Q.85]	98
37	3	97	114	1	99
38	-	100	115	5	94
61	6 [withdrew after Q.82]	93	116	55 [withdrew after Q.32]	37
76	4	95	117	3 [withdrew after Q.86]	97

Overall, with 95% of respondents attempting more than 90% of all questions, it could be assumed that participants understood the questions being asked.

Appendix 5. Questionnaire: detailed analysis

Introduction

This Appendix presents a detailed analysis of responses to the questionnaires that were administered during the period October – December 2007. To give voice to student concerns and issues arising during analysis of questionnaire responses, comments are also included as appropriate from transcripts of the interviews with volunteer participants that took place in December 2007. The intent is to present in detail the data that was used to inform the analysis presented in Chapter 5.

The Appendix is structured in five sections as follows:

- First is presented an appreciation of the validity of analysis, including administrative issues, a comparison of the survey sample with the undergraduate Bachelor of Accounting cohort and other sectors of the university at the time of data collection, and the generalisability of findings to the wider population of Sub-continental undergraduate international students. Captioning conventions that were used to ‘signpost’ patterns that emerged during the heuristic analysis are also introduced. This section starts on page 205.
- Second, a summary is presented detailing overall responses to the questionnaire. This data is used to support the assertion that participants engaged meaningfully with the instrument. This section starts on page 213.
- Third, a tabular presentation is offered as a global appreciation of the analysis and the findings that emerged from the data. This summary is used to support the answers to the research questions that are addressed in Chapter 6. This section starts on page 217.
- The fourth section of the Appendix presents detailed analysis and discussion of responses to each item in the five questionnaire categories of background information (Q.1-10), preparations for studying at a university in Australia (Q.11-32), confidence while studying at university in Australia (Q.33-56), how participants deal with certain issues they experience (Q.57-66), and how they feel generally about their experience at university in Australia (Q.67-87). This section starts on page 228.
- Finally, the fifth section of the Appendix presents data gathered from all categories that describes issues relevant to students in their first term of study at the university. This section starts on page 348.

Validity

This first section of the Appendix presents an appreciation of the degree to which the quantitative and qualitative data reported represents a reasonable explanation of both the survey event and its generalisability to the wider population of undergraduate Sub-continental international students. The section provides an analysis of the survey sample in comparison with the undergraduate Bachelor of

Accounting cohort, and other sectors of the university at the time of data collection. Also presented is a discussion of the generalisability of the analysis, and a summary of the captioning conventions that were used to 'signpost' patterns that emerged during the heuristic analysis.

Administrative arrangements

Arrangements for administration of the questionnaire were adequate. The questionnaire was administered to a random selection of undergraduate classes in the Bachelor of Accounting program. As with the pilot questionnaire, a time-frame of 30 minutes was again scheduled for explanation of the project and administration of the questionnaire. Participation by academics to allocate class time and by students to complete the questionnaire was again voluntary.

Data was gathered during the third teaching week of the academic term in November 2007. A total of 329 completed questionnaires were returned. Of these, 125 (38%) were from students in the target research cohort of Sub-continental students. All returned questionnaires were numbered sequentially in order of collection for later data analysis and storage.

As was the case with the pilot study, feedback from academics administering the questionnaire again indicated that the 30-minute time-frame was adequate, and respondents did not require or seek any supplementary explanation.

A series of follow-up interviews were conducted with volunteer participants after preliminary analysis of the data from the questionnaire. The interview transcripts were intended to illustrate, exemplify and amplify the data that emerged from analysis within 'the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures' (Bell 2002, p.207). A discussion of the interview process is attached as Appendix 3, Follow-up interviews.

Survey sample – 67% of the UG Sub-continental student cohort participated

An overview of the research site and the research population is shown in Appendix 1 on page 167. As shown in Table 31, the undergraduate cohort at the time of administration of the questionnaire numbered 774 students. Of these, 491 students (63.4%) were studying in the Bachelor of Accounting program, of whom 186 (37.9%) were students from the Indian subcontinent.

The questionnaire was administered to volunteer students in the Bachelor of Accounting cohort. As shown in Table 31, a total of 329 questionnaires were returned, representing participation by 67.0% of the Bachelor of Accounting cohort. Of these 329 questionnaires, 125 were returned by Sub-continental students, representing participation by 67.2% of the intended research cohort.

Data gathered from these 125 respondents forms the basis of analysis in this chapter.

Table 31: Summary of questionnaire responses

Summary of Questionnaire Responses				
	No.	% of BAcc Sub-continental Cohort	% of all BAcc Cohort	% of UG Cohort
Questionnaires returned by B.Accounting Sub-continental students	125	67.2%	25.5%	16.2%
Questionnaires returned by all B.Accounting students	329		67.0%	42.5%
B.Accounting Sub-continental cohort	186	100%	37.9%	24.0%
B.Accounting cohort	491		100%	63.4%
Undergraduate Cohort	774			100%

The population in the survey sample compared with the undergraduate Bachelor of Accounting cohort is shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Questionnaire responses compared with the B Accounting cohort

Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Questionnaire Responses Analysed	Responses as % of Sub-continental Cohort	Responses as % of Category
B. Accounting Cohort	491	125		25%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Gender	186	125	67%	
Female	35	25	13.4%	71.4%
Male	152	100	53.7%	65.8%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Birth Country	186	125	67%	
India	75	49	26.3%	65.3%
Bangladesh	60	39	20.9%	65.0%
Nepal	31	20	10.8%	64.5%
Pakistan	10	3	1.6%	30.0%
Kenya	5	6	3.2%	See comment
Sri Lanka	3	3	1.6%	100%
Australia	2	1	0.5%	50%
Fiji	0	2	1.1%	See comment
No data	0	1	0.5%	See comment
Kuwait	0	1	0.5%	See comment
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Home Language	186	125	15%	
Bengali	55	41	22.1%	74.6%
Nepali	31	18	9.7%	58.13%
Hindi	25	15	8.1%	60.0%
Punjabi	23	23	12.3%	100%
English	20	7	3.8%	35.0%
Gujarati	17	15	8.1%	88.2%
Urdu	9	4	2.2%	44.50%
Marathi	2	1	0.5%	50.0%
Sindhi	1	0	0.0%	0.0%

Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Questionnaire Responses Analysed	Responses as % of Sub-continental Cohort	Responses as % of Category
Sinhalese	1	2	1.1%	See comment
Pashto	0	1	0.5%	See comment
Telugu	0	2	1.1%	See comment
Tamil	0	1	0.5%	See comment
Arabic	0	1	0.5%	See comment
Newari	0	2	1.1%	See comment
Kiswahili	0	1	0.5%	See comment
No data	2	1	0.53%	50.0%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Age	186	125	67%	
Not yet 20 years old	19	17	9.1%	89.5%
20-24 years old	133	83	44.6%	62.4%
25-29 years old	29	22	11.8%	75.9%
30 or more years old	5	3	1.6%	60.0%
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Term of Entry	186	125	67%	
Before Term 2051 ¹⁴	52	7	3.8%	13.5%
Term 2051	74	6	3.2%	8.1%
Term 2052	46	8	4.3%	17.4%
Term 2053	36	13	7.0%	36.1%
Term 2061	82	16	8.6%	19.5%
Term 2062	46	17	9.1%	37.0%
Term 2063	21	8	4.3%	38.1%
Term 2071	73	22	11.8%	30.1%
Term 2072	20	11	5.9%	55.0%
Term 2073	41	15	8.1%	36.6%
No Data	0	2	1.1%	N/A

The results can be generalised across the Sub-continental BAcc cohort

Inspection of data in Table 33 and Table 34 demonstrates that the questionnaire and interview sample used for analysis is appropriate to consider generalisability of the results across the Sub-continental cohort of Bachelor of Accounting students. A comparison of the survey population with the Bachelor of Accounting cohort, the undergraduate cohort, and the research site at the time of data collection is shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Sample sizes

Sample Sizes					
Cohort	Sample Size	% of Academy	% of U.G. Cohort	% of BAcc. Cohort	% of Sub-continental BAcc. Cohort
The Academy	1701	100%			
U.G. Cohort	774	45.5%	100%		

¹⁴ Term 2051 represents Term 1, 2005; Term 2052 represents Term 2, 2005, and so on (PSHE Report 2007a).

Sample Sizes					
Cohort	Sample Size	% of Academy	% of U.G. Cohort	% of BAcc. Cohort	% of Sub-continental BAcc. Cohort
BAcc. Cohort	491	28.9%	63.4%	100%	
BAcc. Sub-continental Cohort	186	10.9%	24%	37.9%	100%
Questionnaires Analysed	125	7.4%	16.2%	25.5%	67.2%
Follow-up Interviews	26	1.5%	3.4%	5.3%	14%

Table 34 shows the preferred sample sizes to attain a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of .05 for each sub-category within the research cohort. The number of questionnaire responses analysed is also shown in order to generate the confidence intervals for each sub-category of analysis.

Table 34: Generalisability of results (source: Creative Research Systems 2003)

Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Preferred Sample Size	Questionnaire Responses Analysed	Confidence Interval
B. Accounting Cohort	491	216	125	7.58
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Gender	186	126	125	5.03
Female	35	32	25	10.63
Male	152	109	100	5.75
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Birth Country	186	126	125	
India	75	63	49	8.3
Bangladesh	60	52	39	9.36
Nepal	31	29	20	13.27
Pakistan	10	10	3	49.9
Kenya	5	5	6	0
Sri Lanka	3	3	3	0
Australia	2	2	1	98
Fiji	0	N/A	2	N/A
No data	0	N/A	1	N/A
Kuwait	0	N/A	1	N/A
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Home Language	186	126	125	
Bengali	55	48	41	7.79
Nepali	31	29	18	15.21
Hindi	25	24	15	16.33
Punjabi	23	22	23	0
English	20	19	7	30.64
Gujarati	17	16	15	8.95
Urdu	9	9	4	38.74
Marathi	2	2	1	98
Sindhi	1	1	0	N/A
Sinhalese	1	1	2	0
Pashto	0	N/A	1	N/A
Telugu	0	N/A	2	N/A
Tamil	0	N/A	1	N/A

Questionnaire Responses				
Sample Group	B Acc. Cohort	Preferred Sample Size	Questionnaire Responses Analysed	Confidence Interval
Arabic	0	N/A	1	N/A
Newari	0	N/A	2	N/A
Kiswahili	0	N/A	1	N/A
No data	2	2	1	98
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort - Age	186	126	125	
Not yet 20 years old	19	18	17	5.76
20-24 years old	133	99	83	6.62
25-29 years old	29	27	22	10.45
30 or more years old	5	5	3	40.01
B. Acc. Sub-continental Cohort – Term of Entry	186	126	125	
Before Term 2051	52	46	7	34.79
Term 2051	74	62	6	38.61
Term 2052	46	41	8	31.84
Term 2053	36	33	13	22.03
Term 2061	82	68	16	22.12
Term 2062	46	41	17	19.08
Term 2063	21	20	8	27.93
Term 2071	73	61	22	17.58
Term 2072	20	19	11	20.34
Term 2073	41	37	15	20.4
No Data	0	N/A	2	N/A

Patterns of emerging data

Patterns of emerging data are positioned at 55 locations within the analysis. These patterns of emerging data contribute to the heuristic analysis and interpretation of results. They are summarised in Table 35.

Table 35: Patterns emerging from data analysis

Patterns emerging from analysis of the data	
Emerging Data Pattern 1: Getting along with others may not be an issue	96
Emerging Data Pattern 2: Academic matters may be an issue	96
Emerging Data Pattern 3: Library and Internet equipment and staff may be an issue	97
Emerging Data Pattern 4: University administrative matters may be an issue	97
Emerging Data Pattern 5: The perception of 'value' may be an issue	97
Emerging Data Pattern 6: The real challenge of English is colloquialism	233
Emerging Data Pattern 7: The effect of part-time work	239
Emerging Data Pattern 8: Research cohort demographic	239
Emerging Data Pattern 9: Demographic analysis suggests that the research findings are generalisable across the Sub-continental B.Accounting cohort	240
Emerging Data Pattern 10: Five areas of preparation for study in Australia	243
Emerging Data Pattern 11: Limited relevance of university-published information	252
Emerging Data Pattern 12: The power of word of mouth information	252
Emerging Data Pattern 13: Parents, other students and recruiters/agents are the main source of information	254
Emerging Data Pattern 14: Leverage the power and respect of university lecturers as agents	

Patterns emerging from analysis of the data	
of information	256
Emerging Data Pattern 15: Intending students ‘balance’ lack of research by attending English language courses	258
Emerging Data Pattern 16: Settling-in to university has not been too great a challenge	270
Emerging Data Pattern 17: Sub-continental international students speak up in class	277
Emerging Data Pattern 18: Students are confident in the key foundations of academic study at university in Australia	278
Emerging Data Pattern 19: ‘Culture-proficiency’ vs. ‘culture deficit’ (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999)	280
Emerging Data Pattern 20: Stereotyping Sub-continental students as ‘different’ may be problematic	281
Emerging Data Pattern 21: Respondents have satisfactorily made the transition to study in Australia	283
Emerging Data Pattern 22: The perception of value for money in an international education is an issue	286
Emerging Data Pattern 23: Students are well organised, plan their study and seek help when needed	289
Emerging Data Pattern 24: Students regularly attend class, speak up and ask questions	289
Emerging Data Pattern 25: Students do cope with the issues that confront them at university in Australia	300
Emerging Data Pattern 26: The utility of the questionnaire appears justified	301
Emerging Data Pattern 27: Overall, the experience of university study in Australia has been good	302
Emerging Data Pattern 28: The data suggests a positive relationship with recent literature	302
Emerging Data Pattern 29: The pedagogic experience has generally been good	304
Emerging Data Pattern 30: Balancing study, work and recreation has generally been a good experience	304
Emerging Data Pattern 31: The difference from experiences at home has been appreciated	304
Emerging Data Pattern 32: The cost of living in Australia and the cost of a degree has not been a good experience	304
Emerging Data Pattern 33: Previous ‘read-recall-recite’ pedagogy does not hinder later participative learning	306
Emerging Data Pattern 34: Intercultural learning experiences are positive for international students	307
Emerging Data Pattern 35: International students can balance study and doing part-time work	312
Emerging Data Pattern 36: An opportunity exists to provide better student support programs	313
Emerging Data Pattern 37: Studying in English is a positive experience	314
Emerging Data Pattern 38: ‘Value for money’ and ‘quality’ are issues of concern to international students	315
Emerging Data Pattern 39: Leverage positive aspects of the student experience to reinforce perceptions of value	317
Emerging Data Pattern 40: Student satisfaction with the way lecturers teach	318
Emerging Data Pattern 41: The experience of studying at university in Australia is generally positive	319
Emerging Data Pattern 42: International students prefer a teacher who will engage them in discussion and group work	319
Emerging Data Pattern 43: Overall, the academic experience has been good	320
Emerging Data Pattern 44: The general university experience has been good, too	320
Emerging Data Pattern 45: However, high costs and poor customer service do not represent	

Patterns emerging from analysis of the data	
value for money	320
Emerging Data Pattern 46: The dichotomy of positive overall usefulness of what is being studied and its perceived low value as a quality product	320
Emerging Data Pattern 47: Five broad themes encourage student voice	325
Emerging Data Pattern 48: Student experience has matched expectation	336
Emerging Data Pattern 49: The experience of getting along with others has been a positive one	336
Emerging Data Pattern 50: Students are concerned about their studies, but broadly matched in their opinion as to whether they are easier or harder than expected	337
Emerging Data Pattern 51: Library research and internet access have been a positive experience	337
Emerging Data Pattern 52: University administrative matters are not a significant concern to students	337
Emerging Data Pattern 53: The cost of living and balancing study with part-time work are a concern for students, and three times more students experience difficulty with these matters than those who do not	337
Emerging Data Pattern 54 Dissatisfied customers comment more	347
Emerging Data Pattern 55: First term students are generally less confident than their peers	348

Opportunities for further research

A number of other results emerged from analysis that merit further investigation. These opportunities for further research are developed at 16 locations within the analysis. Like the patterns of emerging data described in the previous section, these opportunities also contribute to the heuristic interpretation of the research results. The implications of these opportunities are discussed in Chapter 6. They are summarised in Table 36.

Table 36: Opportunities for further research

Opportunities for further research	
Further Research 1: Analysis of the full survey sample	230
Further Research 2: Are international students really any different?	231
Further Research 3: The impact of colloquial English	234
Further Research 4: Critical use of Internet information	249
Further Research 5: University-sponsored pre-departure briefings	262
Further Research 6: University preparatory courses	264
Further Research 7: Promote the auditing of university lectures at home as preparation for study overseas	265
Further Research 8: Tourism as preparation for later university study	265
Further Research 9: Is there any academic difference between international and domestic students?	279
Further Research 10: Are perceptions of value for money in a university education similar for international and domestic students?	286
Further Research 11: What do university staff think of students?	290
Further Research 12: Build 'tie strength' between students and friends to enhance perceived value (Bansal & Voyer 2000)	316
Further Research 13: What constitutes value for money in a university education?	320

Further Research 14: How might institutions demonstrate value for money?	321
Further Research 15: Do perceptions change over time?	336
Further Research 16: The impact of negative customer experiences	348

Interview comments

Illustrative comments from participants in the follow-up interviews are presented at 16 locations within the analysis. They are summarised in Table 37.

Table 37: Summary of interview comments

Interview comments	
Interview Comments 1: Issues in English	232
Interview Comments 2: Balancing university study and part-time work	238
Interview Comments 3: The power of word of mouth advice	244
Interview Comments 4: Coping with domestic arrangements in Australia	267
Interview Comments 5: Preparing for university study in Australia	268
Interview Comments 6: Settling-in to life in Australia	271
Interview Comments 7: Keeping up with university workload	273
Interview Comments 8: The hardest and easiest things about starting university in Australia	286
Interview Comments 9: Asking my friends for help	292
Interview Comments 10: What plagiarism means to me	296
Interview Comments 11: Settling-in to life in Australia – more comments	299
Interview Comments 12: Cost of living and cost of degree	305
Interview Comments 13: Making life at university better and easier	321
Interview Comments 14: Making learning at university better and easier	322
Interview Comments 15: Advice for students before they come to university in Australia	323
Interview Comments 16: A final word - the first term experience	349

Summary of responses to the questionnaire

This second section of the Appendix presents an overall appreciation of participant responses to the questionnaire. This data is used to support the assertion that participants engaged meaningfully with the instrument.

The questionnaire comprised five broad sections. These were:

- Background information; Questions 1 – 10, to gather demographic data about the respondents, their home country, main languages spoken at home, and their present program of study in Australia. Detailed analysis of this section starts on page 228.
- How participants prepared for study at an Australian university; Questions 11 – 32. Detailed analysis of this section starts on page 240.
- How confident they felt about certain aspects of studying at university in Australia; Questions 33 – 56. Detailed analysis of this section starts on page 269.

- How participants had dealt with certain issues that international students can experience at university in Australia; Questions 57 – 66. Detailed analysis of this section starts on page 288.
- And lastly, how they felt generally about their experience at university in Australia; Questions 67 – 87. Detailed analysis of this section starts on page 300.

Table 38 below summarises the responses to all questions.

Table 38: Questionnaire responses – Summary of all questions

RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS - SUMMARY					
QN.	CONTENT - BACKGROUND	RESPONSE		NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
1	Gender.	125		0	125
2	Age.	125		0	125
3	Birth country.	124		1	125
4	Country of last study.	123		2	125
5	Study in English at last school.	124		1	125
6	Complete high school in Australia.	124		1	125
7	Main language at home.	124		1	125
8	First term at this university.	123		2	125
9	Program of study.	123		2	125
10	Part-time job.	122		3	125
QN.	CONTENT - PREPARATIONS	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
11	Reading about university life.	47	75	3	125
12	Reading about learning expected.	29	93	3	125
13	Other reading.	56	64	5	125
14	Searching online about university life.	76	44	5	125
15	Searching online about learning expected.	47	73	5	125
16	Other online research.	54	64	7	125
17	Talking with parents or family.	115	3	7	125
18	Talking with other students.	98	21	6	125
19	Talking with university recruiters.	91	26	8	125
20	Talking with Australian Government representatives.	28	92	5	125
21	Talking with university lecturers.	31	89	5	125
22	Talking with other people about studying at <u>this</u> university.	49	71	5	125
23	IELTS/TOEFL language course.	110	7	8	125
24	Language courses <u>other than</u> IELTS/TOEFL.	35	85	5	125
25	University preparatory course <u>in home country</u> .	21	98	6	125

RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS - SUMMARY								
26	Pre-departure briefing by this university.		29	89	7			125
27	University preparatory course <u>in Australia</u> .		24	94	7			125
28	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.		23	95	7			125
29	<u>Other</u> types of preparatory courses.		20	96	9			125
30	Audit (sit in on) university classes.		15	103	7			125
31	Previous visits to Australia.		23	95	7			125
32	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.		32	85	8			125
QN.	CONTENT - CONFIDENCE	1 VERY CONF.	2 CONF.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT C.	5 VERY U.C.	NO RESP.	TOTAL
33	Settling-in to Australia.	44	53	11	7	0	10	125
34	Settling-in to university.	40	56	10	8	1	10	125
35	University workload.	17	72	19	8	1	8	125
36	Mixing with other students.	39	56	16	5	1	8	125
37	Ability to succeed.	30	67	15	4	1	8	125
38	Understanding lectures.	46	63	5	4	0	7	125
39	Taking notes in lectures.	34	64	18	2	0	7	125
40	Lecturers and assignments.	42	59	15	2	0	7	125
41	Asking lecturers' questions.	41	59	14	3	0	8	125
42	Answering questions.	37	62	15	4	0	7	125
43	Group activities.	39	65	12	1	1	7	125
44	Tutorial input to assignments.	38	65	14	0	0	8	125
45	Explaining in English.	44	65	8	1	0	7	125
46	Asking questions of tutors.	42	59	13	2	1	8	125
47	Learning past exams.	34	67	14	2	0	8	125
48	Solving problems.	38	63	13	3	1	7	125
49	Applying theory.	32	64	16	4	1	8	125
50	Thinking critically.	22	67	22	3	3	8	125
51	Library searching.	25	66	18	3	4	9	125
52	Online searching.	35	66	10	2	2	10	125
53	Writing in English.	33	74	8	2	0	8	125
54	Doing assignments.	37	68	10	1	1	8	125
55	Doing exams.	36	64	11	5	1	8	125

RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS - SUMMARY								
56	Anything else?	YES	66	NO	40		19	125
QN.	CONTENT - COPING	1 ALWAYS	2 OFTEN	3 DON'T KNOW	4 SOME TIMES	5 NEVER	NO RESP.	TOTAL
57	Making a study timetable.	33	49	3	19	10	11	125
58	Skipping classes.	11	19	11	30	45	9	125
59	Copying chunks of text.	8	37	13	27	31	9	125
60	Asking friends.	14	19	10	24	46	12	125
61	Asking Learning Skills Unit.	29	37	10	26	14	9	125
62	Asking Client Services.	32	29	10	18	26	10	125
63	Asking Faculty.	32	33	12	20	18	10	125
64	Using TECC employment.	18	19	22	14	41	11	125
65	Keeping quiet in class.	11	10	15	21	59	9	125
66	Using home language.	20	31	14	24	27	9	125
QN.	CONTENT - FEELINGS	1 V G	2 GOOD	3 NEITHER	4 BAD	5 V BAD	NO RESP.	TOTAL
67	Continuous assessment.	27	63	21	3	2	9	125
68	Doing exams.	28	62	17	4	4	10	125
69	Students from other cultures.	41	61	9	2	1	11	125
70	Balancing study and work.	23	65	18	5	3	11	125
71	Studying at university.	39	64	8	0	3	11	125
72	Studying in English.	62	46	4	0	1	12	125
73	Cost of living.	7	31	29	24	24	10	125
74	Cost of degree.	5	29	25	31	24	11	125
75	Courses studied.	36	68	5	2	2	12	125
76	Differences AUS and home.	23	47	38	4	3	10	125
77	Support from staff.	25	58	22	4	5	11	125
78	Usefulness of my course.	35	63	12	0	5	10	125
79	Course structure.	21	72	16	2	5	9	125
80	The way courses are taught.	19	71	21	1	4	9	125
81	Tourism and recreation.	25	50	29	6	5	10	125
82	Working in groups.	32	56	22	1	4	10	125

RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS - SUMMARY							
QN.	CONTENT - OVERALL	RESPONSE	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL		
83	What's easier?	87		38	125		
84	What's harder?	79		46	125		
85	Some other issue or problem.	19	76	30	125		
86	Overall, has experience met expectation?	63	38	24	125		
87	Anything else that we should know about?	29	73	23	125		

A global appreciation of the data

The third part of this Appendix presents a global appreciation of the issues facing this cohort of Sub-continental international students as they experience education in Australia. The section is intended to demonstrate how patterns emerged heuristically during analysis. Table 39 following presents that summary.

Three conventions were introduced to the presentation of results and their interpretation in order to provide clearer identification and appreciation of the results of analysis. These conventions were the creation and use of data labels for specific outcomes of the analysis, namely:

- Assumptions to be tested – the heuristic approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp.23-27) that used the understanding that emerged from analysis of a preceding section of the questionnaire to identify a perception for deeper investigation as the analysis progressed.
- Emerging data patterns – a construct for identifying the patterns that appeared to emerge as the analysis progressed. These patterns were subsequently used to build answers to the research questions in Chapter 6 of the report.
- Opportunities for further research – a construct to identify further research opportunities that could further build on the conclusions arising from analysis, and the implications for policy and practice discussed in Chapter 6.

A separate caption style was created for each of these data labels, and a summary table for each is included in the relevant section of the report as follows:

- Table 3: Assumptions to be tested in analysis of the data on page 80;
- Table 35: Patterns emerging from data analysis on page 210; and
- Table 36: Opportunities for further research on page 212.

Table 39: A global appreciation of the data

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
Piloting the questionnaire	Forty-four pilot questionnaires were analysed and interpreted as discussed in Chapter 4.	<p>Five patterns of interest started to emerge in analysis of the pilot questionnaire responses. These emerging data patterns “telegraphed” issues and patterns that were to recur later in analysis of the full data set:</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 1: Getting along with others may not be an issue, page 96.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 2: Academic matters may be an issue, page 96.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 3: Library and Internet equipment and staff may be an issue, page 97.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 4: University administrative matters may be an issue, page 97.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 5: The perception of ‘value’ may be an issue, page 97.</p>	
An overall appreciation of the data	<p>A global appreciation of engagement with the questionnaire and responses to questions is contained in the following Table:</p> <p>Table 38: Questionnaire responses – Summary of all questions, page 214.</p>		

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
Q.1-10: Background information.	<p>The research cohort was predominantly male, from India, Bangladesh and Nepal, aged 20 – 24 years, and in their first or second year at the university. Their home languages are predominantly Bengali, Punjabi, Nepali, Gujarati and Hindi. Whilst only 5.2% of the cohort identified English as their main language at home, most had studied in the medium of English in their last school, which for all but 2.4% of respondents was not in Australia. Almost three-quarters of the cohort had a part-time job in addition to their university studies.</p> <p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants provided additional interpretation of the data as follows:</p> <p>Interview Comments 1: Issues in English, page 232.</p> <p>Interview Comments 2: Balancing university study and part-time work, page 238.</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 6: The real challenge of English is colloquialism, page 233.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 7: The effect of part-time work, page 233.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 8: Research cohort demographic, page 239.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 9: Demographic analysis suggests that the research findings are generalisable across the Sub-continental B.Accounting cohort, page 240.</p>	<p>Further Research 1: Analysis of the full survey sample¹⁵, page 230.</p> <p>Further Research 2: Are international students really any different? Page 230.</p> <p>Further Research 3: The impact of colloquial English, page 234.</p>
<p>Q.11-32: Preparing for university study in Australia.</p> <p>Assumption:</p> <p>Assumption 1: High school study and IELTS are sufficient preparation for university, page 240:</p> <p><i>Learning experiences at home prepare for university in</i></p>	<p>Preparation for study in Australia focuses on five areas - word of mouth advice from family, other students already studying in Australia and university recruiters, completing an IELTS/TOEFL course, and internet searching.</p> <p>Of these five sources of information, intending students relied most heavily upon the advice of their parents and other students who have studied or are studying in Australia.</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 10: Five areas of preparation for study in Australia, page 243.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 11: Limited relevance of university-published information, page 252.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 12: The power of word of mouth information, page 252.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 13: Parents, other students and recruiters/agents are the main source of information,</p>	<p>Further Research 4: Critical use of Internet information, page 249.</p> <p>Further Research 5: University-sponsored pre-departure briefings, page 262.</p> <p>Further Research 6: University preparatory</p>

¹⁵ These opportunities for further research are discussed in Chapter 6 in the section headed: Recommendations for further research.

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
<i>Australia, and mandatory IELTS/TOEFL testing is sufficient other preparation for study.</i>	<p>Students feel that completing an IELTS/TOEFL course and the mandatory test is sufficient language preparation for study in Australia.</p> <p>University-published materials (both print and online media) appear to be of limited relevance as a source of information.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Tables:</p> <p>Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32), page 241.</p> <p>Table 55: Preparations - Ranked responses (Q.11-32), page 242.</p> <p>Table 57: Sources of information – Reading - Summary, page 245.</p> <p>Table 61: Sources of information – The Internet - Summary, page 248.</p> <p>Table 67: Sources of information - Word of mouth - Summary, page 253.</p> <p>Table 77: Other preparations - Summary, page 261.</p> <p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants provided additional interpretation of the data as follows:</p> <p>Interview Comments 3: The power of word of mouth advice, page 244.</p> <p>Interview Comments 4: Coping with domestic arrangements in Australia, page 267.</p> <p>Interview Comments 5: Preparing for university study in Australia, page 268.</p>	<p>page 254.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 14: Leverage the power and respect of university lecturers as agents of information, page 256.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 15: Intending students ‘balance’ lack of research by attending English language courses, page 258.</p>	<p>courses, page 264.</p> <p>Further Research 7: Promote the auditing of university lectures at home as preparation for study overseas, page 230.</p> <p>Further Research 8: Tourism as preparation for later university study, page 265.</p>

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
<p>Q.33-56: Confidence about living and studying in Australia.</p> <p>Assumption: Assumption 2: Was high school study and IELTS sufficient preparation? Page 269:</p> <p><i>Accepting that the main, almost singular, mode of preparation is talking with parents and other international students, and undertaking a course for the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL test, how then does the experience match the expectation?</i></p>	<p>The research cohort has not experienced too great a difficulty in settling-in and mixing with other international students from diverse backgrounds. They are confident in their ability at keeping up with workload, participating in class and understanding the material and undergraduate tasks such as research, assignments and examinations.</p> <p>They have the confidence to embrace a constructivist perspective of teaching and learning that encourages them to collaborate, self-regulate and actively participate in their learning.</p> <p>They have, therefore, satisfactorily undertaken a transition from the stereotypical perception of rote-learning, memorisation and passivity in Sub-continental pedagogy to the practice-oriented and interactive teaching in an Australian university.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Table:</p> <p>Table 87: Confidence – Summary (Q.33-56), page 270.</p> <p>In free-text comments, respondents “telegraphed” the nature of true concerns that were to recur later in the analysis. The key trend that started to emerge was the perception of value for money in the cost of an international education. These comments are discussed in:</p> <p>Table 114: Q.56 - Comments on matters that respondents worry about or feel good about, page 285.</p> <p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 16: Settling-in to university has not been too great a challenge, page 270.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 17: Sub-continental international students speak up in class, page 277.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 18: Students are confident in the key foundations of academic study at university in Australia, page 278.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 19: ‘Culture-proficiency’ vs. ‘culture deficit’ (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999), page 280.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 20: Stereotyping Sub-continental students as ‘different’ may be problematic, page 281.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 21: Respondents have satisfactorily made the transition to study in Australia, page 283.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 22: The perception of value for money in an international education, page 286.</p>	<p>Further Research 9: Is there any academic difference between international and domestic students? Page 279.</p> <p>Further Research 10: Are perceptions of value for money in a university education similar for international and domestic students? Page 286.</p>

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
	<p>provided additional interpretation of the data as follows:</p> <p>Interview Comments 6: Settling-in to life in Australia, page 271.</p> <p>Interview Comments 7: Keeping up with university workload, page 273.</p> <p>Interview Comments 8: The hardest and easiest things about starting university in Australia, page 286.</p>		
<p>Q.57-66: Coping with certain issues.</p> <p>Assumption:</p> <p>Assumption 3: Being confident, how do you cope with problems? Page 288:</p> <p><i>Accepting that students generally feel confident about their studies at university, how then do they cope with the issues that confront them, and do they make use of the learning services available?</i></p>	<p>Students perceive that they do in fact cope satisfactorily with the issues that confront them and they make use of the learning services available to them.</p> <p>The student group surveyed are well organised, plan their study, and seek help from all but one of the services available to them. The exception is the free TECC (Training, Employment and Career Coaching) employment service. They also appear to plagiarise, despite extensive use of the LSU Learning Skills Unit that was created to help students avoid this academic offence.</p> <p>Just as they seem well organised, they also appear to regularly attend and speak up in class, and to prefer asking questions of the Faculty staff rather than seeking explanations from friends.</p> <p>All of these responses appear contrary to anecdotal popular opinion in the academy.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Table:</p> <p>Table 116: Coping – Summary (Q.57-66), page 289.</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 23: Students are well organised, plan their study and seek help when needed, page 289.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 24: Students regularly attend class, speak up and ask questions, page 289.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 25: Students do cope with the issues that confront them at university in Australia, page 300.</p>	<p>Further Research 11: What do university staff think of students? Page 290.</p>

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
	<p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants provided additional interpretation of the data as follows:</p> <p>Interview Comments 9: Asking my friends for help, page 292.</p> <p>Interview Comments 10: What plagiarism means to me, page 296.</p> <p>Interview Comments 11: Settling-in to life in Australia – more comments, page 299.</p>		
<p>Q.67-82: Overall experience.</p> <p>Assumption:</p> <p>Assumption 4: If experience appears to match expectation, are there other factors to be considered? Page 300:</p> <p><i>Accepting that, in the main, students perceive they arrive in Australia well prepared, express overall confidence of success and in their ability to cope with and to meet the challenges of university in Australia, then presumably the experience could be deemed to have matched the expectation. Or, are there other factors to be considered in determining what changes, if any, might be appropriate</i></p>	<p>Earlier incidence of high levels of anxiety in international student experiences may now have been overcome through experience, as much by institutions as by the students themselves.</p> <p>English language difficulties identified in international students from Asia may not apply to students from the Indian subcontinent.</p> <p>The overall pedagogic experience of studying in Australia has been good. The manner in which courses are structured taught and assessed has been a good experience. The experience of support and recreational services as a difference from the home environment has been good.</p> <p>The perception of value for money, in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of a degree has not been a good experience for most.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Tables:</p> <p>Table 132: Overall Experience – Summary (Q.67-82),</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 26: The utility of the questionnaire appears justified, page 301.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 27: Overall, the experience of university study in Australia has been good, page 302.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 28: The data suggests a positive relationship with recent literature, page 302.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 29: The pedagogic experience has generally been good, page 304.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 30: Balancing study, work and recreation has generally been a good experience, page 304</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 31: The difference from experiences at home has been appreciated, page 304.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 32: The cost of living in Australia and the cost of a degree has not been a good experience, page 304.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 33: Previous ‘read-recall-recite’</p>	<p>Further Research 12: Build ‘tie strength’ between students and friends to enhance perceived value (Bansal & Voyer 2000), page 316.</p> <p>Further Research 13: What constitutes value for money in a university education? Page 320.</p> <p>Further Research 14: How might institutions demonstrate value for money? Page 321.</p>

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
<i>in order to better meet international students' academic needs and expectations?</i>	<p>page 301.</p> <p>Table 133: Goodness of the overall experience (Q.67-82), page 302.</p> <p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants provided additional interpretation of the data as follows:</p> <p>Interview Comments 12: Cost of living and cost of degree, page 305.</p> <p>Interview Comments 13: Making life at university better and easier, page 321.</p> <p>Interview Comments 14: Making learning at university better and easier, page 322.</p> <p>Interview Comments 15: Advice for students before they come to university in Australia, page 323.</p>	<p>pedagogy does not hinder later participative learning, page 306.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 34: Intercultural learning experiences are positive for international students, page 307.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 35: International students can balance study and doing part-time work, page 312.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 36: An opportunity exists to provide better student support programs, page 313.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 37: Studying in English is a positive experience, page 314.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 38: 'Value for money' and 'quality' are issues of concern to international students, page 315</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 39: Leverage positive aspects of the student experience to reinforce perceptions of value, page 317.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 40: Student satisfaction with the way lecturers teach, page 318.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 41: The experience of studying at university in Australia is generally positive, page 319.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 42: International students prefer a teacher who will engage them in discussion and group work, page 319.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 43: Overall, the academic experience has been good, page 320.</p>	

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
		<p>Emerging Data Pattern 44: The general university experience has been good, too, page 320.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 45: However, high costs and poor customer service do not represent value for money, page 320.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 46: The dichotomy of positive overall usefulness of what is being studied and its perceived low value as a quality product, page 320.</p>	
<p>Q.83-84: What’s easier; what’s harder at university in Australia than expected?</p> <p>Assumption: Assumption 5: Did the experience truly match expectation? Page 324: <i>Does the experience truly match the expectation?</i></p>	<p>Student experience could be deemed to have matched the expectation.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Table: Table 160: Comparing what's easier and what’s harder - Summary, page 336.</p> <p>Free-text comments were offered in responses to questions in this section as discussed in the following Table: Table 159: Comparing what's easier and what's harder – Comments, page 326.</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 47: Five broad themes encourage student voice, page 325.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 48: Student experience has matched expectation, page 336.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 49: The experience of getting along with others has been a positive one, page 336.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 50: Students are concerned about their studies, but broadly matched in their opinion as to whether they are easier or harder than expected, page 337.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 51: Library research and internet access have been a positive experience, page 337.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 52: University administrative matters are not a significant concern to students, page 337.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 53: The cost of living and balancing study with part-time work are a concern for students, and three times more students experience</p>	<p>Further Research 15: Do perceptions change over time? Page 336.</p>

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
		difficulty with these matters than those who do not, page 337.	
Q.85-87: Final comments.	<p>Whilst more respondents perceive a positive outcome of experience meeting expectation, it is dissatisfied customers who tend to comment more and therefore do most damage to business reputation.</p> <p>Data is summarised in the following Tables: Table 169: Meeting overall expectations – Response rates by issue (Q.85-87), page 346. Table 170: Meeting overall expectations – Response rates by question (Q.85-87), page 346.</p> <p>Discussion of the free-text comments offered in responses to questions in this section is presented in the following Tables: Table 162: Q.85 Comments - Other issues experienced, page 338. Table 164: Q.86 Comments - Why experience has not met expectation, page 340. Table 165: Q.86 Comments - Why experience has met expectation, page 340. Table 167: Q.87 Comments – Other matters we should know about, page 341. Table 168: Meeting overall expectations - Comments (Q.85-87), page 343.</p> <p>In the follow-up interviews, volunteer participants</p>	<p>Emerging Data Pattern 54 Dissatisfied customers comment more, page 347.</p> <p>Emerging Data Pattern 55: First term students are generally less confident than their peers, page 348.</p>	Further Research 16: The impact of negative customer experiences, page 348.

A GLOBAL APPRECIATION OF THE DATA			
QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION AND ASSUMPTION TESTED	DATA SUMMARY	PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
	provided the following additional interpretation: Interview Comments 16: A final word - the first term experience, page 349.		

The global appreciation presented in Table 39 above represents the basic findings that emerged from analysis. These findings are used to support the answers to the research questions in Chapter 6. The next sections of this Appendix presents a detailed analysis of each question asked.

Detailed analysis by question

This fourth section of the Appendix presents detailed analysis and discussion of responses to each question in the five broad categories of aspects of studying at university. As far as is possible, student comments have been transcribed with the original grammar and spelling. Decimal percentage values have been rounded up as necessary.

Background information (Q.1-10)

Table 40: Q.1 - Gender

1. What is your gender?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Female	25	20.0	F = 18.3% of research cohort (Figure 13, page 171).
Male	100	80.0	M = 81.7% of research cohort.
No Response	0	0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

Questionnaire responses by gender equate well with the gender alignment of the Sub-continental B. Accounting research cohort overall. This suggested that any gender component of further analysis would be reliable.

Table 41: Q.2 - Age

2. What is your age?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Not yet 20 years old	17	13.6	<20 y.o. = 10.2% of research cohort.
20 – 24 years old	83	66.4	20-24 y.o. = 71.5% of research cohort.
25 – 29 years old	22	17.6	20-24 y.o. = 15.6% of research cohort.
30 or more years old	3	2.4	>30 y.o. = 2.7% of research cohort.
No Response	0	0	

2. What is your age?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
TOTAL	125	100%	

All respondents marked one of the four age options. When compared with Figure 15 on page 172, the responses by age also equate well with the age alignment of the Sub-continental B. Accounting research cohort overall. This also suggested that any age component of further analysis would be reliable.

Table 42: Q.3 - Birth country

3. What is your birth country?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Australia	1	0.8	<i>cf</i> 0.5% of research cohort (Figure 11, p.170).
Bangladesh	39	31.2	<i>cf</i> 32.3% of research cohort.
Fiji	2	1.6	Not included in university data (PSHE Report 2007a).
India	49	39.2	<i>cf</i> 40.3% of research cohort.
Kenya	6	4.8	<i>cf</i> 2.7% of research cohort.
Kuwait	1	0.8	Not included in university data (PSHE Report 2007a).
Nepal	20	16.0	<i>cf</i> 16.7% of research cohort.
Pakistan	3	2.4	<i>cf</i> 5.4% of research cohort.
Sri Lanka	3	2.4	<i>cf</i> 1.6% of research cohort.
No Response	1	0.8	One respondent (Ident.190) discontinued at Q2.
TOTAL	125	100%	

Responses by birth country equate well with the overall Sub-continental B. Accounting research cohort data, suggesting that any generalisations relating to analysis based on nationality would be reliable.

Comment regarding birth country and language at home

The data revealed that some disparity exists between the official university record of birth country (PSHE Report 2007a) and respondents' answers to birth country in the questionnaire (Q.3).

For example, the university record does not list either Kuwait or Fiji as countries of birth for any students at the time of data collection. However; one 20-year old female Pakistani respondent identified herself as Kuwait-born, and two 20-year old males identified themselves as Fiji-born. Also, six respondents identified Kenya as their birth country compared with only five in the official record. Also, one respondent, a 20-year old female had discontinued participation in the survey at Q.2.

Overall, this inaccuracy in data relating to birth country is not considered significant in the subsequent analysis of information relating to university study in Australia, as all of these respondents identified a main language at home (Q.7) that matched with the research design intent of students with a prior learning culture similar to that of the Indian subcontinent.

Disparity was also evident between the official university record relating to language at home, which allows for only one language, and the questionnaire responses, which allowed respondents to identify multiple languages used at home. As was the case with data relating to birth country, the differences are not significant in this study, as the data serves to demonstrate that English as main language at home is relevant to only seven respondents (5.2% of responses), a level around half the 10.8% English at home speakers identified in the university data.

The dominant birth countries were India (49 respondents), Bangladesh (39 respondents), and Nepal (20 respondents). Data for these three groups compares with overall B. Accounting cohort data (PSHE Report 2007a) as shown in Table 43.

Table 43: Birth country - India, Nepal and Bangladesh

3. What is your birth country? - Dominant Responses			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	POPULATION IN B.ACCOUNTING COHORT (PSHE REPORT 2007A)	SURVEY SAMPLE AS % OF B.ACCOUNTING COHORT
India	49	75	65.3%
Bangladesh	39	60	65%
Nepal	20	31	64.5%
TOTAL	108	166	65.1%
SAMPLE SIZE	125	186	67.2%
%	86.4%	89.2%	

Noting that the questionnaire was administered to intact classes (see Table 50: Q.9 - Program of study, page 236) of the Bachelor of Accounting cohort, an interesting item for subsequent research could be:

Further Research 1: Analysis of the full survey sample

- Analysis of the full data set collected through the questionnaire to compare results for Sub-continental students with cohorts from other regions, for example China.

Another opportunity for further research also arose. This research focuses exclusively on the needs and expectations of international students in an Australian university. A comparative study of the issues confronting domestic students could also be useful, such as:

Further Research 2: Are international students really any different?

- Administer the same questionnaire to cohorts of domestic students at university in Australia. Academically, is there any significant difference between the two categories of student, or do such “appellations of origin” signify some other dimension that is not relevant to pedagogic practice?

Table 44: Q.4 - Country of last study

4. In what country did you <u>last</u> study as a full time student before starting at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Same country as above	106	84.8	
Other	17	13.6	8 Australia (= 6.0% of responses) 2 U.K. (= 1.6% of responses) 2 India 1 Bangladesh 1 Kenya 1 Malaysia 1 Pakistan 1 Singapore
No Response	2	1.6	1 not specified
TOTAL	125	100%	

Most respondents last studied in their home country before starting university study in Australia. Only ten respondents (7.6% of the sample analysed) identified their last country of full time study as Australia or the U.K. The remaining seven respondents who studied in a country other than their birth country were students in an environment where the pedagogy, generally, is similar to that identified with rote learning (see, for example, Raina & Dhand 2000). This suggested that conclusions based on past learning experiences are reliable.

Table 45: Q.5 - Did you study in English at your last school?

5. Did you study in English at your last school?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	18	14.4	3 Bangladeshi 10 Bengali 1 Sinhalese 4 Not specified
Yes	106	84.8	
No Response	1	0.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

Most students report having studied in English in their last school. This would suggest that issues relating to the use and understanding of the English language are not matters of serious concern to this particular cohort of international students. This also appears contrary to notions of difficulties with English reported in other literature (for example Barthel 2007; Rifkin et al. 1997).

The issue of the extent of English language usage, and if respondents experienced any particular difficulties with English upon arrival in Australia, was considered in the follow-up interviews, with interview participants offering comment as shown in Table 46.

Table 46: Interview comments: Issues in English

Interview Comments 1: Issues in English

- 1¹⁶ *In Australia in Sydney I went to high school... the problem is it's the accent that we don't understand. It's more of an Asian accent ... it's very hard for us to understand.*
- 2 *The more I'm communicating with the Australian people, Australian culture, I'm learning more about Australia, Australian people.*
- 4 *... My home country in Kenya. We normally start studying in the English ... most of it was in English ... At home we speak my mother tongue Gujarati. Each situation depends. First I try to do in English; if I don't understand then I get myself to another language.*
- 7 *Some teachers we can't understand them, they pronounce and stuff ...*
- 11 *My mother tongue Gujarati. English in school ... yes ... four languages ... after year 10, I studied in English. I only just started here. Actually I am here for four months. Actually the English for Academic Purposes at Meridian School.*
- 14 *I have grown up with English. My high school Qatar, from Doha ... English I started in kindergarten. Home language is Bengali ... sometimes in French or sometimes Bengali, some English, it's all mixed ... yes, a mix it all with English.*
- 16 *I studied English right from childhood. I did English. I did Punjabi, my national language and my country language, Hindi, and maths, accounting and economics.*
Sometime students they are very new ... English is not their first language. They are not really understand very quickly all this stuff.
- 20 *In Chittagong in Bangladesh ... basically we studied accounting in bachelor, in English, in my home country. Basically the language thing is my problem ... accent is totally different ... I attended the classes, listened, and talked with the people, and slowly ... it took me about one year I think.*
Even the first day, I can't forget it, first day the train, what he said over the speak, he was saying something about the closing doors that were opening, and I can't understand what they were saying [laughs] I could just understand the door.
- 22 *I did my bachelor of commerce ... in Hindi language. At first I start hearing some news shows in English ... secondly I attended English language classes. The main thing is I have to think in English because before what I do, I think in my language and then I translate it in English. So it takes time but now I'm using this English so I start thinking in that language.*
... The lecturer, those are from China ... but they speak too fast. It's like English but the pronunciation is totally different ... it takes time, like three months I think.

¹⁶ A descriptor of interviewees is contained in Appendix 3, Table 23: Follow-up interview volunteers, page 190.

- 25 *It is the secondary school you're talking about. In Glasgow itself. English throughout. Right from KG. Yeah*
- 27 *In Paha ... in my mother tongue Punjabi. Only language problem, because I learn this from India and English is not my first language, I have problems speaking English. I can understand, but problem is only speaking. [How do you cope?] I don't know, it's natural ... because due to the environment here. Because teachers are very cooperative, that's why.*
- 28 *I don't suffer any things ... I choose the country, then I know that English is very much useful ... I was prepared for English.*
- 29 *In my country. Dhaka in Bangladesh. I did IELTS course in my country ... it's a little bit different from Bangladesh but I can survive.*
- 26;30 *In Nepal. In Kathmandu. We are taught English from preschool ... in most of the schools, 98% schools they are all in English.*
- [26] *What annoys me most is, it's not like we don't understand English, we don't speak English, we do but we are not much used to it eh, sometimes you don't get exact words and sometimes I think, I just think, for example what about this one and other person that talks to you, you might think she doesn't know how to speak English. It's not that I don't speak English. I just don't get the words, the exact words and the dialect. Speak differently.*
- [30] *If you are going to Australia you should have separate thoughts for like Australia. They like speak this way.*
- [26] *I work in checkouts so when people, customers they ask me a lot of things before I was like too embarrassed to say sorry, or what is it? It was a bit difficult. After I started work, two or three months I got used to it. Because I had to listen.*
- 31 *... A bit far from Karachi, two hours' drive. It was in a province ... they were putting some pressure on the students that they use English all the time but the environment was not that much good so you were using with our friends like in our own language. [Where did you learn English?] Here in Sydney. I went to English school ... just IELTS ... and I could achieve around 7.*
- 33 *Australian universities have got different teachers with different accents. So sometimes it feels different when you try to understand because some people spoke really fast; some people go with the examples and go really slow; so just a bit of difference with accents here.... We just ask them, 'can you please repeat?' They always do; whenever any students get stuck they always sort it out; they go back and go slow.*
- 34 *... My city where I was born in India ... English was a part of the school learning and we had the subject since our nursery so from that time.*
- 36 *Bangladesh. Dakar. I had to improve my English ... watching TV. I watched news and everything. BBC, CNN, some mix ... I just went for it; yes.*
- The accents are totally different. All the accents here is totally different. I really had so much problem with this Aussie accent, even in my work I couldn't understand what the customer was saying.*
- 42 *Punjab in India ... [schooling] in English ... I just did the IELTS exam.*
- 43 *Bangladesh, in Thakurgaon. It's far from Dakar. In Dakar, East-West University. It was in English.*

The understanding that emerged from the data and the deep perceptions revealed in the interview comments was:

Emerging Data Pattern 6: The real challenge of English is colloquialism

- It is not knowledge or competence in the usage of English language that presents a difficulty to international students, but the colloquial language and slang of everyday speech in the host city that presents difficulty.

These observations are further supported by the data revealed in responses to Q.7 Main language at home, as shown in Table 48 on page 234. This understanding suggested that an interesting item for subsequent research could be:

Further Research 3: The impact of colloquial English

- Examine the impact of colloquial English usage on visitors' general understanding and participation in class during early days in a new country.

Table 47: Q.6 - Did you complete high school in Australia?

6. Did you complete high school in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	122	97.6	18 Bangladesh 1 Fiji 28 India 6 Kenya 8 Nepal 3 Pakistan 2 Sri Lanka 56 Not specified
Yes	2	1.6	
No Response	1	0.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

Only two respondents completed high school in Australia. As noted in the comments following Table 44: Q.4 - Country of last study on page 231, the country of completion of high schooling, generally, represents an environment in which rote learning predominates.

Table 48: Q.7 - Main language at home

7. What is the main language spoken by your family in your home country?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Bengali	41	30.4	<i>cf</i> 29.6% of research cohort.
Punjabi	23	17.0	<i>cf</i> 12.4% of research cohort.
Nepali	18	13.3	<i>cf</i> 16.7% of research cohort.
Gujarati	15	11.1	<i>cf</i> 9.1% of research cohort.
Hindi	15	11.1	<i>cf</i> 13.4% of research cohort.
English	7	5.2	<i>cf</i> 10.8% of research cohort.
Urdu	4	3.2	<i>cf</i> 4.8% of research cohort.
Newari	2	1.5	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
Sinhalese	2	1.5	<i>cf</i> 0.5% of research cohort.
Telugu	2	1.5	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.

7. What is the main language spoken by your family in your home country?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Arabic	1	0.7	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
Kiswahili	1	0.7	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
Marathi	1	0.7	<i>cf</i> 1.1% of research cohort.
Pashto	1	0.7	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
Tamil	1	0.7	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
Sindhi	0	0	<i>cf</i> 0.5% of research cohort.
No Response	1	0.7	
TOTAL	135	100%	Total number responding of 135 includes multiple languages at home speakers.

The data suggested that conclusions based on languages spoken at home are reliable. As was the case with data relating to country of birth, disparity also exists between the official university record relating to “Language at Home”, which allows for only one language, and the questionnaire responses. The differences are not significant in this study, as the data serves to identify that English as main language at home is relevant to only seven respondents (5.2%), a level around half the 10.8% English at home speakers identified in the university data.

A number of respondents identified multiple main languages spoken at home. One Respondent, Ident. No.208 a 20-year old male Pakistani identified three main languages at home: Arabic, Punjabi and Urdu. Another, Ident. No.387 a 20-year old male from Bangladesh, identified main languages at home as Bengali and English. One 20-year old Indian-born but Kenyan educated male Ident. No.331, identified languages at home as: Gujarati, Hindi, and Kiswahili. One 20-year old Indian female, Ident. No. 362, identified languages at home as Gujarati and Marathi. Two 20-year old males from India, Ident. Nos. 101 and 110, identified main languages at home as Hindi and English. Another, a 20-year old male from India, Ident. No.76, identified Hindi and Telugu. Another 19-year old male from India, Ident. No.209 identified Hindi and Punjabi. Two Nepalese students, Ident. No.194 a 25-year old male, and Ident. No. 195 a 20-year old female identified the main language of Newari, an indigenous language of the Newa people of Nepal’s Kathmandu Valley. Respondent Ident. No.359, a 20-year old male from Pakistan, identified both Punjabi and Urdu.

Table 49: Q.8 - First term at this university

8. What was your first term of study at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Before Term 1, 2005	7	5.6	Term 3, 2004. <i>cf</i> 8.1% of research cohort.
Term 1, 2005	6	4.8	<i>cf</i> 11.3% of research cohort.
Term 2, 2005	8	6.4	<i>cf</i> 11.3% of research cohort.
Term 3, 2005	13	10.4	<i>cf</i> 10.2% of research cohort.
Term 1, 2006	16	12.8	<i>cf</i> 14.0% of research cohort.

8. What was your first term of study at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Term 2, 2006	17	13.6	<i>cf</i> 11.3% of research cohort.
Term 3, 2006	8	6.4	<i>cf</i> 4.3% of research cohort.
Term 1, 2007	22	17.6	<i>cf</i> 13.4% of research cohort.
Term 2, 2007	11	8.8	Pilot survey: last week of Term 2, 2007. <i>cf</i> 3.8% of research cohort.
Term 3, 2007	15	12.0	Main survey: Term 3, 2007. <i>cf</i> 12.4% of research cohort.
After Term 3, 2007	0	0	<i>cf</i> 0.0% of research cohort.
No Response	2	1.6	A second respondent (Ident.191) discontinued after Q7.
TOTAL	125	100%	

The data suggested that conclusions based on term of entry are reliable for respondents whose first term was in 2006 or 2007, and particularly those students in their first or second term of study at the university. That group numbered 26 students, or 21% of the survey samples.

At the time of conducting the survey in Term 3, 2007, 89 students (comprising 71.2% of respondents) were in their first or second year of study. Students starting in 2007 were in their first year of study; they numbered 48 or 38.4% of survey responses. The survey sample therefore represents a useful group for consideration of the issues of learning need and expectation upon arrival at university in Australia.

Table 50: Q.9 - Program of study

9. What is your program of study now at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Ass. Deg. Business	0	0	
B. Accounting	123	98.4	
B. Arts	0	0	
B. Bus.	0	0	
B. Bus. (Spec.)	0	0	
B. Bus. Admin.	0	0	
B. Digital Innov.	0	0	
B. Eng.	0	0	
B. Elect. Comm.	0	0	
B. Hosp. Mgt.	0	0	
B. IT.	0	0	
B. Multimedia	0	0	
Other	0	0	
No Response	2	1.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

The project methodology and questionnaire was constructed to allow for data collection across intact classes of the undergraduate cohort. Data collection on this scale was intended to serve as a source for comparative analysis at a later date, and to avoid any potential issues of a perceived exclusion of one group of students in favour of another in the research. In this report, the research data selected for analysis was B. Accounting students with the characteristics that equate to the Sub-continental cohort.

Table 51: Q.10 - Part-time job

10. Do you have a part-time job while you are studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	30	24.0	
Yes	92	73.6	15 Customer Service 13 Not specified 11 Sales Assist/Support 7 Cashier/Check Out 6 Shift Supervisor 4 Filler 3 Bar Attendant 2 Asst. Accountant 2 Bookkeeper 2 Hospitality 2 Office Worker 2 Waiter 1 Analyst Programmer 1 Asst. Produce Staff 1 Baker 1 Barista 1 Booking Officer 1 Call Centre 1 Carwash 1 Cleaner 1 Cook 1 Crew Member 1 F&B Attendant 1 Finance Assistant 1 Food Runner 1 Gaming Attendant 1 Kitchen Hand 1 Mail Sorter 1 Process Worker 1 Produce Assistant 1 Removalist 1 Room Attendant 1 Sandwich Hand 1 Shop Assistant 1 Telemarketer
No Response	3	2.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

Respondents engaged well with this question, and listed an eclectic variety of job titles. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73.6%) had a part-time job, a value similar to the research findings of Nyland and others (see Nyland et al. 2008), who

identify a 300,000-strong workforce within the 400,000 international students in Australia.

The issue of the tensions between university study and the imperative of part-time work was considered in the follow-up interviews, with interview participants offering comment as shown in Table 52.

Table 52: Interview comments: Balancing university study and part-time work

Interview Comments 2: Balancing university study and part-time work

- 2 *I born in Bangladesh. I finished one subject, organisational behaviour, the same things I got in my job. I really study good in this subject. Combine work and study together, this is just like ... just not studying.*
- 7 *Usually [to work] two to three days. I keep the two things separately, today I got uni, I never go to work. I stop work at least two weeks before exams.*
- 11 *Just come [to university] for classes. [Work] maybe one days or two days. Sometimes three. Sometimes both are crash.*
- 14 *Yes I do [work] two of three days ... I try to keep that time separate ... [exams] before one month I stop my work and try to [study].*
- 16 *I was working three days, six hour shift every day. Two days at university. I spend around 10 to 12 hours at uni. I just sit in the library doing my assignment.*
- 18 *I feel a bit overloaded. Four days [at university]. Weekend [work] actually three days Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I work in the morning. I get a bit tired, but Saturday night I'll have some time for myself.*
... my manager [at work] he actually shows me ... and now I'm also helping him do payroll and stuff and balancing other stock take things ...
- 20 *Two [days each week at university]. I work four days. I work four hours a day. I study about 32 hours a week. ... just give us more flexibility and more time.*
- 28 *Four days [to university]. Five days [to work]. I am doing a part-time job. Yes. I'm tired.*
- 31 *[Days university and work]. Totally different ... that's my job time, Friday, Saturday.*
- 34 *This is my last semester so I left my job ... the major thing ... I already started on my preparation for PR [permanent residency in Australia]. I don't want to work at this time*
- 36 *[How many days a week do you work?] It depends. It's casual so it depends, two days or three days, four hour, five hours ... I live in Wollongong so it takes me so much time.*
- 42 *I work in supermarket three days. Once the term is finished I take off from my work and then I just concentrate on my studies.*
- 43 *[Work] three days. Two days are the same [as university] and one is different ... sometimes six or seven hours in a day. Yeah, it's difficult working and studying.*

These opinions broadly reflect those of “Edward”, a twenty-year-old ELICOS student from Taiwan (reported in Ahern 2009, pp.3-5) and also studying in the same city at the same time as the research cohort. Edward’s ‘bleak cautionary tale’ advised against students working and studying, in the strongest possible terms:

If you fail, even you work very hard in the course, you still fail. Same thing. So they better not to work.

(Ahern 2009, p.4)

A pattern emerged from the data, namely:

Emerging Data Pattern 7: The effect of part-time work

- The data suggests that the effect of part-time work on study and productivity is worthy of further consideration, especially as the university's expectation is that students will commit to a 48 hour per week study load during term time as shown in Table 53 below:

Table 53: B Accounting program planner 2007 (Source: university handbook and course profiles)

B ACCOUNTING PROGRAM PLANNER 2007			
COURSE	RECOMMENDED STUDY COMMITMENT (H.P.W.)	COURSE	RECOMMENDED STUDY COMMITMENT (H.P.W.)
TERM 1		TERM 2	
Using Accounting for Decision Making	12	Principles of Accounting	12
Foundations of Business Computing	12	Organisational Behaviour	12
Marketing	12	Introductory and Contract Law	12
Principles of Economics	12	Essential Statistics	12
TOTAL	48		48

The university's website provides advice regarding student visas. An information fact sheet for international students acknowledges that a student 'Permission to Work Permit' allows up to 20 hours work per week while a program is in session, with no restrictions on working hours during term breaks. With almost three-quarters of the respondents to this questionnaire working part-time, it is conceivable that students might be engaged in up to 68 hours each week of "work" in the form of classes, study and part-time job.

By comparison, when considering the balance between work and family life in Australia, the Acting Sex Discrimination Commissioner, The Hon. John von Doussa QC (in vonDoussa 2007), identified an average of 46 hours worked per week as being 'unacceptably long', further noting that:

Employees and employers acknowledge that working long hours doesn't necessarily equate with extra productivity. Some admitted that working long hours actually reduces a person's productivity.

(vonDoussa 2007, p.4)

Conclusion

The broad demographic pattern that emerged from the first section of the questionnaire was of a research cohort of international students who were:

Emerging Data Pattern 8: Research cohort demographic

- Studying the Bachelor of Accounting program – 98.4%, Table 50 page 236,
- Predominantly male - 80%, Table 40 page 228 and Figure 13 page 171,

- From India, Bangladesh and Nepal - 67.2%, Table 43 page 230,
- Aged between 20 and 24 years old – 66.4%, Table 41 page 228 and Figure 15 page 172,
- Now in their first or second year at the academy – 71.2%, Table 49 page 235 and returning an average cumulative GPA of 2.568 (Table 19 page 174). As noted in Table 23 on page 189, this represents average academic performance of less than passing grades overall.
- Their home languages, Table 48 page 234, are predominantly Bengali (30.4 %), Punjabi (17%), Nepali (13.3%), Gujarati (11.1%) and Hindi (11.1%).
- Whilst only 5.2% of the cohort responding to the questionnaire identify English as one of their main languages spoken at home, Table 48 page 234,
- Most studied in English in their last school - 84.8%, Table 45 page 231, which for all but 3 (2.4%) of the sample population was not in Australia - Table 47 page 234. Of the respondents who completed high school overseas, 92.4% studied in a country recognised as favouring rote pedagogy - Table 44 page 231.
- Almost three-quarters of the cohort (92 or 73.6%) worked part-time job in addition to their university studies - Table 51 page 237, a level of workforce participation, and consequential vulnerability to exploitation and stress, that is similar to the national average for international students (Nyland et al. 2008).

Emerging Data Pattern 9: Demographic analysis suggests that the research findings are generalisable across the Sub-continental B.Accounting cohort

- Data gathered in the background information section of the questionnaire therefore constitutes reasonable categories for subsequent analysis of information gathered in later sections of the questionnaire, and the generalisability of findings.

How did you prepare for university in Australia? (Q.11-32)

Summary

In the section of the questionnaire relating to preparations for university study in Australia, the questions were intended to investigate just how much, and what type of, research is undertaken by international students before they start university study in Australia. The perception to be investigated was:

Assumption 1: High school study and IELTS are sufficient preparation for university

- Undergraduate international students probably presume that their learning experiences at home prepare them for university in Australia, and that preparation for the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL testing is sufficient other preparation for study.

In Questions 11–32, participants were asked to respond with a YES or NO answer regarding possible preparation activities, and then go on to quantify just how helpful

the type of preparatory experience had been. As well, respondents were asked to specify the type of research activity undertaken, and evaluate its usefulness as preparation for university study in Australia.

The questions related to research in the form of reading, internet searching, talking with others, preparatory language courses, and a number of other types of preparation that could be expected of a person about to set out on an expatriate learning experience. Responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 54.

Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32)

PREPARATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY IN AUSTRALIA - SUMMARY					
QN.	CONTENT	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
READING					
11	Reading about university life.	47	75	3	125
12	Reading about learning expected.	29	93	3	125
13	Other reading.	56	64	5	125
ONLINE SEARCHING					
14	Searching online about university life.	76	44	5	125
15	Searching online about learning expected.	47	73	5	125
16	Other online research.	54	64	7	125
TALKING WITH OTHERS					
17	Talking with parents or family.	115	3	7	125
18	Talking with other students.	98	21	6	125
19	Talking with university recruiters.	91	26	8	125
20	Talking with Australian Government representatives.	28	92	5	125
21	Talking with university lecturers.	31	89	5	125
22	Talking with other people about studying at <u>this</u> university.	49	71	5	125
PREPARATORY COURSES					
23	IELTS/TOEFL language course.	110	7	8	125
24	Language courses <u>other than</u> IELTS/TOEFL.	35	85	5	125
25	University preparatory course <u>in home country</u> .	21	98	6	125
OTHER PREPARATIONS					
26	Pre-departure briefing by this university.	29	89	7	125
27	University preparatory course <u>in Australia</u> .	24	94	7	125
28	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	23	95	7	125
29	<u>Other</u> types of preparatory courses.	20	96	9	125
30	Audit (sit in on) university classes.	15	103	7	125
31	Previous visits to Australia.	23	95	7	125
32	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	32	85	8	125

PREPARATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY IN AUSTRALIA - SUMMARY					
QN.	CONTENT	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
	TOTAL	1053	1562	135	2750
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	38%	57%	5%	100%

A global appreciation of the usefulness of various aspects of preparation for university study in Australia was ascertained when responses to these questions (Q.11-32) were sorted in order of how helpful a particular aspect was. Ranked responses are summarised in Table 55. The sequence of question numbers in Table 55 has been arranged to rank the degree of helpfulness in descending order, from:

- Most Helpful (**1 MOST**) or a major factor in preparing for study in Australia, to
- Helpful (**2 HELP.**), then
- Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful (**3 NEITHER**),
- Not Helpful (**4 NOT HELP.**), thence to
- Most Unhelpful (**5 VERY U.H.**) or a useless waste of time and effort, and lastly, either
- No response to the question, a response of NO, or a response of YES, but the degree of helpfulness is not specified (**NO RESP.**).

An unqualified YES response was included in the NO RESP. category as being unhelpful in determining an appreciation of the degree of helpfulness of a particular activity. The fact that a respondent did something, but could not assess its impact presumes that act to have been of no or very limited help in preparing for university study in Australia.

Table 55: Preparations - Ranked responses (Q.11-32)

PREPARATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY IN AUSTRALIA – RANKED RESPONSES								
QN.	CONTENT	1 MOST	2 HELP.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT HELP.	5 VERY U.H.	No RESP.	TOTAL
23	IELTS/TOEFL language course.	54	33	4	0	1	33	125
17	Talking with parents or family.	47	41	5	0	0	32	125
18	Talking with other students.	31	45	3	1	0	45	125
19	Talking with university recruiters.	22	33	14	2	2	52	125
14	Searching online about university life.	21	39	5	0	0	60	125
13	Other reading.	12	29	6	1	0	77	125
16	Other online research.	12	26	5	0	1	81	125
15	Searching online about learning expected.	12	23	0	0	2	88	125
24	Language courses <u>other than</u> IELTS/TOEFL.	12	5	3	0	0	105	125
22	Talking with other people about studying at <u>this</u> university.	11	10	1	0	0	103	125

PREPARATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY IN AUSTRALIA – RANKED RESPONSES								
QN.	CONTENT	1 MOST	2 HELP.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT HELP.	5 VERY U.H.	NO RESP.	TOTAL
21	Talking with university lecturers.	10	9	3	0	1	102	125
32	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	10	9	2	0	0	104	125
11	Reading about university life.	7	29	6	2	1	80	125
20	Talking with Australian Government representatives.	6	10	7	0	1	101	125
25	University preparatory course <u>in</u> home country.	6	6	5	0	0	108	125
12	Reading about learning expected.	5	20	4	0	0	96	125
26	Pre-departure briefing by this university.	5	10	7	0	0	103	125
31	Previous visits to Australia.	5	6	1	1	0	112	125
29	<u>Other</u> types of preparatory courses.	5	5	4	1	0	110	125
27	University preparatory course <u>in</u> Australia.	4	8	5	1	0	107	125
28	<u>Any other</u> type of preparation.	2	6	6	1	0	110	125
30	Audit (sit in on) university classes.	2	5	2	1	0	115	125
	TOTAL	301	407	98	11	9	1924	2750
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	11.0%	14.8%	3.6%	0.4%	0.3%	70.0%	100%

Generally, the pattern that emerged from the responses suggested that preparation for study in Australia focussed on five areas - completing an IELTS/TOEFL course, word of mouth advice from family, other students already studying in Australia, university recruiters, and internet searching:

Emerging Data Pattern 10: Five areas of preparation for study in Australia

- Satisfactorily completing an IELTS/TOEFL course and the mandatory test (Q.23, page 258) may have been perceived as sufficient language preparation for study in Australia, 87 respondents (69.6%) finding the activity to have been most helpful or helpful preparation.
- In preparing for university study in Australia, intending students relied most heavily upon the advice of their parents (Q.17, page 254), other students who have studied or are studying in Australia (Q.18, page 254) and university recruiters, principally education agents (Q.19, page 255). In total, 219 responses (58.4% of the 375 possible responses given to these three questions) found these three activities to have been most helpful or helpful preparations.
- Searching online about university life in Australia (Q.14, page 249) was most helpful or helpful for 60 (48.0%) respondents.
- All other forms of preparation canvassed in the questionnaire generally were either not undertaken or if they were respondents were uncertain as to their usefulness. Responses to the remaining 17 questions in this section attracted a total of 1781 responses (83.8% of a total 2125 possible responses) of NO

RESPONSE, NO, unspecified YES, NEITHER helpful nor unhelpful, UNHELPFUL, or MOST unhelpful.

The high dependence on word of mouth advice from persons other than the university, and the impact of an IELTS-style grammatically-structured appreciation of English (Shaw & Falvey 2008) on living in a colloquial community (see for example Kukec 2006) represent two key issues that were further investigated in the follow-up interviews. Reinforcing the Emerging Data Pattern 6 on page 233 and the opportunity for Further Research 3 on page 234, interview participants offered comment as shown in Table 56.

Table 56: Interview comments: The power of word of mouth advice

Interview Comments 3: The power of word of mouth advice

- 4 ... information I got from my friends who are here earlier, from the same country as well. So I was asking them too, like how is the study over there? What subjects should I need to do? I got information from the bigger students.
- 11 [Looking back]. Don't come. Here student life is much struggling.
- 14 My friend, he's like my childhood friend, he had been here for a year and he told me 'why don't you try in Australia?'
- 16 ... trust me, don't come [to the research site]. One of my friends, he will come next semester; he will come to [another university]. Before he was deciding to come [here] but I told him no way, I told him, come to this [other] university.
- 18 ... my mum give it to choose. She told me ... and I said 'Alright, I have to do that' whatever she said.
- 21 Talk with your family ... we come here, this is good country, the best country. It's good to live here.
- 22 ... my friends. They told me to do it like this. That's easy way.
- 28 I have a brother-in-law, he was studying in Australia.
- 29 Yeah I talk to a number of people they say it's little bit different from Bangladesh but I can survive. You want an honest opinion? Don't come here. Yes, I would tell them to go London, Canada.
- 33 ... a couple of my friends said that there's a good opportunity in Australia ... so, better to go to Australia.
- 43 [Looking back] I'll tell her to stay in our country [Bangladesh] and continue in the university because we have such a good university in our country. If they do [come here] study in a good university like [one place] or [another institution].

The understanding that emerged from the data and interview comments relates to the power of word of mouth processes within the services context, and its potential to inform practice. This issue is further discussed in analysis of Q.74 on page 314.

Responses to individual questions in the Preparations section are analysed in the next part of this Appendix.

Reading (Q.11-13)

Three questions (Q.11-13) dealt with preparations by reading print media relating to university life, learning at university, and general information. Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32) on page 241 identified 364 responses to these three questions (out of a potential opportunity for 375 responses) of which 132 (36.3%) were YES. Excluding the 17 references to Internet-sourced information as “reading” (which is the subject of the subsequent Q.14-17) and the 63 responses in which explanatory information was not given, 50 references are made to the usefulness of information gained from specific sources. This data is summarised in Table 57.

Table 57: Sources of information – Reading - Summary

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – READING - SUMMARY							
ITEM RESEARCHED	MOST HELPFUL	HELPFUL	NEITHER HELPFUL NOR UNHELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL	MOST UNHELPFUL	NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
University handbook, prospectus, brochures, or <i>Good Universities Guide</i>	5	11	1	1	0	0	18
Internet sources	3	13	0	1	0	0	17
IELTS, English test preparation books	6	7	0	0	0	2	15
Relevant books, generally	2	7	0	0	0	0	9
Newspapers, magazines, local	1	4	3	0	0	0	8
Seminars, visits with migration agents	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Not specified						63	63
TOTAL	18	43	4	2	0	65	132
% OF TOTAL	13.6	32.6	3.0	1.5	0	49.3	100%

The data suggested that reading material, where identified, demonstrated a focus by intending students principally on the information contained in the university handbooks (18, or 36% of useful responses), and preparations for the compulsory IELTS test (DIAC 2007b), which elicited 13 or 26% of useful responses. Of the responses, 45 (or 90%) rated the usefulness of the reading material as most helpful or helpful in preparation for future study in Australia.

Responses to individual questions are shown below. Direct quotations are reproduced in *italics* as written in questionnaire responses.

Table 58: Q.11 - Reading about Australian university life

11. Did you read any books or magazines about Australian university life generally?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	75	60.0	
Yes	2	1.6	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	7	5.6	2 Internet 2 University prospectus Lonely Planet 2 Not specified
Yes – helpful	29	23.2	6 University publications 3 Internet browsing, incl. www.immi.gov.au Daily Times Good universities guide Study Australia 17 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	6	4.8	Material not specified
Yes – not helpful	2	1.6	University prospectus 1 Not specified
Yes – most unhelpful	1	0.8	Material not specified
No Response	3	2.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Only three participants (2.4% of the population) declined to answer the question. Of the 47 students who did read about university life in general (37.6% of respondents), a majority (76.6% of the 47) found the information to be helpful in their preparations for university study in Australia. Only nine respondents (19.2% of YES respondents) identified a university publication as the source of their information.

Table 59: Q.12 - Reading about types of learning

12. Did you read any books or magazines about the types of learning expected at Australian universities?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	93	74.4	
Yes	0	0.0	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	5	4.0	1 University handbook 1 University website 3 Not specified
Yes – helpful	20	16.0	2 Magazines 1 University prospectus 1 Internet 16 Not specified

12. Did you read any books or magazines about the types of learning expected at Australian universities?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	4	3.2	1 University handbook 3 Not specified
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	3	2.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Three participants (2.4% of the population) again declined to answer the question. Only 29 students (23.2% of respondents) chose to investigate the types of learning that could be expected at university in Australia. Where stated, the source of this information tended to be the university Handbook (four persons or 13.8% of YES respondents). Of interest is that 25 of these students (86.2% of YES respondents) found the information to be truly helpful in their preparations for university study in Australia.

Table 60: Q.13 - Reading, generally

13. Did you read anything else to prepare for coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	64	51.2	
Yes	8	6.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified. Sources included: 2 IELTS 6 Not specified
Yes – most helpful	12	9.6	6 English books/IELTS 1 Seminars in India 1 Internet 1 Learning about university 1 Accounting books 1 Newspaper articles 1 Not specified
Yes – helpful	29	23.2	8 Internet 7 IELTS/English preparation 3 Local Newspaper 2 Books of Australian lifestyle 2 University brochure 1 IDP study materials 1 Migration agent 1 Standards of study 4 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	6	4.8	3 Newspapers 1 Fortune magazine 1 Lonely Planet 3 Not specified
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	Internet

13. Did you read anything else to prepare for coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	No. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	5	4.0	A third respondent (Ident. No.385) discontinued at Q.14.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Five participants (4.0%) did not answer the question. Fifty-six students (44.87% of respondents) chose to read additional information regarding university in Australia. Excluding internet sources, this reading related to the IELTS test (15 or 26.8% of YES responses) or general information (17 or 30.4% of YES responses). Only two respondents (1.6%) identified university-published material as a source of information.

The Internet (Q.14-16)

The next three questions (Q.14-16) dealt with preparations for university life, learning at university, and general information sourced from the Internet. Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32) on page 241 identified 358 responses to these three questions (out of a potential opportunity for 375 responses) of which 176 (49.2%) were YES. Generally, this represents a response rate of around 33% more than the 132 YES responses to the questions about reading print media.

Of the 176 YES responses, 145 (82.4%) were unable to recall or specify the source consulted. Of these responses, 105 (72.4%) did however recall the source as being most helpful or helpful in their preparations for studying in Australia. The data identifying websites generally related to sources such as Google, untraceable sources, or pay-per-click search networks such as *australianuniversities.com* (see, for example, MDNH 2006).

Of the references made to specific items searched, only 31 (17.6% of YES responses to these three questions) represented a meaningful source of data, such as a specific university website, the Australian immigration authority, or IELTS/IDP websites. Twenty-eight of those responses identified the source as being most helpful or helpful. Sources of Internet information are summarised in Table 61.

Table 61: Sources of information – The Internet - Summary

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – THE INTERNET - SUMMARY							
ITEM RESEARCHED	MOST HELPFUL	HELPFUL	NEITHER HELPFUL NOR UNHELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL	MOST UNHELPFUL	NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
Not specified	28	44	5	0	2	20	99
General Internet surfing	11	22	3	0	1	9	46
University websites	2	17	1	0	0	0	20
DIAC (DIAC 2007a)	4	2	1	0	0	1	8

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – THE INTERNET - SUMMARY							
ITEM RESEARCHED	MOST HELPFUL	HELPFUL	NEITHER HELPFUL NOR UNHELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL	MOST UNHELPFUL	NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
IDP/IELTS websites (IDP Education 2006)	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	45	88	10	0	3	30	176
% OF TOTAL	25.6%	50.0%	5.7%	0%	1.7%	17.0%	100%

This data suggested that, whilst respondents may not recall the specific information searched, Internet sourced material was generally perceived to be most helpful or helpful to students in their preparations for university study in Australia. However, students appeared to be unclear as to the quality of the data source. Only 20 (11.4%) of the YES responses identified a university website as the source of information. This suggested that intending students possibly might have been unclear as to the reliability of the information sourced. The analysis lends support to the findings of Paris (2003, p.30), whose research indicates that there is a need for learners to be more critical when using information from the Internet, and for educators and institutions to address this matter. This finding suggested an opportunity for further research, namely:

Further Research 4: Critical use of Internet information

- How can universities address the need for intending students to critically use Internet sourced information regarding education opportunities?

Data and analysis for each of the Internet-sourced questions is shown below.

Table 62: Q.14 - Online search about university life in Australia

14. Did you search online about Australian university life generally?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	44	35.2	1 "Friend told me"
Yes	11	8.8	But degree of helpfulness not specified. Sites included: 2 Google 9 Not specified
Yes – most helpful	21	16.8	3 Google 2 www.immi.gov.au "A good uni for my Masters" Boomerang Australia 1 Discovery 1 University website 1 www.studyinaustralia 11 Not specified
Yes – helpful	39	31.2	1 "Different Australian websites" 4 Google 1 IDP Website 1 Internet 1 Lifestyle

14. Did you search online about Australian university life generally?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
			1 Study in Australia website 11 University website www.edu.au www.immi.gov.au 17 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	5	4.0	1 University website 1 “Don’t remember” 3 Not specified
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	5	4.0	A fourth respondent (Ident. No.187) discontinued at Q.14.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Five participants (4.0%) declined to answer the question. The low NO response of 44 (about one-third, or 35.2%) when compared to responses regarding reading (Q.11-13) suggested that the Internet was perceived to be a useful source of information, and that prospective students used this medium for their research in preference to print media.

Table 63: Q.15 - Online search about university learning

15. Did you search online about the types of learning expected at Australian universities?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	73	58.4	
Yes	10	8.0	2 Google 1 www.immi.gov.au 1 “study facilities” 4 Not specified
Yes – most helpful	12	9.6	1 Google 1 – “I plan to do masters after my degree” 1 www.immi.gov.au 9 Not specified
Yes – helpful	23	18.4	3 Google; yahoo 2 University website 1 “Better studying & cheap fees” 17 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	0	0.0	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	2	1.6	Material not specified.
No Response	5	4.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Five participants (4.0%) again declined to answer the question.

The high NO response by around half of the survey population (73, or 58.4% of responses to the question), coupled with only two references to a university website (1.6% of responses), suggested that potential students either did not contemplate the types of learning to be expected at university in Australia, or entertained the perception that their past experience at school was indicative of the learning style to be encountered at university.

Table 64: Q.16 - Online research, generally

16. Did you search online anything else to prepare for coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	64	51.2	<i>"Agents were main source of information"</i>
Yes	10	8.0	Degree of helpfulness not specified. Comments included: <i>"Maps"</i> <i>"Life expenditure"</i> <i>"Weather, food"</i>
Yes – most helpful	12	9.6	1 Accommodation 1 University website 1 www.immi.gov.au 9 Not specified
Yes – helpful	26	20.8	5 University website 5 Weather, culture, environment, survival, expenses 2 "outcomes after study"/Planning about future 2 Google 2 IDP/IELTS 1 CPA 1 "Don't remember" 1 www.immi.gov.au 1 www.australianuniversities.com 6 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	5	4.0	1 Google 1 Names of universities 1 RTA 1 Surf through immigration website 1 Not specified
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	1	0.8	<i>"I searched for the culture environment"</i>
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to answer. Six further references (11.1% of YES responses) identified a university

publication as the source of their information. A pattern emerged from the data, namely:

Emerging Data Pattern 11: Limited relevance of university-published information

- The apparent limited relevance or knowledge of university-published materials (both print and online media) as a source of information in preparing for study in Australia.

The incidence of university-published data compared with other sources is summarised in Table 65.

Table 65: University-published material as a source of information in preparing for study in Australia

UNIVERSITY-PUBLISHED MATERIAL AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION					
QN.	CONTENT	UNIVERSITY SOURCE	OTHER SOURCE	NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
11-13	Reading print media.	18	51	63	132
14-16	Searching online media.	20	11	145	176
	TOTAL	38	62	208	308
	(%)	12.3%	20.1%	67.6%	100%

Word of mouth (Q.17-22)

The next six questions (Q.17-22) set out to investigate preparation undertaken by word of mouth, seeking information from parents, friends, recruiters, government representatives, university lecturers, or other sources. The response summary in Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32) on page 241 identified 714 responses to these six questions (out of a potential opportunity for 750 responses) of which 412 (57.7%) were YES. A pattern emerged from the data, namely:

Emerging Data Pattern 12: The power of word of mouth information

- Word of mouth information was used more than either print or Internet data in preparing for university learning in Australia. In the case of this research, word of mouth was used 25% more than print or Internet media.

This is shown in Table 66.

Table 66: Sources of Information - Reading and the Internet compared with Word of mouth

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – READING & INTERNET COMPARED WITH WORD OF MOUTH					
QN.	CONTENT	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
11-16	Reading & Internet research.	309	413	28	750
17-22	Word of mouth preparations.	412	302	36	750
	Difference between Word of Mouth preparations and Reading/Internet preparations	103			
	% Difference	25%			

Further analysis by individual question in Table 68 - Table 73 on pages 254 - 257, revealed that 315 of the YES responses (or 41.9% of all YES responses) to Q.17-22 indicated the degree of the usefulness of word of mouth information as preparation for university study in Australia. Responses are summarised in Table 67 below. The sequence of question numbers has been arranged to rank the degree of helpfulness experienced in descending order, from:

- Most Helpful (**1 MOST H.**), to
- Helpful (**2 H.**), thence
- Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful (**3 NEITHER**),
- Not Helpful (**4 NOT H.**),
- Most Unhelpful (**5 VERY U.H.**), then
- Helpful (a YES response to the question), but the degree of helpfulness not specified (**N.S.**),
- An answer of NO to the question (**No**), and lastly
- No response to this question (**NO RESP.**).

Table 67: Sources of information - Word of mouth - Summary

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – WORD OF MOUTH - SUMMARY										
QN.	CONTENT	1 MOST H.	2 H.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT H.	5 VERY U.H.	N.S.	No	No RESP.	TOTAL
17	Parents or family.	47	41	5	0	0	22	3	7	125
18	Other students in Australia.	31	45	3	1	0	18	21	6	125
19	University recruiters or their agents.	22	33	14	2	2	18	26	8	125
22	Any one else?	11	10	1	0	0	27	71	5	125
21	University lecturers.	10	9	3	0	1	8	89	5	125
20	Australian government representatives.	6	10	7	0	1	4	92	5	125
	TOTAL	127	148	33	3	4	97	302	36	750
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	16.9%	19.7%	4.4%	0.4%	0.5%	13%	40.3%	4.8%	100%

The data showed that around one-third (275, or 36.7%) of a possible 750 responses to these questions perceived word of mouth as a source of information to be most helpful or helpful in preparing for university study in Australia. Of these 275 responses, 219 (more than three-quarters, or 79.6%) found the information from parents, other students in Australia and university recruiters/agents to be the most helpful or helpful in their preparations.

However, the data in Table 65 on page 252 identified only 38 (or 12.3%) out of 308 items of reading or Internet-sourced information to be university-published material. Comparison of these two sets of data showed that word-of mouth information from

parents, other students and recruiters was more significant to international students than university-published information. The pattern that emerged was:

Emerging Data Pattern 13: Parents, other students and recruiters/agents are the main source of information

- The majority of students surveyed found the information from parents, other students in Australia, and university recruiters or agents to be the most helpful or helpful source of information in their preparations for study in Australia, and this word-of mouth information is more significant to international students than university-published information.

Data and analysis for each of the word of mouth sources is shown in Table 68.

Table 68: Q.17 - Talking with parents

17. Did you talk with your parents or family members about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	3	2.4	
Yes	22	17.6	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	47	37.6	
Yes – helpful	41	32.8	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	5	4.0	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to answer. Eighty-eight respondents (70.4%) identified their parents as a most helpful or helpful source of their information.

Table 69: Q.18 - Talking with students or graduates

18. Did you talk with other students or graduates about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	21	16.8	
Yes	18	14.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	31	24.8	
Yes – helpful	45	36.0	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	2.4	
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	

18. Did you talk with other students or graduates about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	6	4.8	A fifth respondent (Ident. No.324) discontinued at Q.18.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Six participants (4.86%) declined to answer. Of significance is that 76 responses (95.0% of YES responses that indicated a degree of helpfulness) identified other students or graduates as a most helpful or helpful source of their information.

Table 70: Q.19 - Talking with university recruiters

19. Did you talk with university recruiters or their agents about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	26	20.8	
Yes	18	14.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	22	17.6	
Yes – helpful	33	26.4	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	14	11.2	
Yes – not helpful	2	1.6	
Yes – most unhelpful	2	1.6	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to answer. As was the case in Q.18, talking with other students, 55 responses to this question (75.4% of YES responses that indicated a degree of helpfulness) identified university recruiters or agents as a most helpful or helpful source of their information.

Table 71: Q.20 - Talking with Australian government representatives

20. Did you talk with Australian government representatives about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	92	73.6	
Yes	4	3.2	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	6	4.8	
Yes – helpful	10	8.0	
Yes – neither helpful nor	7	5.6	

20. Did you talk with Australian government representatives about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	No. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
unhelpful			
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	1	0.8	
No Response	5	4.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Five participants (4.0%) declined to answer. In contrast to word of mouth advice from other students and recruiters/agents, only 16 responses (66.7% of YES responses that indicated a degree of helpfulness) identified Australian government representatives as a most helpful or helpful source of their information.

Table 72: Q.21 - Talking with university lecturers

21. Did you talk with university lecturers about studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	No. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	89	71.2	
Yes	8	6.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	10	8.0	
Yes – helpful	9	7.2	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	2.4	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	1	0.8	
No Response	5	4.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Five participants (4.0%) again declined to answer. An item of interest emerged from this data. Nineteen responses (82.6% of YES responses that indicated a degree of helpfulness) identified university lecturers as a most helpful or helpful source of their information. Noting the discussion on the power of word of mouth information in Q.74 on page 314, as well as the degree of respect accorded to university lecturers in the Indian subcontinent (see for example Raina & Dhand 2000), then:

Emerging Data Pattern 14: Leverage the power and respect of university lecturers as agents of information

- An opportunity exists for universities to leverage the power and respect for university lecturers in promoting the value for money inherent in an international education in Australia.

Table 73: Q.22 – Talking with people, generally

22. Did you talk with anyone else about studying at this university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	71	56.8	
Yes	27	21.6	Degree of usefulness not specified. Comments included: 7 Brother, family, Cousin, other relatives: <i>"HE in Aus is good"</i> 4 Friend; <i>"studying at this university is a good experience"</i> 3 Uncle, Friend in Australia: <i>"Australian study standard is one of the best"</i> 2 Agent, travelling rep. 1 Current university students; <i>"its good"</i> 1 Fellow students; <i>"good/feasible"</i> 9 Not specified
Yes – most helpful	11	8.8	5 Friends, relatives, cousins, neighbours, teachers. Comments included: <i>"my friend told me about how to do the assignment & about plagiarism"</i> ; <i>"its good for you but ..."</i> ; <i>"AUS good"</i> 2 Agent <i>"study options"</i> 1 <i>"Ex-students; about all positive & negative outcomes of uni. Learning"</i> 1 Friend/relatives in AUS 1 UNSW <i>"Good rating of unis"</i> 1 Not specified
Yes – helpful	10	8.0	6 Aunt, Cousin, friends. Comments included: <i>"life's good in here to study & work"</i> ; <i>"come here"</i> ; <i>"not bad"</i> ; <i>"it's a good university"</i> ; <i>"good career opportunities"</i> 2 Immigration agent/consultant 1 school teacher relatives: <i>"lifestyle and student facilities"</i> 1 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	1	0.8	Relatives: <i>"Good experience"</i>
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	5	4.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response to this question. Five participants (4.0%) again declined to answer. Twenty-one responses (95.5% of YES responses that indicated a degree of helpfulness) identified talking with other categories of people as a most helpful or helpful source of their information. Thirty references (61.2% of YES responses) were made in the comments to information gained from sources such as: brother, family, uncle, cousin, other relatives and friends, as well as current and former students.

Preparatory courses (Q.23-25)

The next three questions (Q.23-25) relating to preparing for university study in Australia set out to investigate preparation undertaken in the form of a language course or some other form of university learning skills course. The response summary in Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32) on page 241 identified 356 responses to these three questions (out of a potential opportunity for 375 responses) of which 166 (46.6%) were YES.

The data suggested that students balanced their lack of research about university learning in Australia by attending language and other preparatory training prior to departure for Australia; notably:

Emerging Data Pattern 15: Intending students 'balance' lack of research by attending English language courses

- Almost all respondents (110 or 88.0% - Table 74, page 258) undertook an IELTS/TOEFL preparatory course; of whom
- Thirty-five respondents (or 28.0% of respondents - Table 75, page 259) also undertook other forms of preparatory English language courses; as well as
- Twenty-one respondents (16.8% - Table 76, page 260) who also undertook a university preparatory course in their home country before departure for Australia.

Table 74: Q.23 - IELTS/TOEFL course

23. Did you undertake a course for IELTS/TOEFL English language test before studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	7	5.6	
Yes	18	14.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	54	43.2	
Yes – helpful	33	26.4	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	4	3.2	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to answer. An IELTS/TOEFL course was found to be a most helpful or helpful form of preparation by 70% of respondents, presumably because of the mandatory Australian government requirement in this area (DIAC 2007b) that potential international students demonstrate a specific minimum standard of English language proficiency.

Table 75: Q.24 - Other English language courses

24. Did you undertake any other type of English language course to prepare for studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	85	68.0	1 comment: <i>"I studied English from the first day till the last day of my school life."</i>
Yes	15	12.0	But degree of helpfulness not specified. Courses included: Eng Tutorial <3 mo. Private IELTS <3 mo. Gateway NS ¹⁷ <3 mo. NS NS 3-6 mo. Private school NS <3 mo. Private school NS <3 mo. Meriden NS 3-6 mo. Private school NS <3 mo. Private school NS <3 mo. British Council NS <3 mo. University Study Skills 3-6 mo. British Council TOEFL NS University 3 Not specified
Yes – most helpful	12	9.6	EAP <3 mo. University ELICOS 3-6 mo. Meridien School 2 General Eng. 3-6 mo. British Council IELTS 3-6 mo. Institutes IELTS <3 mo. Lang Centre NS <3 mo. Private school NS 10 yr. Private school NS <3 mo. NS 2 NS 3-6 mo. Private school Personal training 6-12 mo. My father
Yes – helpful	5	4.0	English study <3 mo. University EAP-2 <3 mo. University NS <3 mo. University NS 3-6 mo. British Council NS <3 mo. NS
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	2.4	2 NS <3 mo. Private school 1 NS
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	5	4.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	
Less than 3 months	18	14.4	
From 3 – 6 months	10	8.0	
From 6 – 12 months	1	0.8	

¹⁷ NS = Not specified

24. Did you undertake any other type of English language course to prepare for studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
More than 12 mths.	1	0.8	"10yr. private school"
Not specified	95	76.0	Includes 5 NR to this question
TOTAL	125	100%	
Prov.: university	6	4.8	
Prov.: govt. school	0	0.0	
Prov.: pte. school	11	8.8	
Prov.: other	11	8.8	5 British Council 2 "Lang Centre" 2 Meridien School 1 Gateway 1 "My father"
Prov.: not specified	97	77.6	Includes 5 NR to this question
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Five participants (4.0%) declined to answer. Of the 35 (28.0%) respondents who did undertake additional English language training, 30 provided information relating to the duration and/or provider of these other types of English language courses. For most of these respondents the service was provided by a private school, and was of less than 6-months duration.

Table 76: Q.25 - University preparatory courses overseas

25. Did you undertake a university preparatory course in your home country before coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	98	78.4	
Yes	4	3.2	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	6	4.8	
Yes – helpful	6	4.8	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	5	4.0	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	6	4.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Six participants (4.8%) declined to answer. Of interest in the data was the perception that for only about half of the 21 respondents (12, or 48.0%) who did undertake a university preparatory course in their home country was the experience found to be most helpful or helpful in preparing for university study in Australia.

Other preparations (Q.26-32)

The final seven questions (Q.26-32) relating to preparing for university study in Australia set out to investigate other preparations that international students might undertake before starting at university. The response summary in Table 54: Preparations – Summary (Q.11-32) on page 241 identified 823 responses to these seven questions (out of a potential opportunity for 875 responses) of which 166 (20.2%) were YES. The data reinforced the suggestion that the prime activity in preparing for university study in Australia was to talk with family and other students studying in Australia, and to undertake preparation for the mandatory IELTS test.

Responses to the seven questions in this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 77. The sequence of question numbers in the Table has been arranged to rank the degree of helpfulness experienced in descending order.

Table 77: Other preparations - Summary

SOURCES OF INFORMATION – WORD OF MOUTH - SUMMARY										
QN.	CONTENT	1 MOST H.	2 H.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT H.	5 VERY U.H.	N.S.	No	NO RESP.	TOTAL
32	Any other preparation?	10	9	2	0	0	11	85	8	125
26	Pre-departure briefing by this university.	5	10	7	0	0	7	89	7	125
31	Previous visits to Australia.	5	6	1	1	0	10	95	7	125
29	Other types of prep. course.	5	5	4	1	0	5	96	9	125
27	University prep. course in Australia.	4	8	5	1	0	6	94	7	125
28	Any other type of preparation.	2	6	6	1	0	8	95	7	125
30	Audit university classes.	2	5	2	1	0	5	103	7	125
	TOTAL	33	49	27	5	0	52	657	52	875
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	3.7%	5.6%	3.1%	0.6%	0.0%	6.0%	75.0%	6.0%	100%

The trend that emerged from the responses to these final seven questions was that YES responses reduced in this category to only:

- 12.0% to 25.6% of YES for questions in this domain (Q.26-32) compared with, for example:
- 23.2% lowest YES response to print or online reading about types of learning to be expected at university in Australia (Q.12 page 246);
- 78.4% of respondents talked with others who have studied at university in Australia (Q.18, page 254);
- 88.0% of respondents undertook an IELTS/TOEFL preparatory course (Q.23, page 258); and

- 92.0% of respondents talked with parents and family (Q.17, page 254).

Responses to individual questions are considered in detail in Table 78 - Table 84 on pages 262 to 265 below.

Table 78: Q.26 - Pre-departure briefing

26. Did you undertake a pre-departure briefing or course provided by this university before coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	89	71.2	
Yes	7	5.6	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	5	4.0	
Yes – helpful	10	8.0	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	7	5.6	
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Only about one-quarter of respondents (23.2%) attended some form of university-sponsored pre-departure briefing. However, with only five respondents out of 29 (17.3%) who did undertake this form of activity finding it to be most helpful, an interesting item for subsequent research could be:

Further Research 5: University-sponsored pre-departure briefings

- A deeper exploration of the nature and content of university-sponsored pre-departure briefings.

Table 79: Q.27 - University preparatory course in Australia

27. Did you a university preparatory course in Australia before coming to study in this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	94	75.2	
Yes	6	4.8	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	4	3.2	
Yes – helpful	8	6.4	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	5	4.0	
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	

27. Did you a university preparatory course in Australia before coming to study in this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Twenty-four persons (19.2% of respondents) answered YES; however only 12 of these (9.6%) found the experience to be most helpful or helpful.

Table 80: Q.28 - University study skills course

28. Did you undertake a university study skills course before coming to study in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	95	76.0	
Yes	8	6.4	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	2	1.6	
Yes – helpful	6	4.8	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	6	4.8	
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response and seven participants (5.6%) again declined to respond. As was the case in Q.22, a similar number of respondents (23 or 18.4%) answered YES. Of interest is the perception generated from responses to both questions that preparatory courses tailored to the needs of intending university students are, generally, not considered helpful.

Table 81: Q.29 - Other preparatory course

29. Did you undertake any other type of course to prepare for studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	96	76.8	Comment: "No such course available in my country"
Yes	5	4.0	But degree of helpfulness not specified. Comment: "I studied in Singapore (Accounting)"
Yes – most helpful	5	4.0	Accounting course for 2 months Advance Diploma of Accounting from Aus Business College Diploma of Accounting 2 NS

29. Did you undertake any other type of course to prepare for studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Yes – helpful	5	4.0	Dip IT Diploma in College Diploma of Accounting English language course 1 NS
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	4	3.2	Not specified
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	Not specified
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nine participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Twenty participants (16.0%) responded YES, but again only half (10 responses) found the experience to be helpful in preparing for university study in Australia. Again, the perception of such preparatory courses being less than helpful suggests an area for further investigation:

Further Research 6: University preparatory courses

- A deeper exploration of the utility, nature and content of university preparation courses.

Table 82: Q.30 - Auditing university classes

30. Did you audit (sit in on) any university classes before enrolling at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	103	82.4	
Yes	5	4.0	But degree of helpfulness not specified
Yes – most helpful	2	1.6	
Yes – helpful	5	4.0	
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	2	1.6	
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Only seven respondents (representing 5.6% of all respondents, yet almost half or 46.7% of respondents who did audit university classes before enrolling) found the experience most helpful or helpful. The data suggests an area for further investigation, namely:

Further Research 7: Promote the auditing of university lectures at home as preparation for study overseas

- Some form of promotion to encourage wider use of auditing university lectures as preparation for later study could prove beneficial in preparing for later university study.

Table 83: Q.31 - Tourist visit to Australia previously

31. Did you visit Australia as a tourist or student before studying at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	95	76.0	
Yes	10	8.0	Degree of helpfulness not specified: 7 Student 1 Tourist 2 NS
Yes – most helpful	5	4.0	3 “Student” 1 “Sydney” 1 NR
Yes – helpful	6	4.8	2 Student 2 Tourist 2 Not specified
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	1	0.8	Not specified
Yes – not helpful	1	0.8	Not specified
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) again declined to respond. Eleven of the 23 respondents (representing only 8.8% of the survey sample, and about half or 47.8% of respondents who did visit Australia before enrolling) found the experience helpful. This outcome suggested that there may be merit in the observation contained in the “Baird Report” (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics Finance and Public Administration 2007, p.118) that:

Further Research 8: Tourism as preparation for later university study

- A need exists for more data on the size and contribution of study-related tourism, and the benefit that it could provide as a preparation for later university study.

Table 84: Q.32 - Other preparations, generally

32. Is there anything else that you did that you thought was important to prepare for studying in Australia at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	85	68.0	

32. Is there anything else that you did that you thought was important to prepare for studying in Australia at this university?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Yes	11	8.8	Comments: <i>"Arranging funds"</i> <i>"Hard work and being strong should be the mental set up."</i> <i>"Learn more English"</i> <i>"My friends"</i> <i>"self confidence"</i> <i>"You should do the IELTS"</i> 5 NS
Yes – most helpful	10	8.0	Comments: <i>"Cheep uni fees"</i> <i>"computer skills"</i> <i>"For grad future"</i> <i>"Good communication power"</i> <i>"How to prepare food"</i> <i>"online generally"</i> <i>"Read programming books"</i> <i>"Really know about the course you are enrolling in"</i> <i>"Take more information about university"</i> <i>"Tuition fees"</i>
Yes – helpful	9	7.2	Comments: <i>"Assignments should have 50+ marks"</i> <i>"I asked my relatives & friends living over here"</i> <i>"Online research"</i> <i>"Regular study"</i> <i>"Talk friends"</i> 4 NS
Yes – neither helpful nor unhelpful	2	1.6	Comment: <i>"I heard from my agent it 5 star rated"</i> 1 Not specified
Yes – not helpful	0	0.0	
Yes – most unhelpful	0	0.0	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. The intent of this item was to tease out any other preparations that participants might have felt to be either helpful or not. Generally, the responses tended to show that most significant forms of preparation had been canvassed in preceding questions. Of interest is the one "most helpful" response of '*How to prepare food*' offered by Respondent Ident No.3, a 20-year old male from India.

The issue of apprehension at the prospect of having to look after one's own daily needs such as cooking and washing clothes, instead of having family support to

provide this service, was considered in the follow-up interviews. Coping with domestic arrangements did not seem to be a concern to interview participants, once they had adjusted to their circumstances. Interview participants offered comments such as those shown in Table 85.

Table 85: Interview comments: Coping with domestic arrangements in Australia

Interview Comments 4: Coping with domestic arrangements in Australia

- 20 *It wasn't very difficult.*
- 22 *The hardest thing is lifestyle is totally changed for me. Whereas in my country everything – my parents do everything for me and when I come here I have to exist with fast life.*
- 26 *Best thing I have found is I have become independent.*
- 28 *I don't suffer any things.*
- 29 *At first time nothing was easier, nothing. All hard, new country, different culture, different religion, everything is different. That's right. I need time to adjust ... one year.*
- 34 *Everything was learning for me. Everything is learning. ... What I found it was really very tough over here to settle without any of your relatives ... in India ... my parents were there ... so it was very difficult for me in the beginning but then it was alright since I started learning and everything, and then things were easy.*
- 42 *Well, we are away from home, and we have to cope.*

Conclusion

Overall, the preparations section of the questionnaire attracted meaningful responses to the set questions. The final open-ended question elicited little additional information. Responses to these questions were therefore considered to constitute reasonable items for subsequent analysis and comparison with the responses that were given in later sections relating to experiences of certain aspects of university life in Australia.

The understanding that emerged from the data was further explored in the follow-up interviews, and particularly considered matters such as:

- Why did you feel that an IELTS/TOEFL course/test was all the preparation that is required before study in Australia? How do you feel about this in light of your subsequent experiences?
- Now that you have experienced university lectures and study in Australia, how useful do you think it would be for future students to visit a university and sit in on some classes before they start at university?
- Were you apprehensive at the prospect of having to look after your own daily needs such as cooking and washing clothes, instead of having family to do it for you?

Interview participants gave voice to these matters with comments such as those shown below. The comments compare interviewee responses to the question 'Before you started at this university, did you do anything special to prepare ...?' and 'Looking back, what one suggestion would you have ...?'

In the 18 observations presented here, most interviewees felt that an IELTS course and or test was sufficient preparation. None felt a need to suggest to future students that they visit a university before setting out for Australia. And, most apprehension appeared to take the form of financial preparation, better choosing universities and courses in advance, or not leaving home at all. For those who do come to Australia, the best preparation was summarised by interviewee No.33, a 21 year old male from New Delhi in his first term at the university: ‘*Get your shoes ready*’.

Table 86: Interview comments: Preparing for university study in Australia

Interview Comments 5: Preparing for university study in Australia

- 1 *Everything so far for me I haven't had any problems with anything. I'm fine with the learning. [Hindsight]. Quite a tough question. No idea, I haven't got any [inaudible]. Pick the easiest course.*
- 2 *Yeah the IELTS course, IELTS exam, IELTS preparation. [Hindsight]. Choosing the right university, choosing the right subject.*
- 14 *Special; like what? Yes ... I proceeded like for UK I did my IELTS in UK, then I was accepted here ... [Hindsight]. Try to know what you want in your future.*
- 16 *I'm not aware ... I went to one tutorial for a week, for the preparation of that IELTS test. But it's not an exam. [Was there anything else?] No. [Hindsight]. Don't come here.*
- 18 *I just prepare myself in British Council for IELTS test and finish the IELTS test and come back in here. [Hindsight]. Yeah, before you come organise yourself.*
- 21 *Yeah, I did. I tried to know good English. I go to other course of English language in my Bangladesh university of Dakar. They have English department. I enrolled for three months or four months, something like that, for my improvement in English. Also I sit for the IELTS exam. [Hindsight]. Tuition fees ... choose university ... subjects*
- 22 *English language classes in my country. [Hindsight]. Actually first I'd want to know why he'd want to come here.*
- 25 *Not really. Like there was nothing special preparation because as I already had a Diploma certificate, so I knew I would going for a Bachelor degree. [Hindsight]. Finance.*
- 27 *IELTS for one month. [Hindsight]. Here there are assignments.*
- 28 *Then I was prepared for English ... British Council ... three months ... then I do all the IELTS with them. [Hindsight]. It's okay; it's good ... save the dollars.*
- 30 *We didn't know. [Hindsight]. Just prepare.*
- 31 *No nothing, just IELTS. [Hindsight]. Take ... hairdressing, stuff like that.*
- 33 *I did accounting course in my country. [Hindsight]. Get your shoes ready.*
- 34 *My father he insisted me to come. [Hindsight]. Just be prepared for the hard life.*
- 35 *I studied a diploma here for about 18 months ... in accounting. [Hindsight]. Time management.*
- 36 *I just went for it yes [the IELTS test]. [Hindsight]. She has to be confident, strong because over here we're just ourselves.*
- 42 *I just did the IELTS exam. [Hindsight]. Just go to the university.*
- 43 *Yes [IELTS test]. Because some of my friends were here so I asked them ... that's why I came here. [Hindsight]. I'd tell her to stay in our country.*

Generally, how confident are you? (Q.33-56)

Summary

The third section of the questionnaire, the confidence section, was designed to explore how confident respondents felt about certain aspects of living in Australia and studying at university. The data gathered was intended to start the exploration of experience in the light of preparations made for university study in Australia. Following analysis of responses to the first two parts of the questionnaire dealing with demographic data and preparations undertaken before starting study at university in Australia, the assumption to be investigated became:

Assumption 2: Was high school study and IELTS sufficient preparation?

- Accepting that the main, almost singular, mode of preparation was talking with parents and other international students, and undertaking a course for the mandatory IELTS/TOEFL test, how then does the experience match the expectation?

Respondents engaged well with the questions. Five participants had withdrawn from the survey by this time, and two more withdrew by Q.35, the second question in this section. Of the remaining 118 respondents, 92.0% or more attempted each question.

The confidence section comprised 24 questions (Q.33-56). Participants were asked to respond with a scaled answer (see Table 5, page 94) regarding how confident they were with certain aspects of living and studying at university. The final question in the section (Q.56, page 284) was an open-ended question to elicit additional information and monitor the completeness in identifying and canvassing issues in the preceding questions in this section.

The questions asked related to aspects of university life such as settling-in, keeping up with workload, participation in class and understanding material, and specific undergraduate tasks such as research, assignments and examinations. Responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 87 below. The sequence of question numbers in the table has been arranged to rank the degree of confidence felt in descending order, from:

- Very Confident (**1 VERY CONF.**), to
- Confident (**2 CONF.**), thence
- Neither Confident nor Not Confident (**3 NEITHER**),
- Not Confident (**4 NOT CONF.**), to
- Not at all Confident (**5 VERY U.C.**), and
- No response to this question (**NO RESP.**).

Table 87: Confidence – Summary (Q.33-56)

CONFIDENCE AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA								
QN.	CONTENT	1 VERY CONF.	2 CONF.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT CONF.	5 VERY U.C.	NO RESP.	TOTAL
38	Understanding lectures.	46	63	5	4	0	7	125
45	Explaining in English.	44	65	8	1	0	7	125
33	Settling-in to Australia.	44	53	11	7	0	10	125
40	Lecturers and assignments.	42	59	15	2	0	7	125
46	Asking questions of tutors.	42	59	13	2	1	8	125
41	Asking lecturers' questions.	41	59	14	3	0	8	125
34	Settling-in to university.	40	56	10	8	1	10	125
43	Group activities.	39	65	12	1	1	7	125
36	Mixing with other students.	39	56	16	5	1	8	125
44	Tutorial input to assignments.	38	65	14	0	0	8	125
48	Solving problems.	38	63	13	3	1	7	125
54	Doing assignments.	37	68	10	1	1	8	125
42	Answering questions.	37	62	15	4	0	7	125
55	Doing exams.	36	64	11	5	1	8	125
52	Online searching.	35	66	10	2	2	10	125
47	Learning past exams.	34	67	14	2	0	8	125
39	Taking notes in lectures.	34	64	18	2	0	7	125
53	Writing in English.	33	74	8	2	0	8	125
49	Applying theory.	32	64	16	4	1	8	125
37	Ability to succeed.	30	67	15	4	1	8	125
51	Library searching.	25	66	18	3	4	9	125
50	Thinking critically.	22	67	22	3	3	8	125
35	University workload.	17	72	19	8	1	8	125
	TOTAL	825	1464	307	76	19	184	2875
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	29%	51%	11%	2%	1%	6%	100%
56	Anything else?	YES	66	NO	40		19	125

Generally, the responses suggest that the group surveyed enjoy a very high degree of confidence in their ability to study successfully at university in Australia. Responses of very confident and confident ranged from a maximum of 218 (92.4%) regarding confidence about listening to and understanding in lectures (Q.38, page 275) and explaining, in English, what I know about a subject (Q.45, page 278) to 178 (76.1%) who feel confident about thinking critically (Q.50, page 281) and in keeping up with the university workload (Q.35, page 272). The pattern that emerged was:

Emerging Data Pattern 16: Settling-in to university has not been too great a challenge

- A cohort that has not experienced too great a difficulty in settling-in, mixing with other international students from diverse backgrounds, and are confident

in their ability at keeping up with workload, participating in class and understanding the material and undergraduate tasks such as research, assignments and examinations.

The high degree of confidence expressed in these responses presented an interesting platform for analysis of later sections of the questionnaire, particularly how students dealt with certain issues, and how they felt generally about their experience in Australia. The subsequent parts of this section examine responses to individual questions.

Settling-in (Q.33-37)

Table 88: Q.33 - Confidence about settling-in to life in Australia

33. Confidence: settling-in to life in Australia.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	44	35.2	
Confident	53	42.4	
Neither confident nor not confident	11	8.8	
Not confident	7	5.6	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	10	8.0	A 6 th Respondent Ident. No.116 discontinued at Q.33
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. Of interest is that a feeling of disquiet about settling-in to life in Australia was experienced by only 7 (5.6%) of respondents. Most, 108 or 93.9% of students responding to the question felt very confident, confident or ambivalent (neither confident nor not confident) at the challenge of settling-in to life in Australia. The issue of a lack of disquiet when settling-in to life in Australia was further explored in the follow-up interviews. Significant comments offered by interview participants are shown in Table 89.

Table 89: Interview comments: Settling-in to life in Australia

Interview Comments 6: Settling-in to life in Australia

- 2 ... nowadays I don't know ... lots of overseas students they are finishing after nine o'clock, ten o'clock, like the ... these kind of suggestions that are happening.¹⁸
- 7 At the beginning I was a bit stressed, but later I got used to it.
- 11 Here student life is much struggling.

¹⁸ These comments precede by 18 months the observation by Gillard (in her Ministerial Statement Gillard 2009a, p.2) to 'remain competitive ... and further improve student experiences, particularly students' living experiences and safety'.

- 14 *I think you will enjoy it and all mixed cultures. All religions ... it's a mix. Everyone is so friendly.*
- 16 *... the only thing is I was homesick. I missed my parents all the time. Sometimes students ... they are really very new ... they are not really understand quickly all this stuff.*
- 20 *I was worried actually about the assessment system in Bachelor.*
- 21 *It's good to live here.*
- 22 *The hardest thing is lifestyle is totally changed for me ... I coped with my friends.*
- 27 *... problem is only speaking.*
- 29 *[... to feel overall] comfortable? One year.*
- 30 *[Best thing]. I think it's just the life here, the social life ... There's nothing like the worst thing.*
- 31 *[First semester] I hadn't got enough friends at that time. Everybody was new. There was nothing that much easier.*
- 33 *The first thing is the different culture and all the different peoples from different countries; and trying to make the friendly relations just to make a friendly environment for study.*
- 34 *Actually in the first Semester it was bit hard because the people are different and the culture is very different and I was not having that many friends over here so I found some difficulties in my first semester.*
- 35 *[Hardest] Assignments, because I had to get a bit more time.*
- 36 *... so I think yeah communication is hard at the beginning.*
- 43 *I didn't get any exemption at this university, that's the most awful thing.*

Table 90: Q.34 - Confidence about settling-in to university

34. Confidence: settling-in to student at the university.			
RESPONSE OPTION	No. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	40	32.0	
Confident	56	44.8	
Neither confident nor not confident	10	8.0	
Not confident	8	6.4	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Again, 10 participants (8.0%) declined to respond. As with the response to the previous question on settling-in to life in Australia, most (106 or 92.2%) respondents to this question felt very confident, confident or ambivalent when settling-in to life as a student at university.

Table 91: Q.35 - Confidence about study load

35. Confidence: keeping up with the university workload.			
RESPONSE OPTION	No. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	17	13.6	

35. Confidence: keeping up with the university workload.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Confident	72	57.6	
Neither confident nor not confident	19	15.2	
Not confident	8	6.4	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	A 7 th Respondent Ident. No.186 discontinued at Q.35
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. As with responses to the two previous questions, the issue of keeping up with university workload was considered appropriate for further investigation, particularly considering responses to part-time work (Q.10, page 237) and the conclusions derived from analysis of the Background information (Q.1-10) as described on page 239. Participants in the follow-up interviews offered comments as shown in Table 92.

Table 92: Interview comments: Keeping up with university workload

Interview Comments 7: Keeping up with university workload

- 2 *Yeah I have time for study ... my parents are ... I'm under pressure to study, but I have time to study. I go to lectures, I go to tutorials and I also browse the internet and I got a learning diary here, keep update my learning library every day what I am put in there ... Yeah I work Friday, Saturday and Sunday I work.*
- 4 *... most of the time is in the university. Everything in the university. Most of my studies I do in a group, and assignments ... I work three days too, that's the weekend.*
- 7 *The most hardest was the written assignments ... usually I go to [work] three days. I keep the two things separately, today I got uni, I never go to work ... after I get home just for one or two hours, I just revise what was taught in the class.*
- 18 *I already mentioned the study. The hardest thing is the problem is in here first time ... I feel a bit overloaded ... [university] four days [and work] actually three days.*
- 20 *After work I have some rest and then I've got plenty of time to study still. I study about 32 hours a week.*
- 21 *If an assignment is due then we study in the group of our friends and after we finish we go home, do a little bit too, because we have to cook we have to wash our clothes, everything ... sometimes you get tired you know.*
- 22 *Yes. It's about three days [at work]. I try to spend my time at university because if I go home it's like I'm making fun with my friends.*
- 25 *Only for my classes most of the time [university study].*
- 28 *I think this is so boring and busy. I just like to finish my course.*
- 29 *I just study randomly.*
- 31 *Three or four hours during the week ... that's because I've only got two subjects, both easy.*

- 32 [Regular study timetable?] *I almost made one up, but I was never able to follow it.*
- 33 *Sunday [study] about two or three hours; on Monday I spend five to six hours or six to ten, depends on study load; if my exams come I'll study about 12 hours in a day ... I always make the time to do my study, my work for myself, for friends and all the things but I never follow it; that's the worst thing.*
- 34 *That's pretty tough. Sometimes it changes because sometimes we have to do that cooking and cleaning and everything and whenever I'm home I just try to study at least for three or four hours a day at this time but I have to study hard after the Christmas.*
- 35 *It's packed, nine-to-five, every weekday is; weekends are free.*
- 36 *I could say in a day I would [study] say five hours.*
- 42 *Well the thing is everything is well organised, the time management is good then it's good to understand. [Study] maybe four or five hours. That's during term. Once term is finished I take off ...*
- 43 *Sometimes six or seven hours in a day. When assignments are coming due. Yeah, it's difficult working and studying.*

Table 93: Q.36 - Confidence about mixing with other students

36. Confidence: mixing with students from other countries.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	39	31.2	
Confident	56	44.8	
Neither confident nor not confident	16	12.8	
Not confident	5	4.0	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. When compared with issues of settling-in and workload, respondents appeared to have few issues in mixing with students from other countries.

Table 94: Q.37 - Confidence of success

37. Confidence: your ability to succeed at university compared with other students.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	30	24.0	
Confident	67	53.6	
Neither confident nor not confident	15	12.0	
Not confident	4	3.2	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. Despite responses to this question returning the fourth-lowest degree of confidence listed in Table 87 on page 270, an overall majority of respondents (77.6% or 97 out of 117 responses to the question) were confident or very confident that they might outperform their fellow students.

Interacting with others at university (Q.38-46)

Table 95: Q.38 - Confidence about listening in lectures

38. Confidence: listening to and understanding lectures.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	46	36.8	
Confident	63	50.4	
Neither confident nor not confident	5	4.0	
Not confident	4	3.2	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. This question returned the highest response of feelings of confidence, with most respondents (109 or 87.2%) appearing very confident or confident in listening to and understanding the university lecture mode of presentation.

Table 96: Q.39 - Confidence about note-taking

39. Confidence: taking notes in lectures.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	34	27.2	
Confident	64	51.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	18	14.4	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) again declined to respond. Note-taking in lectures did not appear to present an issue for respondents.

Table 97: Q.40 - Confidence about lectures and assignments

40. Confidence: understanding what lecturers will tell me about assignments.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	42	33.6	
Confident	59	47.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	15	12.0	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. As was the case with listening and note-taking in lectures, respondents appeared clear on the relationship between the content of lectures and their term assignments.

Table 98: Q.41 - Confidence to ask lecturer

41. Confidence: asking my lecturer questions when I do not understand something.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	41	32.8	
Confident	59	47.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	14	11.2	
Not confident	3	2.4	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. The responses suggested that respondents also appeared confident in asking questions of lecturers.

Table 99: Q.42 - Confidence about answering questions in tutorials

42. Confidence: answering questions in tutorials in front of my classmates.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	37	29.6	
Confident	62	49.6	
Neither confident nor not confident	15	12.0	
Not confident	4	3.2	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. As with other aspects of interactions in class, the responses further suggested that respondents appeared confident in speaking up in class in front of others (99 or 79.2% of responses). These findings suggested in part that:

Emerging Data Pattern 17: Sub-continental international students speak up in class

- Earlier difficulties of getting international students to speak up in class (as discussed in the context of Asian students, for example by Rifkin et al. 1997; Tani 2005) may either not be applicable to Sub-continental students, or may be dissipating as the experience with international education in Australia increases for both students and institutions.

Table 100: Q.43 - Confidence about group activities

43. Confidence: taking part in group activities and presentations.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	39	31.2	
Confident	65	52.0	
Neither confident nor not confident	12	9.6	
Not confident	1	0.8	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Again, the responses suggested a continuing high degree of confidence (104 or 83.2%) in classroom interactions.

Table 101: Q.44 - Confidence about tutorials and assignments

44. Confidence: understanding what tutorials are all about, and what they will tell me about assignments.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	38	30.4	
Confident	65	52.0	
Neither confident nor not confident	14	11.2	
Not confident	0	0.0	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. As was the case with the relationship between lectures and assignments (Q.40, Table 97 page 276) respondents also appeared clear on the relationship between the content of tutorials and assignments.

Table 102: Q.45 - Confidence of explaining in English

45. Confidence: explaining, in English, what I know about a subject.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	44	35.2	
Confident	65	52.0	
Neither confident nor not confident	8	6.4	
Not confident	1	0.8	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. This question returned the second-highest expression of confidence (see Table 87 on page 270). As in earlier questions relating to classroom experiences, the responses to this question tended to suggest that ability in using the English language in an operational context was not an issue of significant concern to most (117 or 93.6%) respondents.

Table 103: Q.46 - Confidence to ask tutor

46. Confidence: asking my tutor questions when I do not understand something.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	42	33.6	
Confident	59	47.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	13	10.4	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. Confidence to interact with tutors was the same as in the relationship with lecturers and assignments (Q.41, Table 98 page 276).

Taken together, the responses to these nine questions relating to lecture and tutorial content and its significance, and interactions in English with lecturers, tutors and fellow students (Q.38-46) suggested that:

Emerging Data Pattern 18: Students are confident in the key foundations of academic study at university in Australia

- Respondents felt confident and relaxed about the key foundations of academic life at university in Australia.

This emerging pattern in the data suggested that analysis of subsequent sections of the questionnaire might be expected to reveal that student experience at university had met the expectation at the time of preparing for university.

Responses to this section of the questionnaire suggested that students had the confidence to embrace a constructivist perspective of teaching and learning (as described, for example, by Krause, Bochner & Duchesne 2006) that encourages them to collaborate, self-regulate and actively participate in their learning. In terms of the underpinning premise for this investigation, this is an interesting outcome, suggesting that students in this institution had satisfactorily undertaken a transition from the stereotypical perception of rote-learning, memorisation and passivity in Sub-continental pedagogy (as described, for example, by Kennedy 2002; Rogers & Randall 1997) to the practice-oriented and interactive teaching (Scott 2005) in an Australian university that is intended to enable the learning and intellectual growth of students (Macneill, Cavanagh & Silcox 2005).

The understanding that emerged from analysis suggested an area for further research, namely:

Further Research 9: Is there any academic difference between international and domestic students?

- A longitudinal study of progression or “time to completion” and average GPA for international students at university in Australia compared with similar data for domestic students.

Applying learning (Q.47-56)

Table 104: Q.47 - Learning answers from past exam papers

47. Confidence: learning the answers from past exam papers.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	34	27.2	
Confident	67	53.6	
Neither confident nor not confident	14	11.2	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. High levels of confidence were expressed in responses to this question, with 101 or 80.8% of respondents feeling very confident or confident in learning the answers from past exam papers.

This finding appeared to agree with the culture-deficit perspective of learning in Sub-continental international students as described by Ninnes and colleagues (in Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999). In their review of higher education in India, Ninnes et al.

identify as one thread in the discourse the domination of examinations as a principal focus of undergraduate students' experience (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999, p.340).

Table 105: Q.48 - Learning to solve problems

48. Confidence: learning to solve problems.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	38	30.4	
Confident	63	50.4	
Neither confident nor not confident	13	10.4	
Not confident	3	2.4	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	7	5.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Seven participants (5.6%) declined to respond. Problem-solving did not appear to be a matter of concern for most respondents, with 101 or 80.8%, expressing confidence in the task.

Table 106: Q.49 - Applying theory

49. Confidence: applying the theory that I have learned to problem solving.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	32	25.6	
Confident	64	51.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	16	12.8	
Not confident	4	3.2	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	An 8 th Respondent Ident. No.328 discontinued at Q.49
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. As with problem-solving investigated in the preceding question, the application of theory to problems also did not generally appear to be a matter of concern to 96 or 76.8% of respondents. A pattern emerged from the data as shown in Emerging Data Pattern 19:

Emerging Data Pattern 19: 'Culture-proficiency' vs. 'culture deficit' (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999)

- In contrast to the culture-deficit, or learning the answers from past exam papers thread discussed in Q.47 (Table 104 page 279), the responses to Q.48-49 relating to problem solving and applying theory to problems tended to challenge the stereotype of international students as surface or rote learners.

The data lends support to the prime contention in Ninnes et al. of the alternative cultural-proficiency discourse describing international students who are ‘not passive with a focus on rote learning, but are active, struggling to attain deep understanding of course content’ (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999p.325).

Table 107: Q.50 - Thinking critically

50. Confidence: thinking critically about material that has come from a number of sources.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	22	17.6	
Confident	67	53.6	
Neither confident nor not confident	22	17.6	
Not confident	3	2.4	
Not at all confident	3	2.4	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. The responses to this question were interesting in the context of learning stereotypes discussed earlier in this section. The high levels of confidence (expressed by 89 or 71.2% of respondents) toward the activity of critical thinking tends to support the contention (see, for example, Vandermensbrugge 2004) that contextualised critical thinking is not a learning experience new to international students. Such misunderstanding (suggests Biggs 1994) originates in Western misperceptions of international students’ approaches to learning and of the environments in which they were previously taught. This is an issue that Spack (1997, p.766) describes as the potentially hazardous and rhetorical construction of labelling any student identity as ‘different’.

The data may also further suggested that academic staff in this institution might have begun to teach the core set of intercultural competencies, introduced in the staff development activities designed by their colleague (see Owens 2005). A pattern thus emerged from the analysis:

Emerging Data Pattern 20: Stereotyping Sub-continental students as ‘different’ may be problematic

- It may be problematic to stereotype Sub-continental international students simply as rote learners (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999) or different (Spack 1997, p.766). Instead, and in a spirit of reconceptualising equity (Dooley 2003), classifications of learning background would be better premised in an understanding of the socio-cultural scenarios in source countries, and the ways in which these manifest themselves in terms of, for example, different learning styles, interactivity, mutual respect, authority consciousness, hesitation, fear and gender sensitivity (Kumar & Bhattacharya 2007).
- Similarly, teaching strategies should be based on identified learning needs and how students learn (Tickle 2001).

Table 108: Q.51 - Searching for information in the library

51. Confidence: searching for information in a library.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	25	20.0	
Confident	66	52.8	
Neither confident nor not confident	18	14.4	
Not confident	3	2.4	
Not at all confident	4	3.2	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nine participants (7.2%) declined to respond. As with earlier questions on the application of learning, respondents expressed confidence in this activity, with 91 or 72.8% of responses expressing confidence in searching for library information.

Table 109: Q.52 - Searching for information online

52. Confidence: searching for information online.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	35	28.0	
Confident	66	52.8	
Neither confident nor not confident	10	8.0	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	2	1.6	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. 101 or 80.8% of respondents appeared to be confident at Internet and database searching.

Table 110: Q.53 - Writing essays and assignments

53. Confidence: writing essays and assignments in English.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	33	26.4	
Confident	74	59.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	8	6.4	
Not confident	2	1.6	
Not at all confident	0	0.0	

53. Confidence: writing essays and assignments in English.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. A high level of confidence was expressed (107 or 85.7% of respondents felt very confident or confident) in writing assignments in English. The same degree of confidence was also expressed in responses to the questions which follow, Q.54 (doing assignments) and Q.55 (doing exams).

When viewed in the context of the analysis of earlier Q.38-46 on pages 275 - 278 above, the data was suggestive of another pattern that emerged from the analysis as shown in Emerging Data Pattern 21, namely:

Emerging Data Pattern 21: Respondents have satisfactorily made the transition to study in Australia

- Respondents in this university have satisfactorily completed the transition to university life in Australia.

Table 111: Q.54 - Doing assignments

54. Confidence: doing assignments during the term.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	37	29.6	
Confident	68	54.4	
Neither confident nor not confident	10	8.0	
Not confident	1	0.8	
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) declined to respond. The high level of confidence expressed in this data (105 or 84.0% of responses) has been discussed above.

Table 112: Q.55 - Doing exams

55. Confidence: doing exams at the end of term.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very confident	36	28.8	
Confident	64	51.2	
Neither confident nor not confident	11	8.8	
Not confident	5	4.0	

55. Confidence: doing exams at the end of term.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Not at all confident	1	0.8	
No Response	8	6.4	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eight participants (6.4%) again declined to respond. The high level of confidence (100, or 80% of responses) expressed in this data has been discussed above.

Table 113: Q.56 - Worries, or feeling good, generally

56. Is there anything else that you worry about, or feel good about in studying at university in Australia?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT ¹⁹
No	66	52.8	
Yes	40	32.0	19 Generally positive 6 Generally worried 8 Generally negative comments related to other issues. 4 Other comments 3 No comment
No Response	19	15.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nineteen participants (15.2%) declined to respond. The significantly lower YES response of 40 (32.0%) to this open-ended question suggested that earlier items in this section of the questionnaire had reasonably canvassed the main issues affecting student confidence at university.

Overall, 37 specific comments were offered, as shown in Table 114 following. Responses to the question started to introduce some genuine feelings in student voice. Generally positive comments tended to focus on the benefits of a friendly and helpful social and university community. In the case of the “worried” comments, the focus tended to be on the pressure of balancing work and study, and the international acceptability of qualifications. Negative comments elicited remarks on racism, teaching quality, and the practical usefulness of courses being undertaken. Those comments more suitably categorised as “other” focused on negative aspects of the commercial orientation of the university.

¹⁹ For comments offered by respondents, see Table 114 on page 287 below.

Table 114: Q.56 - Comments on matters that respondents worry about or feel good about

56. Is there anything else that you worry about, or feel good about in studying at university in Australia? Comments offered by respondents answering "YES" to Q.56			
GENERALLY POSITIVE	GENERALLY WORRIED	GENERALLY NEGATIVE COMMENTS	OTHER COMMENTS
19 comments	6 comments	8 comments	4 comments
<p><i>Accent Problem but become familiar after 2 or 3 months</i></p> <p><i>Doing assignments are really good job and I enjoy in doing so.</i></p> <p><i>Feel good: cultural diversity</i></p> <p><i>Flexibility for the entry to study at university</i></p> <p><i>Good way of teaching</i></p> <p><i>Helpful lecturers & tutor to succeed in the subject</i></p> <p><i>I feel good that I would be getting world recognise degree after graduation</i></p> <p><i>I have gained good confidence and knowledge</i></p> <p><i>I like the environment over here</i></p> <p><i>I love Australia but feel a little homesick</i></p> <p><i>It is really nice environment of study. But it is really tough to stay away from parents</i></p> <p><i>Its just fine. System is quite flexible here</i></p> <p><i>Learning Skills Unit</i></p> <p><i>LSU has been very helpful</i></p> <p><i>Multicultural Community</i></p> <p><i>Staying in Australia.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers all good & cooperative.</i></p> <p><i>They are good & friendly and clear to us.</i></p> <p><i>Your confidence level increases tremendously</i></p>	<p><i>All assessment due only at end of term make us lazy at the beginning and worried at end; so ...?</i></p> <p><i>Exams seem to have tougher questions than expected.</i></p> <p><i>Is my study recognised globally</i></p> <p><i>It is hard to manage studies, work and household duties at the same time and I feel the assignment pressure is a bit too high for me</i></p> <p><i>The job. Everyone just want experienced people.</i></p> <p><i>Too much Pressure</i></p>	<p><i>[comment on Q41] Some people do not allow to ask questions or they never get to the answer</i></p> <p><i>If I wouldn't have come to Australia or any other overseas country I would have never learn in the life.</i></p> <p><i>In this university, very need to pass and tutor does not give good mark.</i></p> <p><i>My Corporate Accounting tutor dose not teach any single word for whole term. He just sitting in front of the class doing nothing.</i></p> <p><i>Racist people</i></p> <p><i>Specifically my course was less practical compared to other unis</i></p> <p><i>The time given by the tutors for core subjects is too less and we are not prepared well for it</i></p> <p><i>Very Commercial</i></p>	<p><i>"Fraud". There is no one to listen to international student.</i></p> <p><i>Assignments should have 50+ marks</i></p> <p><i>Australian fucking life as work with studies doing at late nites</i></p> <p><i>For international students, university's fees accommodation are quite expensive for them. Therefore they always need to work part time it makes burden for them to study and the job together</i></p>

These matters are further considered in the section headed: General feelings about the experience (Q.67-87).

Conclusion

Overall, the confidence section of the questionnaire attracted meaningful responses to the set questions, and the final open-ended question telegraphed the nature of the true concerns that were to arise later in the analysis. The key trend that started to emerge was:

Emerging Data Pattern 22: The perception of value for money in an international education is an issue

- The question of perceived value for money, which is discussed later in this appendix at Q.74 (the cost of my degree, on page 314).

Given the growing incidence of full fee paying domestic students at university in Australia (DEEWR 2008) an opportunity for further research arose from analysis of data in this section, namely:

Further Research 10: Are perceptions of value for money in a university education similar for international and domestic students?

- Are the perceptions of value for money in a university degree for domestic students in Australia the same as for international students?

Participants appeared to be significantly confident about their ability to cope and to succeed at university in Australia. Responses to these questions were therefore considered to constitute reasonable items for subsequent analysis and comparison with the responses given in later sections relating to dealing with certain issues that arise in university life in Australia. Given the generally confident responses to questions in this section, the issue canvassed in the follow-up interviews considered:

- When you started university in Australia, what was the hardest thing that you had to do? ... How did you cope with this?
- What was the easiest? ... Why?

The issue of the extent of apprehension at the prospect of having to look after one's own daily needs such as cooking and washing clothes, instead of having family support to provide this service, was also considered in the follow-up interviews, with interview participants offering comment as shown in Table 115:

Table 115: The hardest and easiest things about starting university in Australia

Interview Comments 8: The hardest and easiest things about starting university in Australia

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Hardest: <i>It was too big.</i> Easiest: <i>Tutorials because they were small.</i> |
| 2 | Hardest: <i>Social interactions.</i> Easiest: <i>The instructions are easy to follow and the staff members are all helpful.</i> |
| 4 | Hardest: <i>The city.</i> Easiest: <i>Making friends ... I met all the enrolment ... I basically looked the Indian guy, but that's there in my background actually from Kenya, so they were asking like</i> |

- 'are you from India?' And this and that, so from that on we were just chatting all day, and it was easy for us to make friends.*
- 7 Hardest: *The most hardest was written assignments.* Easiest: *I think in the teaching style itself.*
- 11 Hardest: *Some different subjects like Law, Computing I never heard of this before. I just tried to learn what the concept is.* Easiest: *Accounting, Marketing.*
- 14 Hardest: *What I expected [of a university campus] I didn't get it Well, best thing I could do was like stay with my friends that are there, like all mature so they gave me some clues.* Easiest: *The way everything study, all things are provided.*
- 16 Hardest: *I think very hard, the only thing is I was homesick. I missed my parents all the time.* Easiest: *Everything was going fine until mid 2006 and after that something totally changed ... my father had an accident ... I was robbed a week before my exam ... [and] like one day before my exam my house, there was a fire in my house. My house was totally burnt and I gave them both documentation. They didn't approve my documentation ... I didn't get any chance ... they failed me ... my father called 'Okay I got bad in my business. Don't worry about me, you can study'. But because that thing is in my mind, that I had to go back to India, I didn't study hard because I couldn't study, everything's going in my mind ...*
- 18 Hardest: *Uni, they've got different culture. There is assignment and exam. I really get a problem with make a friendship and make it as group working together. ... Financial they should do something for the overseas student.* Easiest: *You must get a good group.*
- 20 Hardest: *Accent is different. I worried about the assessment system in Bachelor. We have to study from first to last.* Easiest: *Afterward when I was studying, I was thinking if I really study, it's going to be easy to pass.*
- 21 Hardest: *Fist thing is we never had to do assignment in our country. Some words we don't know. Before [this university] I studied in one Diploma in a business college ... so they little bit teach us how to do the assignment ... so from them I learned a little bit.* Easiest: *After lecture they have tutorial then if I do not understand anything from lecture I can get from tutorial. It's very good and easy for us.*
- 22 Hardest: *Lifestyle is totally changed for me. I coped with my friends.* Easiest: *I think that passing the exams is easier here.*
- 25 Hardest: *I think it comes back to other university ... because I met my friends [at the other university] ... I think they are better off.* Easiest: [No response].
- 27 Hardest: *Only language problem.* Easiest: *It's easiest to do the course. Because the teachers are very cooperative, that's why.*
- 28 Hardest: *I don't suffer any things. My brother-in-law, he was studying in Australia.* Easiest: *That my brother-in-law is very assistant because ... he was very helpful for me. He gives the most information for me.*
- 29 Hardest: *Language ... the accent. It's so different. I keep talking, make friends.* Easiest: *At first time nothing was easier, nothing. All hard, new country, different culture, different religion, everything is different. That's right. I need time to adjust.*
- 30;26 Hardest: *Managing time. Yeah.* Easiest: *We have to work hard in here as well but it's like not much.*
- 31 Hardest: *Assignments.* Easiest: *There was nothing that much easier.*
- 32 Hardest: *It's a lot of pressure.* Easiest: *The environment: the group study; the teachers; consult; and everything.*
- 33 Hardest: *Different culture and all different people. Australian universities have got different teachers with different accents ... we just ask the, 'can you please repeat?'* Easiest: *The way of assignments and exams.*
- 34 Hardest: *The first semester people are different and the culture is very different and I was not having that many friends ... it was all right and I got used to it.* Easiest: *Not really. Actually,*

- student life is very hard over here. Everything was learning for me, everything is learning.*
- 35 Hardest: *Assignments, because I had to get a bit more time.* Easiest: *I don't know; not easy but its kind of okay, not hard, except the assignments. Time is the thing I think.*
- 36 Hardest: *I think, yeah, communication is hard at the beginning.* Easiest: *I don't know. I think that I won't be able to cope with this country, the people, culture and everything. I think I cope pretty well in the sort time.*
- 42 Hardest: *Well actually the system as compared to in India. Australia is totally different ... the only thing was to take help from my previous friends who were my seniors ... and I went to the LSU [learning skills unit] a couple of times.* Easiest: *Everything is organised, the time management is good.*
- 43 Hardest: *I didn't get my exemptions at this university.* Easiest: *Nothing.*

Generally, how do you deal with ...? (Q.57-66)

Summary

The fourth section of the questionnaire related to the participants' adjustment to tertiary education in Australia. The section was designed to explore how students dealt with certain issues they experienced at university. The data gathered was intended to allow for comparison between how students felt about matters at university and how they made use of their time and the services available to help them. Following analysis of responses to the Confidence section of the questionnaire which suggested a high degree of confidence in the ability to cope and to succeed at university in Australia, the matter that arose for investigation here was:

Assumption 3: Being confident, how do you cope with problems?

- Accepting that students generally felt confident about their studies at university, how then do they cope with the issues that confront them, and do they make use of the learning services available?

This section of the questionnaire comprised 10 questions (Q.57-66). Participants were asked to respond with a scaled answer (see Table 5, page 94) describing how often they did something, or sought the assistance of a university service. The first three questions (Q.57-59) investigated issues of time management and plagiarism (a much-trumpeted issue in recent popular writing, as in Burke & Jobson 2005; Elson-Green 2007a; Jobson & Burke 2005a; Jobson & Burke 2005b). Seven subsequent questions (Q.60-66) then investigated the extent to which international students access university services that are seen as cost centres in a business-driven academic enterprise.

Respondents engaged well with the questions. Eight participants had withdrawn from the survey by this time, and one more withdrew by Q.58, the second question in the section. Of the remaining 117 respondents, most (107 or 93.8%) attempted each question in the section.

Responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 116 below. The sequence of question numbers in the Table has been arranged to rank the degree of action or inaction in descending order, from:

- I always do this (**1 ALWAYS**), to
- I often do this (**2 OFTEN**), thence
- I don't know (**3 DON'T KNOW**),
- I sometimes do this (**4 SOME TIMES**), to
- I never do this (**5 NEVER**), and
- No response to this question (**NO RESP.**).

Table 116: Coping – Summary (Q.57-66)

COPING WITH ISSUES AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA								
QN.	CONTENT	1 ALWAYS	2 OFTEN	3 DON'T KNOW	4 SOME TIMES	5 NEVER	No RESP.	TOTAL
57	Making a study timetable.	33	49	3	19	10	11	125
63	Asking Faculty.	32	33	12	20	18	10	125
62	Asking Client Services.	32	29	10	18	26	10	125
61	Asking Learning Skills Unit.	29	37	10	26	14	9	125
66	Using home language.	20	31	14	24	27	9	125
64	Using TECC employment.	18	19	22	14	41	11	125
60	Asking friends.	14	19	10	24	46	12	125
58	Skipping classes.	11	19	11	30	45	9	125
65	Keeping quiet in class.	11	10	15	21	59	9	125
59	Copying chunks of text.	8	37	13	27	31	9	125
	TOTAL	208	283	120	223	317	99	1250
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	17%	23%	9%	18%	25%	8%	100%

Generally, the patterns that emerged from the responses suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 23: Students are well organised, plan their study and seek help when needed

- The student group surveyed were well organised, planned their study, and sought help from all but one of the services available to them. The exception is the free employment coaching service, discussed later in this section. They also appeared to plagiarise, despite extensive use of the LSU Learning Skills Unit that was created to help students avoid this academic offence.

Emerging Data Pattern 24: Students regularly attend class, speak up and ask questions

- Just as they seemed well organised, they also appeared to regularly attend and speak up in class, and to prefer asking questions of the Faculty staff rather than seeking explanations from friends.

Both of these data patterns regarding international students appear contrary to anecdotal popular opinion in the academy. Data to support “anecdotal popular opinion” is not recorded or analysed in this report. The observation here is offered to suggest an opportunity for further research, namely:

Further Research 11: What do university staff think of students?

- What are the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of teaching and administrative staff towards international students in an Australian university? Is there any differentiation between international and domestic students, or is there some other factor that influences university staff attitudes towards international students?

The subsequent parts of this section examine responses to individual questions, providing detailed comment as appropriate.

Table 117: Q.57 - Making a study timetable

57. Coping: making a study timetable so that I can balance my study time and other work.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	33	26.4	
I often do this	49	39.2	
I don't know	3	2.4	
I sometimes do this	19	15.2	
I never do this	10	8.0	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. Around two-thirds of respondents (82 or 65.6%) claimed to make a study timetable in order to balance their study time and other work.

Table 118: Q.58 - Skipping classes

58. Coping: skipping classes, because all that I need is in the textbook or online.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	11	8.8	
I often do this	19	15.2	
I don't know	11	8.8	
I sometimes do this	30	24.0	
I never do this	45	36.0	
No Response	9	7.2	A 9 th Respondent Ident. No.100 discontinued at Q.58.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Only the nine participants (7.2%) who had withdrawn from the survey declined to respond.

The low incidence of skipping classes (only 30 or 24% of responses) merits comment. A statutory requirement for international students to maintain 80% attendance in class (AEI 2007) could represent a tendency in respondents, despite strict safeguards of anonymity in the survey methodology, to possibly regard the

sensitivity of the question as embodying in the researcher the authority of a power 'who can impose sanctions' on 'powerless' student respondents (see Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.121). Respondents might therefore have opted for a cautious 'never' or 'sometimes' response (75 or 60% of responses).

Table 119: Q.59 - Copying large chunks of text

59. Coping: copying or rewriting in my own words large chunks of text or online material that is useful in my work.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	8	6.4	
I often do this	37	29.6	
I don't know	13	10.4	
I sometimes do this	27	21.6	
I never do this	31	24.8	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Again, only the nine participants (7.2%) who had withdrawn from the survey declined to respond. Of interest is the data that only about one-quarter of respondents (31, or 24.8%) claimed never to plagiarise (in the form of copying large chunks of text or online material). The relationship between plagiarism and use of the Learning Skills Unit (LSU) is explored in analysis of a subsequent question on LSU usage (Q.61, page 292).

Table 120: Q.60 - Asking for help from my own people

60. Coping: asking someone from my home country when a real problem arises, rather than asking the university staff.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	14	11.2	
I often do this	19	15.2	
I don't know	10	8.0	
I sometimes do this	24	19.2	
I never do this	46	36.8	
No Response	12	9.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Twelve participants (9.6%) declined to respond. Of interest are the 33 or one-quarter of respondents (26.4%) who often or always asked someone from their home country for advice when a real problem arises, rather than first, or also, seeking help from the university.

The impact on learning of student interactions inside and out of class to promote a sense of belonging and to engage students in active learning (Asmar & Peseta 2001) was considered in the follow-up interviews, with participants offering comment as shown in Table 121.

Table 121: Interview comments: Asking my friends for help

Interview Comments 9: Asking my friends for help

- 1 *My friends from school ... we all got in the same course ... more easy for us to communicate.*
- 2 *I got all the help I need inside the uni.*
- 4 *What I did is like I got a bit of information from the bigger students. Most of my studies I do in a group, and assignments.*
- 14 *Your friends ... are there to communicate and discuss ... spend some time and get some ideas from them.*
- 18 *... make a friendship and make it as a group to working together.*
- 21 *... we study in the group of our friends ...*
- 22 *I coped with my friends. They came together and I talked with the senior boys who already did ... they told me to do it like this. That's easy way.*
- 33 *... we stay here [at the university], a couple of my friends because we don't have work, after we finish in the labs and library searching ... studying.*
- 35 *Last semester I studied at the university itself; everyone came and we formed a group and studied in the library.*
- 42 *... I just take help off those guys [my friends] and I just ask them for the previous assignments to have a look how they prepare, how to reference and all that so I just do that way ...*

Table 122: Q.61 - Asking the Learning Skills Unit for help

61. Coping: asking the LSU Learning Skills Unit for help with my assignments and English.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	29	23.2	
I often do this	37	29.6	
I don't know	10	8.0	
I sometimes do this	26	20.8	
I never do this	14	11.2	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Again, only the nine participants (7.2%) who had withdrawn from the survey declined to respond.

The data in these responses appeared at odds with responses to the question on copying or rewriting large chunks of text (Q.59, see Table 119, page 291), in which only about one-quarter of respondents (31 or 24.8%) claimed never to plagiarise. Table 123 below investigates the relationship between respondents' answers to plagiarism (Q.59) and use of the Learning Skills Unit (Q.61). In the Table, Respondent Ident. has been sorted to show in a descending array the varying combinations of the association between plagiarism and seeking LSU assistance, such as:

- Always (plagiarise) – Always (ask LSU for help); then
- Often – Always;
- Often – Often;

- Often – Never;
- Sometimes – Sometimes;
- Sometimes – Often; and so on until
- Never (plagiarise) – Never (ask LSU).

Table 123: Plagiarism and the Learning Skills Unit (Q.59 of Q.61)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAGIARISM AND USING THE LSU LEARNING SKILLS UNIT			
RESPONDENT IDENT.	RESPONSE Q.59 - PLAGIARISE	RESPONSE Q.61 - ASK LSU FOR HELP	COMMENT
8	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably not reliable. Answered 1 to all questions in this section.
89	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable. In other questions provided a range of responses and informative comment.
192	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably not reliable. Answered 1 to all questions in this section.
197	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably not reliable. Answered 1 to all questions in this section.
206	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably not reliable. Answered 1 to all questions in this and the following section.
209	1 (Always)	1 (Always)	Probably not reliable. Answered 1 to all questions in this section.
332	1 (Always)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable ²⁰ .
326	1 (Always)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
3	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
76	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
77	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
78	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
111	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
184	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
188	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
208	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
210	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
319	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
336	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
337	2 (Often)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
32	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
104	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
106	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably not reliable. Answered 2 to all questions in this section.
107	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably not reliable. Answered 2 to all questions in this section.
194	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
204	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
218	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably not reliable. Answered 2 to

²⁰ The notation “Probably reliable” is used in this Table for brevity. The responses to Q.59&61 are assumed to be probably reliable for reasons similar to the justification made in regard to Respondent Ident.89. That is, in response to other questions in this section, the respondent provided a range of response options and informative comment.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAGIARISM AND USING THE LSU LEARNING SKILLS UNIT			
RESPONDENT IDENT.	RESPONSE Q.59 - PLAGIARISE	RESPONSE Q.61 - ASK LSU FOR HELP	COMMENT
			all questions in this and the subsequent section.
219	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
221	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
318	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
321	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably not reliable. Answered 2 to all questions in this section, except answered 3 in Q.66 (<i>I don't know</i> about speaking in my home country language with friends, because that way I can understand things better).
323	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
330	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
331	2 (Often)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
329	2 (Often)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
334	2 (Often)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
362	2 (Often)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
383	2 (Often)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
16	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
34	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
36	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
105	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
108	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
109	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
203	2 (Often)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
22	3 (Don't Know)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
207	3 (Don't Know)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
17	3 (Don't Know)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
198	3 (Don't Know)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
216	3 (Don't Know)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
19	3 (Don't Know)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably not reliable. Answered 3 to most questions in this section.
320	3 (Don't Know)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably not reliable. Did not respond to Q.58, and then answered 3 to all other questions in this section.
35	3 (Don't Know)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
103	3 (Don't Know)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
178	3 (Don't Know)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
195	3 (Don't Know)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
37	3 (Don't Know)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
333	3 (Don't Know)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
101	4 (Sometimes)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
179	4 (Sometimes)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
180	4 (Sometimes)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
9	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
10	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
18	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
38	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
110	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
175	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAGIARISM AND USING THE LSU LEARNING SKILLS UNIT			
RESPONDENT IDENT.	RESPONSE Q.59 - PLAGIARISE	RESPONSE Q.61 - ASK LSU FOR HELP	COMMENT
189	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
201	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
205	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
211	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
212	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
215	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
322	4 (Sometimes)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
199	4 (Sometimes)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
317	4 (Sometimes)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
15	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
90	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
114	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
176	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
185	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
316	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
338	4 (Sometimes)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
363	4 (Sometimes)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
1	5 (Never)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
115	5 (Never)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
117	5 (Never)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
220	5 (Never)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
386	5 (Never)	1 (Always)	Probably reliable.
12	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
61	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
99	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
325	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
335	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
360	5 (Never)	2 (Often)	Probably reliable.
193	5 (Never)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
213	5 (Never)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
217	5 (Never)	3 (Don't Know)	Probably reliable.
112	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
113	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
177	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
181	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
182	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
196	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
327	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
359	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
361	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
382	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
384	5 (Never)	4 (Sometimes)	Probably reliable.
7	5 (Never)	5 (Never)	Probably not reliable. Answered 5 to nine questions in this section, plus one NR.
29	5 (Never)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
183	5 (Never)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
200	5 (Never)	5 (Never)	Probably reliable.
214	5 (Never)	5 (Never)	Probably not reliable. Answered 5 to all questions in this section.

As noted in the discussion of Table 5 on page 94, a test for thoughtfulness in responses was built into this section of the questionnaire. To test if respondents merely ticked the boxes without thinking, the sense of questions investigating how students cope with certain issues that arise when at university was mixed to include positive and negative actions, whilst the scale criteria remained similar to other questions.

Table 123 above shows that of the 116 responses to these two questions, only 13 (11.2%) responses are indicative of a donkey vote, as other respondents provided variable responses to the ten questions in this section of the questionnaire. The data in these responses therefore suggested that the dual matters of plagiarism and the perceived usefulness of the LSU Learning Skills Unit should be considered in the follow-up interviews. The matter was introduced obliquely in terms of how helpful friends might be. No mention was made by interviewees to either plagiarism or the usefulness of the LSU learning skills unit, except for:

Table 124: Interview comments: What plagiarism means to me

Interview Comments 10: What plagiarism means to me

42 ... I just take help off those guys [my friends] and I just ask them for the previous assignments to have a look how they prepare, how to reference and all that so I just do that way ...

Table 125: Q.62 - Asking Client Services for help

62. Coping: asking the student Client services people for help when I have a problem.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	32	25.6	
I often do this	29	23.2	
I don't know	10	8.0	
I sometimes do this	18	14.4	
I never do this	26	20.8	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. Almost half of the respondents (61 or 48.8%) claimed to know or often or always make use of the student client support service at this university, even if (argues Snider 2003) the concept of counselling adopted in this university reflects Western cultural values, and individualism in particular.

Table 126: Q.63 - Asking Faculty for help

63. Coping: asking the Faculty service desk people for help when I have a problem.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	32	25.6	
I often do this	33	26.4	
I don't know	12	9.6	

63. Coping: asking the Faculty service desk people for help when I have a problem.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I sometimes do this	20	16.0	
I never do this	18	14.4	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

Another satisfactory response. Again, 10 participants (8.0%) declined to respond. Although half of the respondents (65 or 52.0%) claimed to often or always make use of the Faculty service desk at this university, the remainder expressed ambivalence or disinclination to utilise the service. This result corresponds with the university's own polling of student opinion (CMS 2007, p.3) that also notes a higher than average level of dissatisfaction with the service.

Table 127: Q.64 - Asking the student employment service for help

64. Coping: asking the TECC student employment service for help finding a job.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	18	14.4	
I often do this	19	15.2	
I don't know	22	17.6	
I sometimes do this	14	11.2	
I never do this	41	32.8	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. Only 37 responses (29.6%) always or often used the free service. Such minimal use of that service represented an exception to student use of support services provided by the university. This could, in part, be explained by the high proportion of respondents already in part-time employment (92, or 73.6% in Table 51 on page 237). Alternatively, respondents may have experienced apprehension over the service or its providers, as was also noted in the university's own polling of student opinion (CMS 2007, p.2) which registered a dissatisfaction level of 45.0% with the service.

Table 128: Q.65 - Asking for help in class

65. Coping: keeping quiet in class and not asking for help, because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	11	8.8	
I often do this	10	8.0	
I don't know	15	12.0	
I sometimes do this	21	16.8	
I never do this	59	47.2	
No Response	9	7.2	

65. Coping: keeping quiet in class and not asking for help, because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Only the nine participants (7.2%) who had withdrawn from the survey declined to respond. This question was intentionally designed as a leading question by the addition of the words *because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student*. Cohen and colleagues (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.122) make a case for such questioning in circumstances where it is suspected that certain information might otherwise be withheld. In this case, the suspicion lay in the perceptions surrounding the individualism-collectivism debate (Tan & Goh 2006) present in the literature on pedagogy in international education (Ninnes, Aitchison & Kalos 1999; Hellmundt 2000; Raina & Dhand 2000; Tanaka 2002).

The data that emerged appeared to further contradict the preconception that international students stereotypically are quiet in class (see discussion in Emerging Data Pattern 17 on page 277 of this Appendix). Instead, it could be that Sub-continental students are more engaging in class than are students from a Chinese cultural background (such as the experiences of Tani 2005 in encouraging participation by quiet students in English-language classes in Australia and New Zealand). Or maybe that there exists a difference between a student who does not speak up but is engaged in the work, and a student who does not speak up for some other reason, such as adjustment to an Australian classroom.

Tatar's brief exploration (Tatar 2005) of anxiety in international students' classroom interactions tends to suggest that participation relates more to educational and environmental factors (such as cultural background and classroom dynamics) than to language proficiency. Given the generally positive aspect of classroom interaction arising from the data (only 21 or 16.8% of respondents in Table 128 on page 297 above indicate that they often or always keep quiet in class), the nature of international students' acclimatisation to an Australian style of pedagogy in the early weeks in class was further investigated as shown in Table 129.

Table 129: Q.65 – Keeping quiet in class: The first term experience

65. Coping: keeping quiet in class and not asking for help, because my teacher will be ashamed of me if I am not a good student.							
	1 ALWAYS	2 OFTEN	3 DON'T KNOW	4 SOME TIMES	5 NEVER	No RESP.	TOTAL
Total responses to question	11	10	15	21	59	9	125
Other Terms	9	9	13	18	52	9	110
%	8.2%	8.2%	11.7%	16.4%	47.3%	8.2%	100%
Term 3, 2007 responses	2	1	2	3	7	0	15
%	13.3%	6.7%	13.3%	20.0%	46.7%	0.0%	100%

The significant difference in responses to this question arises in the “always keeping quiet” dimension, with first term students around twice as inclined to keeping quiet as others (13.3% vs. only 8.2%). The data further suggested that, contrary to

perception, settling-in to university did not appear to be too great a challenge for the students in this survey, as is shown in the Emerging Data Pattern 16 on page 270.

Table 130: Q.66 - Speaking in my home language

66. Coping: speaking in my home country language with friends, because that way I can understand things better.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
I always do this	20	16.0	
I often do this	31	24.8	
I don't know	14	11.2	
I sometimes do this	24	19.2	
I never do this	27	21.6	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nine participants (7.2%) again declined to respond. As was the case with the previous question, the issue of settling-in to life in Australia as a predictor of overall satisfaction of learning expectations was further explored in the follow-up interviews, with interview participants offering comment as shown in Table 131.

Table 131: Interview comments: Settling-in to life in Australia - more comments

Interview Comments 11: Settling-in to life in Australia – more comments

- 7 *Can't really think about it. I think everything is done to make our life better.*
- 16 *It's better to study by yourself.*
- 27 *... the environment here. Because teachers are very cooperative, that's why.*
- 28 *... because we are starting in Australia, we have much expense from there. Ultimately we have expectations from the study ... go for the job ... if we don't get a job after me degree, I will be frustrated and I will be demonstrated other ways.*
- 29 *We want our tutors and lecturers to show us the door but it's us we have to go through it but if you show us the wrong door we'll be lost.*
- 33 *... we have to study because we have to pass the course because the fees is too much ... it's hard to say, study is always <inaudible>.*
- 34 *... it was alright since I started learning and everything and then things were easy.*
- 36 *... over here you have to take your own decisions, you have to do your own works ... be courageous ... make my own options and choose from them.*
- 42 *... in Australia they need people and if you can get into Australia you can get good education for universities.*

Conclusion

Overall, the coping or “how do you deal with ..?” section of the questionnaire was successful, and identified a number of issues that were further investigated in the follow-up interviews. The data suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 25: Students do cope with the issues that confront them at university in Australia

- The international students in this survey perceived that they do in fact cope satisfactorily with the issues that confront them and, with the exception of the employment service, they made use of the learning services available to them.

The data collected from analysis of these questions were therefore considered as constituting reasonable items for subsequent analysis and comparison with the responses that were given in later sections of the questionnaire relating to students' overall experiences of university in Australia.

The major issue canvassed in the follow-up interviews that arose from analysis of questionnaire responses in this section considered the best and worst aspects of learning at university in Australia, as shown in Interview Comments 8 on page 286.

General feelings about the experience (Q.67-87)

Summary

The fifth and final section of the questionnaire, the experience section, was designed to explore how students felt generally about their overall experience at university in Australia. The questions canvassed four main themes:

- Overall experiences (Q.67-82, page 306 – page 319);
- What is easier at university in Australia than was expected (Q.83, page 324);
- What is harder than expected (Q.84, page 325); and
- Any other issues that participants might wish to raise (Q.85-87, page 338).

Analysis of responses to the preceding coping section of the questionnaire relating to how students dealt with certain situations they might face at university in Australia suggested international students perceived that they do in fact cope satisfactorily. That conclusion, when coupled with the conclusions that emerged from earlier sections of the questionnaire prompted the assumption to be investigated in the final experience section of the questionnaire, namely:

Assumption 4: If experience appears to match expectation, are there other factors to be considered?

- Accepting that, in the main, students perceived they arrived in Australia well prepared in terms of English language skills and knowing what is ahead (page 267), expressed overall confidence of success (page 286), and in their ability to cope with and to meet the challenges of university in Australia (page 299), then presumably, the experience could be deemed to have matched the expectation. Or, were there other factors to be considered in determining what changes, if any, might be appropriate in order to better meet international students' expectations?

Generally, respondents engaged well with the questions. Nine participants had withdrawn from the survey before reaching the final section. Twelve further participants withdrew at various stages during this final section of the questionnaire. Five of these 12 declined to respond to the last five questions, and seven variously withdrew at the third-last, second-last and final question respectively. This declining rate of response toward the end of the questionnaire suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 26: The utility of the questionnaire appears justified

- Either the preceding questions satisfactorily addressed the main issues of concern to students, or that participants experienced an element of response fatigue when confronted with the prospect of providing free-text comments after completing the previous 82 forced-option questions.

The remaining 104 participants attempted all or part of each question.

What has been your overall experience? (Q.67-82)

The overall experience portion of this section comprised 16 questions (Q.67-82). Participants were asked to respond with a scaled answer (see Table 5, page 94) regarding how good their experience of something had been. The issues canvassed included assessment, living and working as an international student in Australia, the usefulness of what was learnt, and the general success of the university as a service provider. The sequence of questions was deliberately randomised in an attempt to avoid any bias or sequential leading of responses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp.128-129).

Respondents engaged well with these 16 forced-option questions, with all 116 respondents who completed the preceding section continuing their participation in the survey. Responses to this section of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 132. The sequence of question numbers in the Table has been arranged to rank the degree of goodness felt in descending order from:

- Very good (**1 VG**) and Good (**2 GOOD**) considered together, then
- Neither good nor bad (**3 NEITHER**),
- Bad (**4 BAD**),
- Very bad (**5 V BAD**), and
- No response to this question (**NO RESP.**).

Table 132: Overall Experience – Summary (Q.67-82)

OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA - SUMMARY								
QN.	CONTENT	1 VG	2 GOOD	3 NEITHER	4 BAD	5 V BAD	NO RESP.	TOTAL
72	Studying in English.	62	46	4	0	1	12	125
75	Courses studied.	36	68	5	2	2	12	125
71	Studying at university.	39	64	8	0	3	11	125
69	Students from other cultures.	41	61	9	2	1	11	125

OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA - SUMMARY								
QN.	CONTENT	1 V G	2 GOOD	3 NEITHER	4 BAD	5 V BAD	NO RESP.	TOTAL
78	Usefulness of my course.	35	63	12	0	5	10	125
79	Course structure.	21	72	16	2	5	9	125
67	Continuous assessment.	27	63	21	3	2	9	125
68	Doing exams.	28	62	17	4	4	10	125
80	The way courses are taught.	19	71	21	1	4	9	125
70	Balancing study and work.	23	65	18	5	3	11	125
82	Working in groups.	32	56	22	6	4	10	130
77	Support from staff.	25	58	22	4	5	11	125
81	Tourism and recreation.	25	50	29	6	5	10	125
76	Differences AUS and home.	23	47	38	4	3	10	125
73	Cost of living.	7	31	29	24	24	10	125
74	Cost of degree.	5	29	25	31	24	11	125
	TOTAL	448	906	296	94	95	166	2005
	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES	22%	45%	15%	5%	5%	8%	100%

The pattern that emerged from the data in Table 132 suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 27: Overall, the experience of university study in Australia has been good

- Overall, the experience of university study in Australia had been very good or good for two-thirds of the Sub-continental cohort of Bachelor of Accounting participants surveyed at this university.

Responses to individual questions are analysed in later sections of this part of the Appendix. The pattern that emerged from the data was:

Emerging Data Pattern 28: The data suggests a positive relationship with recent literature

- Generally, and as summarised in Table 133, the overall responses suggested a positive relationship with findings in recent literature on the issue.

Table 133: Goodness of the overall experience (Q.67-82)

GOODNESS OF THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE				
QN.	CONTENT	1 V G + 2 GOOD	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
72	Studying in English.	108	125	86.4%
75	Courses studied.	104	125	83.2%
71	Studying at university.	103	125	82.4%
69	Students from other cultures.	102	125	81.6%
			< 80% "Goodness"	
78	Usefulness of my course.	98	125	78.4%
79	Course structure.	93	125	77.4%

GOODNESS OF THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE				
QN.	CONTENT	1 VG + 2 GOOD	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
67	Continuous assessment.	90	125	72.0%
68	Doing exams.	90	125	72.0%
80	The way courses are taught.	90	125	72.0%
70	Balancing study and work.	88	125	70.4%
82	Working in groups.	88	125	70.4%
77	Support from staff.	83	125	66.4%
81	Tourism and recreation.	75	125	60.0%
			< 60% "Goodness"	
76	Differences AUS and home.	70	125	56.0%
			< 50% "Goodness"	
73	Cost of living.	38	125	30.4%
74	Cost of degree.	34	125	27.2%

Evidence of an overall relationship with findings in recent literature on the issue includes:

- The earlier incidence of high levels of anxiety in international student experiences reported by Cooper (1998) may now have been overcome through experience, as much by institutions as by the students themselves. It was to test this assumption that the questionnaire used in this research was based in part on the short questionnaires administered by Cooper to gauge students' perceptions of difficulties in the earlier days of the latest surge in international education in Australia in the 1990's.
- The findings in this survey tended also to suggest that the English language difficulties identified in international students from Asia by Sawir (Sawir 2005) may not apply to Sub-continental students. The findings also support in part the contention of Asmar and Peseta (2001) that peer interaction and a student-centred learning environment supports the success of international students.
- This outcome was similar in part to the not language contention of Tanaka (2002) that the problems of international students are more focused on academic issues. This contention supports the findings of Hellmundt (2000) that the experience of intercultural teaching and learning generally is a positive one, and that rather than focussing on perceived deficiencies in international students, it would be more productive to address issues in teaching practice that stimulate a student-centred institutional culture. An example of such a student-centred culture could be the cultural mediation upon first arrival at university proposed by Magalh (2005) for Asian-born university students starting at an English-speaking university in the United States. Magalh has proposed a practice in which peer networks of international students assist in the assimilation process as an alternative to later, and costly, institutional mediation when academic difficulties become evident at a later stage.

- The outcome also supports the earlier research at the same site by Owens (2005) that practitioners are developing an intercultural awareness of international students and its relationship to pedagogy.
- The data in this survey also supported in part the findings in New Zealand of Sherry and colleagues (Sherry et al. 2004) that report low levels of satisfaction of international students in the services provided by universities when compared with the perceptions of satisfaction by domestic students. These low levels of satisfaction with student services are also described by Kutieleh and Egege (2004) as evidence of the need for culturally-sensitive support programs and services for international students.

Generally, the patterns that emerged from the data summarised in Table 133 on page 302 suggested that in this survey sample:

Emerging Data Pattern 29: The pedagogic experience has generally been good

- The overall pedagogic experience of studying in Australia has been good or very good. Most respondents (ranging from 81% to 86% of the sample) appreciated the university life and the courses studied there, and the experience of learning in English with students from other cultures. The usefulness of courses, and the manner in which they were structured, taught, assessed and supported by university staff, has been a good experience for many (with a very good or good experience identified by 60% to 79% of responses).

Emerging Data Pattern 30: Balancing study, work and recreation has generally been a good experience

- Also a good experience for many (60% to 79% of responses) has been the challenge of balancing their study and work, and participation in the recreational services available to them.

Emerging Data Pattern 31: The difference from experiences at home has been appreciated

- The overall experience, as a difference from their home environment, has been a very good or good experience for around half of the group (56% of responses).

Significantly however:

Emerging Data Pattern 32: The cost of living in Australia and the cost of a degree has not been a good experience

- The perception of value for money, in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of a degree has not been a good experience for most, with less than 25% of respondents identifying these attributes as very good or good experiences overall. As such, the data tends to replicate the findings in New Zealand of Sherry and associates (Sherry et al. 2004) that international students are not confident that they are getting value for money. The data also tends to support the 'self-interest causes such as tuition fees' (Rodan 2007, p.1) as the new manifestations of student dissent in international student experiences at university in Australia.

The concept of value for money, or obtaining maximum benefit from an educational service (see for example University of Cambridge Secretariat 2008) may be a subjective and intangible perception within the context of this research. Whilst Sahney and colleagues note ‘the ambiguous nature of *quality*’ (Sahney, Banwet & Karunes 2004, p.145) as a value in the perceptions of students from the Sub-continent, research in Australian universities of the experience of Sub-continental undergraduates (Arambewela 2003; Arambewela & Hall 2006; O’Neill 2003) has shown that it is the overall perception of service quality (as measured in the SERVQUAL construct proposed by Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1991, 1993; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988) that constitutes good value.

This issue of value in terms of cost of living and cost of degree was further investigated in the follow-up interviews, with participants offering comments as shown below:

Table 134: Interview comments: Cost of living and cost of degree

Interview Comments 12: Cost of living and cost of degree

- 16 [Following discussion on why the university would not help with special consideration after family problems at home] ... *All my expenses ... my rent, my foodstuff, groceries, all those things, I just get it from my work ... a 12 hour job every day. It’s very hard for my parents because they’re not financially strong ... if you’re already financially strong, your parents can support you then you will come to [another] university or [another] because they will help you in your study but trust me don’t come [to this university].*
- 18 ... *the thing is we are in here for part of business from Australia. For the government, they need to take care of us. They almost don’t care ... but the thing is about the expense ... they should do something for the overseas student. [Discussion follows on Indian class structure and the financial burdens of international education for ‘middle class families’. Then:] There is so many students here, healthcare needs students. Do some insurance, like finance insurance ... a “safety net” ... if suddenly you got a money problem there and you try and fix up those things and suddenly you can’t study any more, so something ... there needs to be a bit of support from the government.*
- 21 *Too expensive. Life is really hard. You have to struggle sometimes, no work, no money. In my opinion, sometimes it would be very helpful if university says ‘Okay something happened, a disaster in the family and they lost a lot of money. Okay you can pay the tuition fee in instalment. That would be very helpful for the student.*
- 22 [A final thought] ... *student, they are very poor, they run out of money and they don’t have time for study. So you have to take these into your account as well.*
- 25 ... *the university is of a good standard, [but the university] is an international campus which means we only interact with students who are international and we really don’t have a chance to see how domestic students are. There are other facilities which universities, in general would provide, like probably you have in [main campus, but] you charge me \$1590 per subject ... so at the time I went, a major reason in deciding this university was finance [because] the certificate of which university held is not really a major role player in how well you do in a job ...*
- 28 ... *Starting in Australia we have much expense from there. If we don’t get a job after my degree, I will be frustrated and I will be demonstrated other ways. Because I have so much expense and everybody of my family depend on me. So my job is very valuable and I will be frustrated.*
- 29 *What’s your responsibility to us, like when we finish our graduation? Don’t you think you have a responsibility at least to help us get a job?*
- 31 [In discussing the role of Agents and appropriate courses of study:] *If they send a student in [this university] they get more money [so] they just put me down any course ... [and then on job*

prospects following graduation from this university] *when they are trying to get a job in their own field* [their prospects] *is very less as compared to other universities like* [another]. *Yes, that's it* [select a university with a good reputation because that will help get a job later].

- 43 *I didn't get an exemption at this uni, that's the most awful thing ... I just keep going. I have to save the tuition fees; that's the thing. ... If [you] have enough money study in a good university like [one university] or [another one].*

The subsequent parts of this section examine responses to individual Questions 67-82.

Table 135: Q.67 - Experience of continuous assessment

67. Experience: continuous assessment through assignments during the term.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	27	21.6	
Good	63	50.4	
Neither good nor bad	21	16.8	
Bad	3	2.4	
Very bad	2	1.6	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nine participants (7.2%) declined to respond. Continuous assessment in the form of assignments during the term did not appear to be a bad experience for the international students in this study, with only 5 respondents, (or 4.0%) identifying a bad or very bad experience.

The pattern emerging from the data thus suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 33: Previous 'read-recall-recite' pedagogy does not hinder later participative learning

- The exam-based read-recall-recite experiences of Sub-continental students (Raina & Dhand 2000) does not hinder a subsequent positive student experience in Australia.

Table 136: Q.68 - Doing exams at the end of term

68. Experience: doing exams at the end of term.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	28	22.4	
Good	62	49.6	
Neither good nor bad	17	13.6	
Bad	4	3.2	
Very bad	4	3.2	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. The concept of examinations as a form of assessment did not appear to be an issue with these international students. Only eight (6.4%) respondents identified a bad or very bad experience.

Table 137: Q.69 - Learning with students from other countries

69. Experience: learning with students from other countries and cultures.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	41	32.8	
Good	61	48.8	
Neither good nor bad	9	7.2	
Bad	2	1.6	
Very bad	1	0.8	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. The interesting issue that emerged from the data in response to this question was:

Emerging Data Pattern 34: Intercultural learning experiences are positive for international students

- Generally, the participants in this survey reported a positive experience of learning with students from other countries and cultures (102 or 81.6% of responses).

Such an outcome appears counter to the findings of earlier research (Parry & Wharton 2006, for example) that suggested perceptions of difficulty in coping with differences in control, tolerance for ambiguity, and work motivation experienced by collections of students from different cultural backgrounds. In contrast, the data in this survey lends support to the more positive outlook for intercultural educational experiences (for example, see Volet & Ang 1998; Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999). A similar positive outlook was also expressed in the guest editorial by Stone to the Winter 2006 edition of the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (Stone 2006, p.317) suggesting the improvement and relevance of all students' learning experiences within an internationalised context.

Table 138: Q.70 - Balancing study and work

70. Experience: balancing university study and doing part-time work.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	23	18.4	
Good	65	52.0	
Neither good nor bad	18	14.4	
Bad	5	4.0	
Very bad	3	2.4	
No Response	11	8.8	

70. Experience: balancing university study and doing part-time work.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. Balancing study and part-time work did not appear to have been an unsatisfactory experience for the students responding to this questionnaire. Eighty-eight respondents (70.4%) reported a good or very good experience. Responses to Q.10 (part-time work, see Table 51, page 237) identified 92 (73.6%) participants in part-time work. The relationship between responses to Q.10 and Q.70 above is shown in Table 139:

Table 139: The relationship between study and work (Q.10 cf Q.70)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDY AND WORK - RESPONSE BY PARTICIPANT					
* Q.70: 1 = VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE; 5 = VERY BAD EXPERIENCE					
RESPONDENT IDENT.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK	RESPONDENT IDENT.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK
1	Yes	2	195	Yes	2
3	Yes	2	196	Yes	2
7	Yes	1	197	Yes	2
8	Yes	3	198	No	2
9	Yes	2	199	Yes	3
10	Yes	1	200	Yes	1
12	Yes	2	201	Yes	2
15	Yes	2	203	Yes	2
17	Yes	1	204	Yes	2
18	Yes	3	205	Yes	3
19	Yes	2	206	Yes	1
22	No	3	207	Yes	2
29	Yes	4	208	No	3
32	Yes	4	209	No	1
34	Yes	1	210	No	1
35	No	2	211	Yes	2
36	Yes	2	212	Yes	1
37	Yes	2	213	Yes	5
38	Yes	5	214	No	1
61	Yes	2	215	No	3
76	No	3	216	Yes	2
77	No	2	217	Yes	3
78	No	3	218	Yes	2
89	No	2	219	Yes	3
90	Yes	2	220	Yes	2
99	Yes	2	221	No	4
100	Yes	NR	316	Yes	4
101	No	2	317	Yes	2
103	Yes	2	318	Yes	2
104	Yes	1	319	Yes	1
105	Yes	2	320	No	2
106	Yes	1	321	Yes	3
107	No	1	322	No	2
108	Yes	2	323	Yes	NR
109	Yes	2	324	No	NR

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDY AND WORK - RESPONSE BY PARTICIPANT					
* Q.70: 1 = VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE; 5 = VERY BAD EXPERIENCE					
RESPONDENT IDENT.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK	RESPONDENT IDENT.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK
110	Yes	2	325	Yes	3
111	No	2	326	Yes	5
112	No	1	327	Yes	2
113	Yes	3	328	Yes	NR
114	No	2	329	Yes	2
115	No	3	330	Yes	2
116	No	NR	331	Yes	2
117	No	4	332	No	2
175	Yes	2	333	Yes	1
176	Yes	2	334	Yes	2
177	Yes	2	335	No	2
178	Yes	3	336	Yes	1
179	Yes	2	337	Yes	NR
180	No	2	338	NR	2
181	Yes	1	359	No	2
182	Yes	2	360	Yes	2
183	Yes	2	361	Yes	3
184	No	3	362	Yes	2
185	Yes	1	363	Yes	2
186	Yes	NR	382	Yes	1
187	Yes	NR	383	Yes	2
188	Yes	1	384	Yes	2
189	Yes	2	385	Yes	NR
190	NR	NR	386	Yes	2
191	NR	NR	387	Yes	2
192	Yes	2	388	Yes	1
193	No	2	395	Yes	1
194	Yes	2			

Table 139 above identified that 113 (90.4%) participants responded to both Q.10 (part-time work) and Q.70 (the experience of balancing university study and doing part-time work). Ninety-two (81.4% of these 113 respondents) selected the YES option of engaging in part-time work. Of the 92 students responding YES to Q.10, only 8 (8.7%) report a bad or very bad experience in balancing university study and doing part-time work at Q.70.

The general engagement with the questionnaire of these eight respondents is further investigated in Table 140 following. Responses are ranked according to the degree of severity of the bad experience in balancing study and work.

Table 140: The relationship between study and work (Q.10 cf Q.70) – Bad experiences

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDY AND WORK – PARTICIPANTS WITH BAD EXPERIENCES			
* Q.70: 1 = VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE; 5 = VERY BAD EXPERIENCE			
I.D.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK	COMMENT
326	Yes	5	M 25 Bangladesh T307 ²¹ (a first-term student in his third week at the university at the time of data collection). Generally uncertain confidence (avg. rank = 3 in Q.33-55), and unsure, perhaps a little concerned about coping (avg. rank = 3.3 in Q.57-66), and reporting a generally bad overall experience (avg. rank = 4.3 in Q.67-82). Easier (Q.83) is <i>shopping</i> . Harder (Q.84) is <i>Making Friends</i> . Overall experience (Q.86) did not meet expectation, with final comment (Q.87): <i>Adaptation</i> .
38	Yes	5	M 20 India T206 (a member of the pilot sample, in his 4 th term at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 2 in Q.33-55), but does not report to be coping well (avg. rank = 4 in Q.57-66), with generally neither a good nor bad overall experience (avg. rank = 2.8 in Q.67-82). This respondent found it <i>easier to make friends</i> (Q.83), but in other free-text questions (Q.84-87 inclusive) provided extensive negative comment on study load, assessment regimes, interaction with teachers, and general disappointment that the experience in Australia (Q.86) did not meet expectation because: <i>I thought it would be fun to study in Australia. Friends, parties, Pubs etc. but we don't get time for anything except studies and Assignments. We are always in tensions because of this.</i>
213	Yes	5	M 20 India T206 (a fifth-term student at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 3 in Q.33-55), but does not report to be coping well (avg. rank = 4 in Q.57-66), with neither a good nor bad overall experience (avg. rank = 3 in Q.67-82). Free-text comments included: <i>Nothing easier</i> ; and <i>Maths; Maths; Maths harder</i> . Overall experience (Q.86) did not meet expectation.
29	Yes	4	M 20 Nepal T207 (a member of the pilot sample, and a first-term student at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 2 in Q.33-55), but does not report to be coping well (avg. rank = 4 in Q.57-66), and neither a good nor bad overall experience (avg. rank = 3 in Q.67-82), with free-text comments

²¹ M 25 Bangladesh T307: Male; aged between 25 and 29 years; home country Bangladesh; and first term of study at the university Term 3, 2007.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDY AND WORK – PARTICIPANTS WITH BAD EXPERIENCES			
* Q.70: 1 = VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE; 5 = VERY BAD EXPERIENCE			
I.D.	Q.10 PART-TIME WORK	Q.70* BALANCING STUDY & WORK	COMMENT
			including Q.84 what's harder: <i>study - lots of things & not enough time</i> . Overall experience (Q.86) did not meet expectation.
117	No	4	M 20 Bangladesh T306 (a member of the pilot sample, and in his 3 rd term at the time of data collection). Generally ambivalent in terms of confidence (avg. rank =3.4 in Q.33-55) and coping (avg. rank = 3 in Q.57-66), with neither a good nor bad overall experience (avg. rank = 3 in Q.67-82). Free-text comments are more illuminating, pointing to concerns at coping with the pedagogy at the university; for example: <i>liberal – not helpful; Assignments – not proper inform; and: Exam – vast things</i> . Overall experience (Q.86) did not meet expectation. An interesting outcome, considering the NO response to part-time work (Q.10).
316	Yes	4	M 20 India T106 (a sixth-term student at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 2 in Q.33-55), but does not report to be coping well (avg. rank = 4.3 in Q.57-66), yet reports a somewhat good overall experience (avg. rank = 2.4 in Q.67-82). Free-text comments included Q.83 what's easier: <i>Research: researching online is very helpful and fast; Assignment; we get all sort of help needed to do a assignment correctly</i> . Harder (Q.84) comments included: <i>Exams: to much materials to study</i> . Overall experience (Q.86) did not meet expectation, including comment: <i>Well was expecting a full campus where recreational activities like sports could be enjoyed rather than the building</i> .
32	Yes	4	M 25 Nepal T107 (a member of the pilot sample, and a second-term student at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 2 in Q.33-55), does not report any real issues in coping (avg. rank = 3 in Q.57-66), and a generally good overall experience (avg. rank = 2.5 in Q.67-82). No free-text comments; and only an overall YES response without comment to Q.86 experience matching expectation.
221	No	4	M 25 Nepal T306 (a fourth-term student at the time of data collection). Generally confident (avg. rank = 2 in Q.33-55), and coping (avg. rank = 3.5 in Q.57-66), and neither a good nor bad overall experience (avg. rank = 2.7 in Q.67-82). Only free-text comments Q.84 what's harder: <i>Time management: hard to balance time between part time work and study</i> , regardless of the NO response to part-time work (Q.10). No other comments, yet (Q.86) the overall experience has met expectation.

With the exception of the eight respondents noted in Table 140 above, the data that emerged from analysis of Q.70, the experience of balancing university study and doing part-time work, supports the conclusion that:

Emerging Data Pattern 35: International students can balance study and doing part-time work

- Balancing study and part-time work does not appear to have been an unsatisfactory experience for most of the students responding to the questionnaire.

The issue of balancing study and part-time work was further investigated in the follow-up interviews, with comments recorded in Interview Comments 7 on page 273.

As discussed in the findings of the longitudinal study on student satisfaction by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne (Krause et al. 2005) this could be due in part to the fact that, by 2004, students had less contact hours per week than 10 years earlier and spent fewer hours on campus.

Table 141: Q.71 - Studying at university in Australia

71. Experience: studying at university in Australia.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	39	31.2	
Good	64	51.2	
Neither good nor bad	8	6.4	
Bad	0	0.0	
Very bad	3	2.4	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. Overall, the university experience in Australia appeared to have been very good or good for 103 (82.4%) respondents.

Exploring further the case of the eight respondents reporting a bad experience in balancing study and work (Table 140, page 310), Table 142 below compares these participants' responses to Q.10, Q.70 and Q.71.

Table 142: Further relationships between study and work

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PART-TIME WORK, BALANCING STUDY AND WORK, AND THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA – PARTICIPANTS WITH BAD EXPERIENCES				
* Q.70-71: 1 = VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE; 5 = VERY BAD EXPERIENCE				
I.D.	Q.10 PART- TIME WORK	Q.70 BALANCING STUDY & WORK	Q.71 EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY	COMMENT
326	Yes	5	5	A not unexpected response from this first-term student in his third week at the university.
38	Yes	5	5	Again, a not unexpected response, but considering that this respondent was in his 4 th term at the time of data collection, the generally negative comments noted earlier on study load, assessment regimes, and interaction with teachers could be suggestive of a student experiencing academic difficulty.
213	Yes	5	3	An interesting series of responses, again suggestive of the seeming ambivalence noted earlier.
29	Yes	4	NR	
117	No	4	2	Another intriguing series of responses, suggestive overall of a student perhaps stoically attempting to cope with the rigour of university learning.
316	Yes	4	2	As above.
32	Yes	4	2	As above.
221	No	4	2	As above.

The pattern of disquiet that emerged from the data in analysis of these questions tended to reinforce the comments following Table 133: Goodness of the overall experience (Q.67-82) on page 302 regarding an opportunity to better support international students, namely:

Emerging Data Pattern 36: An opportunity exists to provide better student support programs

- The provision of culturally-sensitive support programs and services for international students (Kutieleh & Egege 2004) and peer networks of international students to assist in the assimilation process (Magalh 2005) may better equip international students for success in balancing study and work, and to better appreciate the learning experience at university in Australia.

Table 143: Q.72 - Studying in English

72. Experience: studying in English.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	62	49.6	
Good	46	36.8	
Neither good nor bad	4	3.2	
Bad	0	0.0	

72. Experience: studying in English.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very bad	1	0.8	
No Response	12	9.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Twelve participants (9.6%) declined to respond. A finding that most students (108 or 86.4%) responding to the questionnaire found the experience of studying in English to be very good or good, added a further dimension to the already robust media debate regarding perceived low levels of English language proficiency in international students (see, for example, Blundell 2007; Elson-Green 2007a; Elson-Green 2007b, 2007c; Feast 2002). The pattern that emerged from the data was:

Emerging Data Pattern 37: Studying in English is a positive experience

- In the case of respondents to this questionnaire, the issue of English language proficiency and its effect on learning by international students is not as negatively significant as reported by some observers.

Table 144: Q.73 - The cost of living

73. Experience: the cost of living here.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	7	5.6	
Good	31	24.8	
Neither good nor bad	29	23.2	
Bad	24	19.2	
Very bad	24	19.2	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. About two-thirds of the respondents (77 or 61.6%) appeared to either take issue with or be ambivalent to the cost of living in Australia. This finding is understandable, considering that the research site is located in the centre of Sydney, which at the time of data collection was considered to be the most expensive city in Australia, and the 21st most expensive city worldwide in terms of cost of living for expatriate workers (Mercer HR Consulting 2007).

Table 145: Q.74 - The cost of my degree

74. Experience: the cost of my degree.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	5	4.0	
Good	29	23.2	
Neither good nor bad	25	20.0	

74. Experience: the cost of my degree.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Bad	31	24.8	
Very bad	24	19.2	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. As with cost of living responses in Q.73 above (page 314), the absolute cost of a degree appears to have been a bad or very bad experience for 55 (44.0%) respondents in this sample of international students.

The question does not, however, explore the separate issue of the dichotomy of perceived value for money and a quality product (as reported in Smith 2007, for example), particularly in terms of the pressure on international students towards the end of their course, given their visa, employment and family expectations. As noted earlier in this Appendix, the experience of Sherry and associates is that international students in New Zealand are:

Not confident that they are getting value for money, or that the skills they are being taught will get them good results both academically and for future employment. They are also unsure of lecturers' knowledge in their subject area and do not feel that an adequate range of support services are being offered to them ...

(Sherry et al. 2004, p.9)

A pattern emerged from the data:

Emerging Data Pattern 38: 'Value for money' and 'quality' are issues of concern to international students

- A need exists for institutions to come to terms with the issue of value for money and a quality product.

This issue is discussed in the sections headed: Apparent contradictions in the data on page 97. The issue of quality is also discussed in analysis of Q.80 – the way courses are taught, at Table 151 on page 318.

A lead for action could be found in the findings of the second section of this survey: How did you prepare for university in Australia? (Q.11-32). The data on preparations revealed that word of mouth as a source of information was perceived to be most helpful in preparing for university study in Australia (see Table 67, page 253). The literature on marketing, for example the research by Bansal and Voyer suggests that word of mouth is one of the most powerful forces in the marketplace (Bansal & Voyer 2000, p.166). They further advise (p.176) that 'businesses must do whatever it takes to keep the customer satisfied'.

Given this, and the perception of lack of value for money identified in Q.74 above, an opportunity for further research was identified:

Further Research 12: Build 'tie strength' between students and friends to enhance perceived value (Bansal & Voyer 2000)

- Institutions could investigate strategies to consistently reinforce the goodness of a student's purchase, and build 'tie strength' (Bansal & Voyer 2000, p.175) between students and their friends who are themselves customers, and thus build the perceived value of an international education in Australia.

Table 146: Q.75 - What I think of the courses that I am studying

75. Experience: the courses that I am studying.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	36	28.8	
Good	68	54.4	
Neither good nor bad	5	4.0	
Bad	2	1.6	
Very bad	2	1.6	
No Response	12	9.6	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Twelve participants (9.6%) declined to respond, with most participants (104 or 83.2%) identifying a very good or good experience with the courses studied at the university.

This finding, despite the perceived lack of value for money noted in Q.74 above, further suggested an opportunity for institutions to reinforce the perceived value of a student's purchase decision.

Table 147: Q.76 - The difference between Australia and home

76. Experience: the difference between studying in Australia and in my home country.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	23	18.4	
Good	47	37.6	
Neither good nor bad	38	30.4	
Bad	4	3.2	
Very bad	3	2.4	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. The data was suggestive of an overall good experience (70 or 56.0% responding with a very good or good experience) in the difference between studying in the home country and at university in Australia.

Table 148: Q.77 - Support from university staff

77. Experience: the support I receive from university staff.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	25	20.0	
Good	58	46.4	
Neither good nor bad	22	17.6	
Bad	4	3.2	
Very bad	5	4.0	
No Response	11	8.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Eleven participants (8.8%) declined to respond. The overall low level of satisfaction with customer service by around a quarter of Sub-continental students (31 students or 24.8% reporting a very bad, bad or ambivalent response to the question) is in line with the findings on relative customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction of international students, which shows (Arambewela 2003) students from the Sub-continent recording the lowest satisfaction levels. This finding further adds strength to the suggestion noted in analysis of Q.74 above (see page 314) that institutions should actively reinforce to students the perception of value of purchase and value for money in an international education in Australia.

Table 149: Q.78 - The usefulness of my learning

78. Experience: the usefulness of what I am learning.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	35	28.0	
Good	63	50.4	
Neither good nor bad	12	9.6	
Bad	0	0.0	
Very bad	5	4.0	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. As with Q.75-77, most respondents (in this case 98 or 78.4%) recorded a very good or good experience of the usefulness of their learning in Australia. Taken together, the data from Q.73-78 added strength to the pattern that emerged from the data, that:

Emerging Data Pattern 39: Leverage positive aspects of the student experience to reinforce perceptions of value

- Universities could leverage positive aspects such as the usefulness of learning to improve student perceptions of value for money in their purchase.

Table 150: Q.79 - The structure of my courses

79. Experience: the way courses are structured – it's easy to follow what is being taught each week.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	21	16.8	
Good	72	57.6	
Neither good nor bad	16	12.8	
Bad	2	1.6	
Very bad	5	4.0	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Nine participants (7.2%) declined to respond. The majority of students (93 or 74.4%) reported a good or very good experience in finding it easy to follow what was being taught.

Table 151: Q.80 - The way courses are taught

80. Experience: the way the courses are taught.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	19	15.2	
Good	71	56.8	
Neither good nor bad	21	16.8	
Bad	1	0.8	
Very bad	4	3.2	
No Response	9	7.2	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Again, nine participants (7.2%) declined to respond. The positive finding of satisfaction in the way courses were taught, in other words, the way lecturers teach (90 respondents or 72.0% reporting very good or good experiences) tended to suggest that students in this sample differed from the experience of international students in New Zealand (reported in Sherry et al. 2004) that students tend to be unsure of lecturers' knowledge in their subject area. The pattern that emerged was:

Emerging Data Pattern 40: Student satisfaction with the way lecturers teach

- The respondents to this questionnaire generally were satisfied with the way courses are taught at university in Australia.

Table 152: Q.81 - Tourist and recreation opportunities here

81. Experience: tourist and recreation opportunities available here.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	25	20.0	
Good	50	40.0	

81. Experience: tourist and recreation opportunities available here.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Neither good nor bad	29	23.2	
Bad	6	4.8	
Very bad	5	4.0	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. In response to Q.10 at Table 51 on page 237 almost three-quarters (92 or 73.6%) of respondents identified themselves as engaging in part-time work whilst also studying. Table 138 on page 307 showed that 88 respondents (70.4%) had a good experience in balancing study and work. The data that emerged from the generally positive response to this Q.81 (75 or 60.0% reporting a very good or good experience) on tourism and recreation opportunities in Australia therefore suggested:

Emerging Data Pattern 41: The experience of studying at university in Australia is generally positive

- The cohort of students surveyed in this questionnaire has evidenced a generally positive outlook toward the overall experience of studying at university in Australia.

Table 153: Q.82 - Working in groups

82. Experience: working in groups in class.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Very good	32	25.6	
Good	56	44.8	
Neither good nor bad	22	17.6	
Bad	1	0.8	
Very bad	4	3.2	
No Response	10	8.0	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Ten participants (8.0%) declined to respond. More than two-thirds of respondents (88 or 70.4%) reported the experience of group work as being very good or good. Only five (4.0%) respondents found the experience to have been bad or very bad. The pattern that emerged from this data was:

Emerging Data Pattern 42: International students prefer a teacher who will engage them in discussion and group work

- The experience of the cohort surveyed generally supports the proposition presented by Leask to the aiec2006 International Education Conference (Leask 2006) that international student perceptions of the ideal teacher in a transnational classroom includes one who will engage students from different cultural backgrounds in discussion and group work

Overall, Questions 67-82 of the experience section of the questionnaire attracted meaningful responses and, except for the key issue of perceived value for money, the student experience could be deemed to have matched the expectation. A number of patterns emerged from the data, and they can be summarised as follows:

Emerging Data Pattern 43: Overall, the academic experience has been good

- Overall, the university experience in Australia appears to have been good (Q.71, Table 141 page 312), with students displaying a generally positive outlook toward the overall experience, including the tourist and recreation opportunities available (Q.81, Table 152 page 318). Balancing study and part-time work (Q.70, Table 138 page 307) did not appear to have been an unsatisfactory experience, and learning in groups (Q.82, Table 153 page 319) with students from other countries and cultures (Q.69, Table 137 page 307) had been a positive experience.

Emerging Data Pattern 44: The general university experience has been good, too

- Respondents have found this experience to be an overall positive difference from studying in the home country (Q.76, Table 147 page 316), with the experiences of studying in English (Q.72, Table 143 page 313), continuous assessment in the form of assignments during the term (Q.67, Table 135 page 306), and examinations (Q.68, Table 136 page 306) not appearing to be a bad experience. The majority of students (93 or 74.4%) reported finding it easy to follow what is being taught (Q.79, Table 150 page 318) and found satisfaction in the way it was taught (Q.80, Table 151 page 318). They were similarly satisfied with both the courses studied (Q.75, Table 146 page 316) at the university, and their usefulness (Q.78, Table 149 page 317), which represented a very good or good experience.

Emerging Data Pattern 45: However, high costs and poor customer service do not represent value for money

- However, a significant number of students appeared to take issue with the twin aspects of the cost of living (77 or 61.6% in Q.73, Table 144 page 314) and an overall low level of satisfaction with customer service (31 or 24.8% in Q.77, Table 148 page 316) at university in Australia.

Emerging Data Pattern 46: The dichotomy of positive overall usefulness of what is being studied and its perceived low value as a quality product

- This last finding represents a dichotomy between the positive overall usefulness of what is being studied (98 or 78.4% in Q.78, Table 149 page 317) and its perceived low value as a quality product (55 or 44.0% in Q.74, Table 145 page 314). Such a finding identified two opportunities for further research, namely:

Further Research 13: What constitutes value for money in a university education?

- What constitutes value for money in a university education? Is this perception the same for various stakeholders? Do perceptions vary over time?

Further Research 14: How might institutions demonstrate value for money?

- The need for institutions to build on the positive aspects of student experience and demonstrate to international students the value for money and quality of the international education product.

Given the generally positive experiences reported by respondents to questions in this section, the issues canvassed in the follow-up interviews considered:

- What do you feel we should do to make life at university better and easier?
- Also, what do you feel we should do to make learning at university better and easier?

And,

- Looking back at your experiences, what advice or suggestions would you have for students before they come to university in Australia?

Interview participants offered comments on these matters as shown in the Tables below.

Table 154: Interview comments: Making life at university better and easier

Interview Comments 13: Making life at university better and easier

- 4 *Open space.*
- 7 *Can't really think about it. I think everything is done to make our life better.*
- 11 *Change the times ... evening. In the morning lots of words, go to uni, go to uni!*
- 14 *Provide some recreational facilities.*
- 16 *I really work hard in the semester ... I'm sick of that university ... so I'm not really thinking much of the university.*
- 20 *Just give us more flexibility and more time.*
- 21 *[Student] travel concession.*
- 22 *Have an advisor who will help us ... to an idea of a schedule like the subjects that you have to do in the first semester, second semester.*
- 25 *Other facilities ... like sports and stuff.*
- 27 *I think there would be jobs for students.*
- 28 *There is nothing to be better because the people is not happy.*
- 29 *We want you to show us the proper door because we're not watching [For a job?] For everything; work and study because we no wanting our tutors and lecturers to show us the door but its us we have to go through it but if you show us the wrong thing or wrong door we'll be lost.*
- 30&26 *Open area, like recreational spaces.*
- 31 *That's a pretty hard question. [No further response].*
- 33 *Activities ... sports, activities and physical training rooms ... because playing is the thing which makes our mind really relax. My friend, he's studying at [another university nearby]. I've been there and I saw they've got video games, and big TV games; they've got a pool table; they've got a badminton court; and a basketball court, I think. That's the thing students need to get them relaxed. [The research site,] it's in the city so it's hard to manage*

things.

34 *Help out [finding a job] ... the companies [should] come in to the college and give placement and everything.*

43 *I have to keep saying the tuition fees; that's the thing. [So, money is a big issue?] Yeah.*

Table 155: Interview comments: Making learning at university better and easier

Interview Comments 14: Making learning at university better and easier

1 *More lecturers, the variety of lecturers. We only had eight. [This one] wasn't good [that one] wasn't good ... it's very hard for us to understand; everyone is a bit worried.*

2 *The study should be more practical ... combine work and study together.*

4 *The tutors ... some tutors they really don't give enough information when you ask for help from them ... they are not ready to actually help.*

7 *Some teachers we can't understand them, they pronounce and stuff ...*

11 *Teaching. Small classes.*

14 *Get professional stuff like tutors and lecturers with backgrounds of same subject.*

16 *[Lecturers and tutors] Sometimes they don't know anything about that subject ... it's better to study by yourself.*

18 *... lecturer or tutor, like guide us now ...*

21 *In my experience from [this university], the standard is very good.*

22 *That's hard those ones, don't know for English, like I would have a couple of the lecturer, those are from [another regional demographic] ... I'm not saying that they don't know, but they speak too fast. It's like English but the pronunciation is too fast.*

25 *I would better have Australian students studying with me than only international students.*

27 *Extra classes for English for international students.*

28 *Its okay; its good.*

29 *Try to be more flexible.*

30&26 *More open-ended timetables.*

31 *They should have more teachers and all the teachers should be qualified. Less students, around 15 [per class].*

32 *If we got more chance to talk with our teachers; that would be great ... to discuss the problems.*

33 *I think they're doing really good about academic; so it's no point for me to say anything.*

34 *They should actually take us practically to some audit firm or CA firm or something to give us practical knowledge.*

35 *Better quality education, good teachers, flexible timetables, more help from teachers. Break down the syllabus and not [all] assignments [due] at the same time; break down assignments into weekly.*

36 *I like more easier structure course ... and because English is not our first language, I think teachers should consider that because it takes time to understand what they're saying so I think they should teach us a bit slowly and asking.*

42 *Maybe more help to start the first term, how to make assignments how to prepare for exams.*

43 *Just keep going; just doing.*

Table 156: Interview comments: Advice for students before they come to university in Australia

Interview Comments 15: Advice for students before they come to university in Australia

- 1 *Pick the easiest courses ... best courses and the job prospects outside, that would have been such a great help.*
- 2 *Choosing the right university, choosing the right subject.*
- 7 *Don't miss your classes ... don't leave [studying] for the last like we do it back home.*
- 11 *Don't come. I think life in home country is much better.*
- 14 *I would say it's a good country. Australians here they don't have much competition; I [can] do better than them.*
- 16 *If you're really financially strong go to [another university] or [another].*
- 18 *Before you come, organise yourself, get your money together.*
- 20 *Get good basics in accounting [before you come] because it's more easier for you. Straight away if you finish high school and come here, it's going to be too hard to get this.*
- 21 *Try to set up your tuition fee from your country.*
- 22 *At first I'd want to know why he'd want to come here.*
- 25 *One very important thing is finance.*
- 27 *Here the education is simplest way, tough, but we can do, its very simple here, that's why [then discussion regarding ease of assignments or end of year exam].*
- 28 *I would tell that to them because knowledge is proud in everywhere. So if a student want to come to abroad for a study, it's a good idea. I would save the dollars.*
- 29 *You want an honest opinion? Don't come here. Go London, Canada ... academic experiences and potential of work in future.*
- 30 *Advice. Just prepare.*
- 32 *Have to be very smart; have to access everything ... for uni the advice, what's going on here and there. [Further probing] ... Look out for things and make things happen; it doesn't just happen around you.*
- 33 *If you have to come, you have to study. Just think about it like your country you had yourself ... go to college and party outside with your friends. You can't do it here. So get your shoes ready to study because you have to run all the time from your house to work, from work to study.*
- 34 *Just be prepared for a hard life.*
- 35 *Time management.*
- 36 *She has to be confident, strong because over here just ourselves ... over here we have to take our own decisions ... we have to choose from the options, no one gives me options, I make my own options and choose from them. Before they're coming, get their study plan.*
- 42 *Just go ... if you are really willing to study.*
- 43 *If they have enough money then come here and do further study in a good university like [one university] or [another].*

The data collected from analysis of these questions were therefore considered as constituting reasonable information for subsequent analysis and comparison with the responses that were given in the final section of the questionnaire relating to

students' overall perception of what was easier or harder than expected when starting university in Australia.

What is easier at university in Australia? (Q.83)

The second and third main themes in the final experience section of the questionnaire (what is easier at university, and what is harder than expected) were designed to tease out of respondents some illustrations in plain text of their earlier forced responses (Q.67-82) to the issue of:

Assumption 5: Did the experience truly match expectation?

- Does the experience truly match the expectation?

To encourage thoughtfulness and openness in responses, the only prompts offered were those of “easier” and “harder” than expected.

In Question 83, participants were asked to nominate three things that they found to be easier to do at university in Australia than was expected. A transcript of responses to both this question and the following Q.84 on what is harder are presented in Table 159: Comparing what's easier and what's harder – Comments on page 326.

Table 157: Q.83 - What's easier in Australia

83. Please nominate 3 things that you find easier to do at university in Australia than you expected.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Responding	87	69.6	
No Response	38	30.4	5 further respondents discontinued at Q.83. They were: Ident. Nos.19, 61, 99, 101 & 203.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. A total of 38 participants (30.4%) declined to respond, including five respondents who discontinued participation in the survey at this point. The remaining 87 respondents provided a total of 194 comments, an average of 2.2 comments per respondent.

What is harder at university in Australia? (Q.84)

Following a reflection on aspects of university life that students found to be easier in Australia than was expected, respondents were next invited to comment on things found to be harder than expected. The intention was to allow a balance in responses, and to also provide final tests for engagement and thoughtfulness in respondent participation. Respondents were again invited to nominate three things they found to be harder.

Table 158: Q.84 - What's harder in Australia

84. Please nominate 3 things that you find harder to do at university in Australia than you expected.			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
Responding	79	63.2	
No Response	46	36.8	
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response, with 79 participants offering a total of 170 comments, an average of 2.2 comments per respondent that was similar to the number of comments offered in the preceding question. Forty-six participants (36.8%) declined to respond.

To compare the responses to Questions 83 and 84, Table 159 on page 326 below lists respondents' free text comments on things that were found to be easier or harder at university in Australia. Inspection of these responses revealed a pattern to the comments, with remarks falling, generally, into five broad themes:

Emerging Data Pattern 47: Five broad themes encourage student voice

- Getting along with others: teachers, other staff and fellow students;
- Academic matters;
- Issues in library research and Internet access;
- University administrative matters; and
- Other matters identified as not falling within the above specific themes.

Table 159: Comparing what's easier and what's harder – Comments

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
CONTEXT: In terms of getting along with others, teachers, staff and fellow students, the respondents offered the following specific comments:	
<p><i>“asking questions”²²</i></p> <p><i>“Communicate – Because I can understand and interact with my mates, teachers and staff easily”</i></p> <p><i>“communicate with teachers”</i></p> <p><i>“Communicating with students: Multicultural students try to help each other coz new to each other.”</i></p> <p><i>“Communicating with the university staff - the staff are very helpful”</i></p> <p><i>“Communication” [4 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“Consulting with teachers: they are co-operative”</i></p> <p><i>“Co-operation with or from some teachers (not all)”</i></p> <p><i>“Culture: lots of cultures to learn from”</i></p> <p><i>“English accents - universal language but multicultural society in the uni”</i></p> <p><i>“Faculty Staff - They are very helpful”</i></p> <p><i>“friendly Atmosphere - Good friends”</i></p> <p><i>“Friendly staff”</i></p> <p><i>“Friendly”</i></p> <p><i>“Friends: easy to make friends”</i></p> <p><i>“Helpful environment - there are lots of help for us. LSU, Client Service etc.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Course co-ordinator”</i></p> <p><i>“English - as it is not first language</i></p> <p><i>“English skills: sometime when we talk with an Australian people.”</i></p> <p><i>“equality in class - Lecturers are often partial to aussie students”²³</i></p> <p><i>“equality in class - some lecturers criticize South Asians for no reason at all”</i></p> <p><i>“feeling of being part of the institution – Racism”</i></p> <p><i>“interact with people”</i></p> <p><i>“Language problem: Sometime, we have, English teacher, Chinese teacher, and other culture, makes different accent so, make bit difficult to understand but not so, often lectur; lecturers talk about other related things more than lecture slide.”</i></p> <p><i>“listen properly: too fast</i></p> <p><i>“Making friends: Not enough social groups”</i></p> <p><i>“Making Friends” [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“No sympathy on students (exceptionally, sometimes) - Some staff (not all) misbehave or underestimate students coz of their speaking accent or skin color or dress”</i></p> <p><i>“people: Employee of CQU in a word very bad.”</i></p>

²² Comments are sorted alphabetically within each context.

²³ An intriguing, and inexplicable, comment – students at the research site were exclusively international students.

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>“Living - Very Good Life”</i></p> <p><i>“Making friends”</i></p> <p><i>“Mixing around with students from other countries”</i></p> <p><i>“Social: lot of university activities to take part”</i></p> <p><i>“staff: good dedicated, experienced – lecturers”</i></p> <p><i>“Staff: Staff is very friendly.”</i></p> <p><i>“Support from lecturers & teachers are excellent - I found all of them were very good and very supportive”</i></p> <p><i>“Teacher email - they give us their email addresses in the first tutorial”</i></p> <p><i>“Teachers associating”</i></p> <p><i>“Teacher's help”</i></p> <p><i>“to adapt to change; Due to exposure to different cultures.”</i></p> <p><i>“to make ausi friends: because they are so friendly”</i></p> <p><i>“to make friends”</i></p> <p><i>“Transparency in staff: Because most of the staff is familiar with students”</i></p>	
CONTEXT: In relation to academic matters, students offered the following comments regarding university in Australia:	
<p><i>“3 years study: Courses are design to finish my study quickly”</i></p> <p><i>“Adjustment with the tutors and lecturers: because they are very helpful and co-operative.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment time”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment: Because they are 40+”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment; we get all sort of help needed to do a assignment successfully”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments - its clear and easy</i></p> <p><i>“assignments - plenty of help available”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments - Quiet Easier to understand”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments & exams”</i></p>	<p><i>“1st assignments somewhat”</i></p> <p><i>“assessments: many online exams with little time to complete”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment - because it is different from my home country”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment - not proper inform”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment marking”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment system - No specific way”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment: often they are set complex”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments - Because we were not used to doing assignments back home. They were totally new to me.”</i></p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>“Assignments: enough information and time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: get help easily”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: groups”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: just for few weeks syllabus”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: Tutors and lecturers help a lot. It is easy to follow the course profile and subject. Also group discussion is very handy. Almost a practical way of learning.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments”</i></p> <p><i>“class work”</i></p> <p><i>“classes”</i></p> <p><i>“Combo of lectures/tutorials: Reimburses stuff taught in lectures and tutorials”</i></p> <p><i>“Doing assignments - more help from library & LSU”</i></p> <p><i>“exam”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams - proper exam format provided”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams preparations - more help from the coordinators”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Because of assignments assessment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: easy to understand what the examiner is going to examine. Exam examines students only about the outcomes of course. Course coordi's help also handy to follow the exams.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Exams are easier than assignments.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: small syllabus”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams”</i></p> <p><i>“Following lecture classes: lecturers explain properly”</i></p> <p><i>“get more information: They concise the statement and present in a good way”</i></p> <p><i>“Group study” [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“Groupwork: easy to work in groups”</i></p> <p><i>“it's seems study is worth and applicable to real life”</i></p>	<p><i>“Assignments - For the first time I did” [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments & Exams - Because we don't get any help from staff about assignments and are not told how the exams would be till the last week.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: Each tutor marks differently. Sometimes time is a factor.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: higher outcome such as weighting of 30%”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: I have not done any assignment before in my previous study life.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: sometimes not getting support from tutor”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments: When they are 2 or 3 assignments due around the same time its hard to manage.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignments” [11 comments; unspecified]</i></p> <p><i>“Exam - No specific explanation in some subjects”</i></p> <p><i>“Exam - vast things”</i></p> <p><i>“Exam: it usually out of topic”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Exams of the uni are sometimes very difficult.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Giving important notes one week before.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: higher weighting, stressing”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: sometimes exams are lengthy and hard to finish on time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Sometimes exams are more harder than we expect.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: to much materials to study”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams: Very little time to revise, and of course not done at the end of semester in uni.”</i></p> <p><i>“Questions are together then done.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exams” [5 comments; unspecified]</i></p> <p><i>“Final Exam” [2 comments; unspecified]</i></p> <p><i>“Final exams: few papers feel tough”</i></p> <p><i>“get the assignment on time”</i></p> <p><i>“Group assignment: All the team members don't turn up regularly & the work is burden on</i></p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>"Its quite easy to understand the course due to the way its structured"</i></p> <p><i>"learning"</i></p> <p><i>"lecture – Helpful"</i></p> <p><i>"lecture slides - more information"</i></p> <p><i>"lecture"</i></p> <p><i>"Lectures: workload is less"</i></p> <p><i>"lisining to lectures: easier to understand"</i></p> <p><i>"Listening to lectures"</i></p> <p><i>"making Assignments - U get a lot of material and help from seniors"</i></p> <p><i>"Online test"</i></p> <p><i>"pass"</i></p> <p><i>"presentation: Im more confident than the rest of people"</i></p> <p><i>"problems & solution: Every problem has an instant solution, so I don't have to work too much"</i></p> <p><i>"Projector machine - It helps and makes it easier to understand rather than on Board"</i></p> <p><i>"Reading: As I was and always good at it"</i></p> <p><i>"Revision" [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>"Short term courses - in my country it takes a year"</i></p> <p><i>"speaking: Most easiest part of IELTS"</i></p> <p><i>"Studies: Because the classes are well organised and all concepts have been taught well to students"</i></p> <p><i>"Studies: getting good result"</i></p> <p><i>"STUDIES"</i></p> <p><i>"Study It is more easier than I Expected"</i></p> <p><i>"Study load: Becase in my country the study load is far more than it is here."</i></p> <p><i>"Study material"</i></p>	<p><i>one or more always (communication courses mainly)"</i></p> <p><i>"Individual assignments: takes a lot of effort and time"</i></p> <p><i>"late Assignment - Plenty of work to do"</i></p> <p><i>"Learning - Because the time rate they are taught here is comparatively quick and its difficult to follow up in a 2 hour lecture/tutorial."</i></p> <p><i>"lecture notes"</i></p> <p><i>"Lecture: 2 hours lecture is pretty boring."</i></p> <p><i>"Lectures: sometimes lecturer not supportive"</i></p> <p><i>"Maths" [3 comments, all from same respondent]</i></p> <p><i>"pass in the exam"</i></p> <p><i>"Pass"</i></p> <p><i>"passing exam"</i></p> <p><i>"Referencing - sometimes it is confusing whether it is right or wrong"</i></p> <p><i>"Results" [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>"some assignments"</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes when the lecturers or tutors are not qualified enough its very hard to learn the course and then it requires to depend only on self studies"</i></p> <p><i>"Studies - Because there are 4 subjects and no time to manage all. Because all are vast subjects"</i></p> <p><i>"Study - lots of things & not enough time"</i></p> <p><i>"taking information"</i></p> <p><i>"Things ontime"</i></p> <p><i>"To get time - Due to the studies, there's no time at all for other things and that is why I don't like it here."</i></p> <p><i>"To study - It is hard to complete 4 subjects in just 3 months with at least 2 assignments and a very hard exam and with no help"</i></p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>“Study: Because except something everything is very helpful to study in Australia”</i></p> <p><i>“Study: easy to understand”</i></p> <p><i>“Study: friendly environment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Study” [3 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“Studying - Well Structured”</i></p> <p><i>“Teaching style: Teachers taught in easy or soft manner by which we can understand easily”</i></p> <p><i>“the courses are very interesting”</i></p> <p><i>“Time management: Time management of lectures are very good. In proper weeks - some no. of chapters should finished etc.”</i></p> <p><i>“Time table: flexible”</i></p> <p><i>“to analyse business cases: the learning structure at uni”</i></p> <p><i>“to get extensions - any excuse is valid”</i></p> <p><i>“To know about the course: it is easier because CQU has provided all information about the course”</i></p> <p><i>“to pass exam”</i></p> <p><i>“to pass exams - Exam hints available”</i></p> <p><i>“to prepare reports: help from LSU”</i></p> <p><i>“To understand lecture: well qualified”</i></p> <p><i>“tutor - understand evens on only economics”</i></p> <p><i>“Tutorial - if we do exercise & homework regularly it is easier”</i></p> <p><i>“Tutorial: I thought it would be difficult because there might be lots of students from different countries”</i></p> <p><i>“Tutorials: workload I sless”</i></p> <p><i>“tutorials”</i></p> <p><i>“Understand any topic: because of tutorial.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Tutorial class: sometimes all review Qs are not done. One lecturer & another tutor causes differences in opinions.”</i></p> <p><i>“University (CQU): Bad quality teaching methods. So that hard to pass.”</i></p> <p><i>“weekly assignment: because we do only exams or little bit assignment in our country.”</i></p> <p><i>“Weekly Question - they are very hard”</i></p> <p><i>“Weekly submissions: It becomes hard as sometimes forget to do it.”</i></p> <p><i>“Work under pressure”</i></p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>“Understand the topics - Lectures are very good”</i></p> <p><i>“Understanding of lecture”</i></p> <p><i>“Understanding the lectures: Fully explain the contents of lectures”</i></p> <p><i>“Understanding”</i></p> <p><i>“Using the study materials - most of the materials are online”</i></p> <p><i>“Work with studies”</i></p> <p><i>“Working in a team”</i></p> <p><i>“Working In Groups”</i></p> <p><i>“Workload: As in most of subjects 50% comprises of assignments”</i></p> <p><i>“Writing: as I got a good mark in IELTS.”</i></p>	
CONTEXT: In terms of library research and Internet access, respondents commented as follows:	
<p><i>“Access of computers”</i></p> <p><i>“access to information required”</i></p> <p><i>“Accessibility”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment - do online materials or library and labs opens 24 hr”</i></p> <p><i>“Assignment: sources available”</i></p> <p><i>“Computer access: As at anytime a student can use the PC for his personal use”</i></p> <p><i>“computer facility: if we miss any class we can get slides from comp.”</i></p> <p><i>“Computer lab: huge computer”</i></p> <p><i>“Course material on the CQU web”</i></p> <p><i>“database”</i></p> <p><i>“facilities”</i></p> <p><i>“finding info: Internet facility plus staff ready to help.”</i></p> <p><i>“Finding resources for assignments: Library & online resources available.”</i></p> <p><i>“getting good Resources: enough materials provided”</i></p>	<p><i>“Computer lab”</i></p> <p><i>“getting seat on the laboratory: not enough computer for all”</i></p> <p><i>“IT staff - they don't listen”</i></p> <p><i>“libral - not helpful”</i></p> <p><i>“library - No book's! No staff!”</i> ["Sad face" sketch added]</p> <p><i>“Library: Hard to get books near exams”</i></p> <p><i>“Library”</i> [Two "Sad face" sketches added]</p> <p><i>“online service: very slow”</i></p> <p><i>“Print outs - some printer sucks all the time”</i></p> <p><i>“Printer: sometimes it makes trouble.”</i></p> <p><i>“Printers - Never Work on time”</i></p> <p><i>“Printing - Never works”</i></p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<p><i>“Internet Access - because it helps to find out the answer or is useful for assignment”</i></p> <p><i>“lab - Easily avail.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lab access - Its available to student nearly 24 hrs. Even on Sunday”</i></p> <p><i>“Labs: Because we can search material easily for study.”</i></p> <p><i>“Learning outcomes or lectures: study material helps lot to follow lectures. Specially balckboard²⁴.”</i></p> <p><i>“library - Easy to research”</i></p> <p><i>“Library - it is very reliable to do assignments”</i></p> <p><i>“Library - most of the library journal can be found online”</i></p> <p><i>“Library access”</i></p> <p><i>“Library: A lots of library”</i></p> <p><i>“library: broadband internet and books.”</i></p> <p><i>“Online helpdesk 24 hours”</i></p> <p><i>“online serv – everywhere”</i></p> <p><i>“online slides: If miss lecture it is easy to catch up.”</i></p> <p><i>“Research: because LSU teach us”</i></p> <p><i>“Research: Researching online is very helpful and fast”</i></p> <p><i>“Research” [2 comments]</i></p> <p><i>“Studies: Because of helping tutors and 24hrs internet access in university”</i></p> <p><i>“Technology: use of Internet.”</i></p> <p><i>“to do research at uni: because uni got facilities”</i></p> <p><i>“To find course material: Because uni has its own library”</i></p>	

²⁴ Online academic suite (see Blackboard Inc. 2008).

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
<i>“to use online information: Because it has plenty of computers”</i>	
CONTEXT: For university administrative matters:	
<i>“About the information about univesities: they provide all the information”</i> <i>“Accessing your data and information: because the high tech technology”</i> <i>“Choosing time”</i> <i>“Easy enrolment”</i> <i>“Enrolling - fully helpful staff and easy to follow the procedure”</i> <i>“Fee - easy to pay by Bpay”</i> <i>“get help from staff: because uni staff is very helpful”</i> <i>“Information generated to the student: Application used i.e. computers”</i> <i>“Review of Grade: it is online”</i> <i>“Secure: I have stayed at night its very secure”</i> <i>“Student helpline”</i> <i>“Time table: I can manage for other activities”</i> <i>“Timetable: Class timetable can be managed”</i> <i>“Timetable: the time table are very flexible to catch up”</i> <i>“Timetable: we can opt by over.”</i> <i>“to get information”</i>	<i>“Accessing to university: Everytime yu need your ID card”</i> <i>“Admissions - high standard”</i> <i>“Applying for deferred exams - university sucks they don't listen to your excuse”</i> <i>“Attendance - because of the attendance only in the tutorial”</i> <i>“Attending classes for a continuous 2 hours”</i> <i>“Class Timetables - Very hard to choose. Not much option available.”</i> <i>“Discipline”</i> <i>“Enrollment process - We have to be present there at the time of enrollment. There is not such flexible option available for student”</i> <i>“Enrolment - Course Selection is hard sometimes”</i> <i>“Enrolment process”</i> <i>“getting specific information”</i> <i>“keep changing rules for the overseas students”</i> <i>“Nights: University must open all nights”</i> <i>“No second chances given if a student fails: it makes you feel as if university is not a education institution but a business organisation”</i> <i>“Photo copies charge”</i> <i>“Policy (CQU): No coordination between rockhampton & Syd CQU. Looking for business”</i> <i>“possibilities of failing: same as above”</i> <i>“scholarships; hard steps and conditions to get scholarships”</i> <i>“Time-Table: Because sometime I will have to take classes at that time at which I never want”</i>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
CONTEXT: Other matters:	
<p>“Boxing” [no expansion provided by respondent on this matter] “CQU's site: its site gives so much help” “earning money” “Freedom” “Indiscipline” “Job - Come to know about many things” “Job: Because when I came it is very easy for me to get the job.” “Live: Because my brother lives with me.” “Location: Its very easy to identify” “Location: near to transportation” “Part time work” “shopping” “Talking on the phone by going out from class” “transport - Universities are located nearer to all transport facilities” [Although listed as “easier”, respondents also provided the following generally negative comments] “I haven't got anything easier. Sorry!!” “Nothing” “Truly speaking, I don't know”</p>	<p>“Balance uni/work life: due to lengthy lecture & tutorial times” “Balance work & study” “Canteen: bad food” “canteen: close at 5.” “Cost of living & fees” “costly” “Costly - very hard to afford” “Different building: Its difficult to manage class sometimes to attend class in different building” “Difficult to get job - Sometimes, students don't get jobs because of <u>not being a permanent resident (PR)</u>” “Doing job along with studies: As an accounting student it is quite difficult to maintain a balance” “Expenses” “Expensive books” [2 comments] “feel no confident” “feel tired” “Fees is slightly higher” “Fees to collect from work: To maintain the effective time for work and study is hard” “Fees: Very hard to manage whole fees.” “Fees” “Finding job - balancing time with uni schedule” “finding job - They want experience people. If each and every organization ask for experience people then How can we get job” “future” “Job & Study - Doing the things together” “job placement” “Job: sometime we find little bit difficulties in finding job.”</p>

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER, AND WHAT'S HARDER – FREE-TEXT COMMENTS	
83. EASIER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA	84. HARDER AT UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA
	<p><i>“Job”</i></p> <p><i>“Jobs: Because in Accounting field it's hard to find a job.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lift: wait too long for the lift”</i></p> <p><i>“Living costs: As living in Sydney is quite expensive.”</i></p> <p><i>“Living expense/travelling: Living expense is a lot here and also travelling.”</i></p> <p><i>“living: without parents I cook own food”</i></p> <p><i>“Making Food - make the food”</i></p> <p><i>“No scholarship - If students do not get any award or reward for their hard work, why would they study + No award for students for their semester results”</i></p> <p><i>“Rest”</i></p> <p><i>“text books: too expensive.”</i></p> <p><i>“the real learning as expected by course”</i></p> <p><i>“Time maintaining: Because we do not schedule time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Time management: hard to balance time in between part time work and study.”</i></p> <p><i>“to free mind in uni: because we do not have and garden our outing place”</i></p> <p><i>“to pay fees: because is to high”</i></p> <p><i>“Too far from our parents and can't afford holidays - can't afford holidays most often feel homesick”</i></p> <p><i>“Transportation - its costly and sometimes its late</i></p> <p><i>“travel pass”²⁵</i></p> <p><i>“Travelling till here”</i></p> <p><i>“Work - do parttime work while studying”</i></p> <p><i>“Work: managing work and study gets harder sometimes”</i></p> <p><i>“Work”</i></p>

²⁵ Fee-paying international students at the research site are not entitled to government subsidised public transport services (see Ministry of Transport 2008).

Meaning can be inferred from these free-text comments as shown in Table 160. The sequence of responses in the Table has been arranged to rank the number of comments offered in descending order.

Table 160: Comparing what's easier and what's harder - Summary

COMPARING WHAT'S EASIER AND WHAT'S HARDER - SUMMARY						
CONTEXT	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	Q.83 EASIER	% OF TOTAL	Q.84 HARDER	% OF TOTAL
Academic matters.	166	46.0	91	54.8	75	45.2
Other matters.	64	17.7	17	26.6	47	73.4
Library research and Internet access.	49	13.6	37	75.5	12	24.5
Getting along with others: teachers, staff and fellow students.	47	13.0	33	70.2	14	29.8
University administrative matters.	35	9.7	16	45.7	19	54.3
TOTAL COMMENTS	361	100%	194	54%	167	46%

Six patterns emerged from this data. When comments in Q.83-84 were considered in conjunction with responses to earlier questions on the goodness of the overall experience at university in Australia (Q.67-82, Table 133 page 302) it was apparent that, except for the key issue of perceived value for money:

Emerging Data Pattern 48: Student experience has matched expectation

- Student experience can be deemed to have matched the expectation.

This new understanding suggested an area for further research (O'Neill 2003; Sahney, Banwet & Karunes 2004; Sherry et al. 2004) on the perceptions of a quality education over time, for example:

Further Research 15: Do perceptions change over time?

- A longitudinal study of student perceptions of experience at university meeting expectation, and the utility of a university education, both as the learning journey progresses, and after graduation. Particularly in the context of this research, are there any differences in the (changing) perceptions of international students and domestic students?

In terms of the five broad themes identified in the Emerging Data Pattern 47 on page 325 (see Table 159 and Table 160 on page 326 and page 336 above), this pattern of experience having met expectation was further suggestive of a participant sentiment in which:

Emerging Data Pattern 49: The experience of getting along with others has been a positive one

- In terms of getting along with others (teachers, other staff and fellow students), easier or positive aspects of university life in Australia included

communicating, friendliness of colleagues and staff, and a generally helpful environment. Around three times as many comments described such positive relationships (33 or 70.2% of comments in this category) than did negative comments (14 or 29.8%), which cited perceived discriminatory practices and difficulties with language. Together comments relating to relationships comprised only 13% of all comments.

Emerging Data Pattern 50: Students are concerned about their studies, but broadly matched in their opinion as to whether they are easier or harder than expected

- Academic matters, by way of contrast, constituted almost half (166 or 46%) of all comments. Of these, the proportions of easier and harder were about the same, with 91 or 54.8% easier and 75 or 45.2% harder. Issues with matters such as studying, teamwork, assignments and examinations generated similar volumes of comment in both the easier and harder category, suggesting that there probably was a balance in the degree of difficulty in academic work. In only three instances out of the 75 harder comments in this theme was there any allusion to less than helpful service:
 - *“Lectures: sometimes lecturer not supportive”*
 - *“Sometimes when the lecturers or tutors are not qualified enough its very hard to learn the course and then it requires to depend only on self studies”*
 - *“University (CQU): Bad quality teaching methods. So that hard to pass.”*

Emerging Data Pattern 51: Library research and internet access have been a positive experience

- When issues in library research and Internet access (13.6% of comments) were combined with academic matters, the combined response constituted almost two-thirds (59.6%) of all comments. The good-bad proportions of comments in this area significantly favoured a good experience, with 37 or 75.5% describing a good experience. Positive comments related to easy accessibility of services, whilst the 12 negative comments (3.3% of all comments) related equally to deficiencies in IT equipment and poor service by staff.

Emerging Data Pattern 52: University administrative matters are not a significant concern to students

- University administrative matters, eliciting 35 comments, comprised only 9.7% of responses to these two questions. As such, they constituted the least significant aspect of what students perceived to be easier or harder than expected; with both positive and negative comments broadly similar (16 or 45.7% good and 19 or 54.3% bad).

Emerging Data Pattern 53: The cost of living and balancing study with part-time work are a concern for students, and three times more students experience difficulty with these matters than those who do not

- Other matters in the two free-text questions elicited 64 comments (17.7% of the total), of which most related primarily to matters of cost and working

part-time whilst studying. These negative comments exceeded positive responses threefold.

Is there anything else? (Q.85-87)

The final theme in the experience section, and last three questions in the survey, was designed to identify any further matters of concern to respondents that might not have been adequately covered in the previous 84 questions. Each question forced a YES – NO response, and offered an opportunity for unprompted free-text comment. The matters canvassed were:

- Is there any other issue or problem that you would like to tell us about?
- Overall, has your experience met your expectation?
- And finally, is there anything else that you would like to tell us about?

Again, the nature of these final three questions with an open-ended invitation was intended to allow respondents an opportunity to illustrate their feelings and perceptions in plain text.

Table 161: Q.85 - Other issues that you should know about

85. Is there some other issue or problem that you have experienced at university in Australia, and would like to tell us about?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	76	60.8	
Yes	19	15.2	1 No comment included
No Response	30	24.0	2 further respondents Ident. Nos.115 & 383 discontinued at Q.85.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Thirty participants (24.0%) declined to respond, and 19 participants (15.2%) identified another issue or problem at the university. The 18 free-text comments that were offered by “Yes” respondents were as shown in Table 162:

Table 162: Q.85 Comments - Other issues experienced

Q.85 OTHER ISSUES EXPERIENCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Assignments should have 50+” • “Computers on levels other than 2nd are damn slow. They need to be fast and speedy.” • “CQU & Business Colleges are looking for business and money rather than student” • “Expensive, Some says of no good opportunities after the completion of course” • “Group assignment submissions. When I did a group assignment last term it was a serious problem from my team mates.” • “I got some exemption problem in university because two people have studied same course from same Institution one can get six exemption and the other can get eight exemption.” • “It is very difficult to understand”

Q.85 OTHER ISSUES EXPERIENCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “lots of regulation like a prison” • “more time should be given for core subjects and should be prepared from day one for about what is going to come in exams instead of saying in week 12” • “No rebate for intl. Students in bus fares.” • “not enough exemptions/credit transfer” • “Not frequent access uni with friends” • “Some staff are rude and try to underestimate you thinking English is difficult for us to understand.” • “some times some teachers are bias in checking the assignments.” • “Students should be able to pay fees online and enrol online which inturn saves cost to university and time to students” • “University has to have humanity (feelings). Business at 2nd place. And should not create threat in students about policies.” • “We need some "hands on experience" (practical) besides the theoretical ones.” • “Well at the same time some lecturers are excellent and it would be great to have them for more courses.”

Analysis and interpretation of these comments is contained in Table 168: Meeting overall expectations - Comments (Q.85-87) on page 343.

Table 163: Q.86 - Has the experience met the expectation?

86. Overall, has your experience at university in Australia met your expectations?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	38	30.4	24 – No comment offered
Yes	63	50.4	50 – No comment offered
No Response	24	19.2	2 – Comments offered: “neither no neither yes” “Not really” 2 further respondents Ident. Nos.113 & 176 discontinued at Q.86.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Twenty-four participants (19.2%) declined to respond. Respondents generally felt that their experience at university in Australia had met their expectation (63 or 50.4% responding “Yes”). Twenty-seven participants (21.6%) who responded either “Yes” or “No” offered a free-text comment in support of their opinion. Of the respondents answering “No”, the overall experience has not met expectations, the following 14 comments were offered as shown in Table 164 below.

Table 164: Q.86 Comments - Why experience has not met expectation

Q.86 WHY EXPERIENCE HAS NOT MET EXPECTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Because for e.g. Sydney campus don't have the real uni life compare to uni in Qld like big campus and recreation life, sports etc”</i> • <i>“Except the fees”</i> • <i>“Expected studies and assignments to be a bit more easy”</i> • <i>“I expected some award or reward for my hard work in my previous somesters. Only hanging photos on wall is not enough.”</i> • <i>“I thought it would be fun to study in Australia. Friends, Parties, Pubs etc. but we don't get time for anything except studies and Assignments. We are always in tensions because of this.”</i> • <i>“Life is feeling tough. Because at age of 20's there are so many responsibilities we have to face. But its O.K.”</i> • <i>“More business than education provider”</i> • <i>“No big campus; no student association; study overload; less services”</i> • <i>“Should have sports events, end of semester parties etc.”</i> • <i>“Sydney is not big city like Rome or other European cities”</i> • <i>“The campus is nothing to what I though university life would provide.”</i> • <i>“They are commercial. Need more skilled teacher & professor”</i> • <i>“University policy should be clear to understand. It should not be changed person to person.”</i> • <i>“Well was expecting a full campus where recreational activities like sports could be enjoyed rather than the building”</i>

Of the respondents answering “Yes”, the overall experience has met expectations, the following 13 comments were offered as shown in Table 165:

Table 165: Q.86 Comments - Why experience has met expectation

Q.86 WHY EXPERIENCE HAS MET EXPECTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Better education than home country”</i> • <i>“For most of my studies yes it has been fantastic. But it is the biggest problem at university when the teachers do not put enough effort. And the biggest thing is that sometimes no actions are taken about it even after several complaints, which puts the student's career at a risk. But I'm very happy with the other who have been doing a great job.”</i> • <i>“Good people; multicultural; great beaches”</i> • <i>“Good”</i> • <i>“Great, interesting many cultures to learn”</i> • <i>“Highly regarde degree and reputed study overall the world.”</i> • <i>“I am overseas student here, I pay for this and I will try my best to get my certificate asap.”</i> • <i>“I can become a good accountant and can run a company”</i> • <i>“learning & living in Australia for me has been a good experience so far”</i>

Q.86 WHY EXPERIENCE HAS MET EXPECTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Marketing and communication”</i> • <i>“Not yet, But because of CQU monitoring policy I can definitely do well in the future and will be a graduate”</i> • <i>“University's (all staff) looks to me like robot. (Machine man) no feelings”</i> • <i>“What I expect from teachers about good education, they provide to us.”</i>

Analysis and interpretation of these comments is also contained in Table 168: Meeting overall expectations - Comments (Q.85-87) on page 343.

Table 166: Q.87 - Some final thoughts you should know about

87. Is there anything else that you feel we should know about?			
RESPONSE OPTION	NO. RESPONDING	% OF RESPONSES	COMMENT
No	73	58.4	1 - Comment offered: <i>“Thank U!”</i> (☺ ‘smiley face’ added)
Yes	29	23.2	4 – No comment offered
No Response	23	18.4	1 – Comment offered: <i>“nothing specific”</i> 3 further respondents Ident. Nos.117, 198 & 331 discontinued at Q.87. 102 respondents completed the final item in the questionnaire.
TOTAL	125	100%	

A satisfactory response. Twenty-three participants (18.4%) declined to respond. Of the 29 respondents feeling that ‘Yes’, there was something else that we should know about, 25 comments were offered, of which:

- 3 generally were indicative of a positive experience,
- 20 generally were indicative of a negative experience, and
- 2 generally were neutral in nature.

These 25 comments are shown in Table 167.

Table 167: Q.87 Comments – Other matters we should know about

87. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU FEEL WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT? – COMMENTS OFFERED BY “YES” RESPONDENTS
<p>Generally Positive Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creating a good studying environment which benefit everybodys.</i> • <i>I don't know why students always arguing for that this university's results very poor.</i> • <i>University in Australia is a better place to learn</i>
<p>Generally Negative Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adaptation</i> • <i>Agents misguide students about university. Provide false picture of university</i> • <i>Better student service and better communication with student.</i> • <i>Finding required TEXT Books at the university library should be easier.</i>

87. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU FEEL WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT? – COMMENTS OFFERED BY “YES” RESPONDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Firstly, the university means it should be having a campus. When ever we come to uni, we just learning like we are going into a building. This is not the university atmosphere.</i> • <i>I think we should have more communication with the course co-ordinator. Because sometime we cannot get enough information from our lecturers about the exam for that season, sometimes we get fail even though we study hard.</i> • <i>Job placement of the graduates more practical course structures</i> • <i>life is a bit hard</i> • <i>More academic books in library</i> • <i>on an average there are 3 - 4 subject per term. 12 weeks and numbers of lec & tutorials. We have 100's of Hardcopies to be printed. Please give more credit on student card.</i> • <i>Students overseas before coming here should be given true advice & information</i> • <i>That is if it is possible to make all the universities is same standard.</i> • <i>The course coordinator should be in the same campus, as he can all tell us, what to give importance to and he can prepare us well for the exams and assignments as he knows what would be there in the exams.</i> • <i>The placement all TECC should provide more support towards getting jobs and employment. There should be some university cadet program for "hands on experience".</i> • <i>To upgrade the study style and administration system and university website</i> • <i>Uni's should be more professional in their teachings.</i> • <i>University need to earn but looks to keep student's Benefits first & Business 2nd.</i> • <i>University representatives in India are leading students in wrong way. They don't tell student about anything about university life and courses.</i> • <i>University should provide sports activities.</i> • <i>We (as local) should more understand about overseas student how they living life in Aus. And government rulls.</i>
<p>Generally Neutral Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I love playing</i> • <i>In my studies, some subjects are so easy & some are tough. So I think it would be better if all the subject are equal i.e., not so easy but not so tough as well.</i>

Overall, a total of 72 free-text comments were offered in response to Q.85-87. Analysis and interpretation of these comments is contained in Table 168 on page 343 and Table 169 on page 346. These two Tables bring together the positive and negative free-text comments for comparison. For clarity, the same five themes identified in analysis of comments in Q.83-84 in Table 159 on page 326 and Table 160 on page 336 are used, and comments are sorted alphabetically.

Table 168: Meeting overall expectations - Comments (Q.85-87)

THE OVERALL EXPECTATION - COMMENTS	
POSITIVE COMMENTS	NEGATIVE COMMENTS
CONTEXT: Getting along with others: teachers, staff and fellow students.	
<p><i>“Adaptation”</i></p> <p><i>“Good people; multicultural; great beaches”</i></p> <p><i>“Great, interesting many cultures to learn”</i></p> <p><i>“learning & living in Australia for me has been a good experience so far”</i></p>	<p><i>“I thought it would be fun to study in Australia. Friends, Parties, Pubs etc. but we don’t get time for anything except studies and Assignments. We are always in tensions because of this.”</i></p> <p><i>“Some staff are rude and try to underestimate you thinking English is difficult for us to understand.”</i></p> <p><i>“University's (all staff) looks to me like robot. (Machine man) no feelings”</i></p>
CONTEXT: Academic matters.	
<p><i>“Better education than home country”</i></p> <p><i>“Highly regarde degree and reputed study overall the world.”</i></p> <p><i>“I am overseas student here, I pay for this and I will try my best to get my certificate asap.”</i></p> <p><i>“I can become a good accountant and can run a company”</i></p> <p><i>“I don't know why students always arguing for that this university's results very poor.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not yet, But because of CQU monitoring policy I can definitely do well in the future and will be a graduate”</i></p> <p><i>“University in Australia is a better place to learn”</i></p> <p><i>“Well at the same time some lecturers are excellent and it would be great to have them for more courses.”</i></p> <p><i>“What I expect from teachers about good education, they provide to us.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Assignments should have 50+”</i></p> <p><i>“Expected studies and assignments to be a bit more easy”</i></p> <p><i>“For most of my studies yes it has been fantastic. But it is the biggest problem at university when the teachers do not put enough effort. And the biggest thing is that sometimes no actions are taken about it even after several complaints, which puts the student's career at a risk. But I'm very happy with the other who have been doing a great job.”</i></p> <p><i>“Group assignment submissions. When I did a group assignment last term it was a serious problem from my team mates.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think we should have more communication with the course co-ordinator. Because sometime we cannot get enough information from our lecturers about the exam for that season, sometimes we get fail even though we study hard.”</i></p> <p><i>“In my studies, some subjects are so easy & some are tough. So I think it would be better if all the subject are equal i.e., not so easy but not so tough as well.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is very difficult to understand”</i></p> <p><i>“more time should be given for core subjects and should be prepared from day one for about what is going to come in exams instead of saying in week 12”</i></p> <p><i>“on an average there are 3 - 4 subject per term. 12 weeks and numbers of lec & tutorials. We have 100's of Hardcopies to be printed. Please give more credit on student card.”</i></p> <p><i>“some times some teachers are bias in checking the assignments.”</i></p> <p><i>“The course coordinator should be in the same campus, as he can all tell us, what to give importance to and he can prepare us well for the exams and assignments as he knows what would be there in the exams.”</i></p> <p><i>“Uni's should be more professional in their teachings.”</i></p>

THE OVERALL EXPECTATION - COMMENTS	
POSITIVE COMMENTS	NEGATIVE COMMENTS
CONTEXT: Library research and Internet access.	
	<p><i>“Computers on levels other than 2nd are damn slow. They need to be fast and speedy.”</i></p> <p><i>“Finding required TEXT Books at the university library should be easier.”</i></p> <p><i>“More academic books in library”</i></p> <p><i>“To upgrade the study style and administration system and university website”</i></p>
CONTEXT: University administrative matters.	
<p><i>“Better student service and better communication with student.”</i></p> <p><i>“Creating a good studying environment which benefit everybodys.”</i></p> <p><i>“Marketing and communication”</i></p>	<p><i>“Because for e.g. Sydney campus don't have the real uni life compare to uni in Qld like big campus and recreation life, sports etc”</i></p> <p><i>“Except the fees”</i></p> <p><i>“Expensive, Some says of no good opportuniies after the completion of course</i></p> <p><i>“Firstly, the university means it should be having a campus. When ever we come to uni, we just learning like we are going into a building. This is not the university atmosphere.”</i></p> <p><i>“I expected some award or reward for my hard work in my previous somesters. Only hanging photos on wall is not enough.”</i></p> <p><i>“I got some exemption problem in university because two people have studied same course from same Institution one can get six exemption and the other can get eight exemption.”</i></p> <p><i>“lots of regulation like a prison”</i></p> <p><i>“No big campus; no student association; study overload; less services”</i></p> <p><i>“No rebate for intl. Students in bus fares.”</i></p> <p><i>“not enough exemptions/credit transfer”</i></p> <p><i>“Not frequent access uni with friends”</i></p> <p><i>“Not really”</i></p> <p><i>“Provide more student service like external activities, sports-life, games, more social activities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Should have sports events, end of semester parties etc.”</i></p> <p><i>“Students should be able to pay fees online and enrol online which inturn saves cost to university and time to students”</i></p> <p><i>“The campus is nothing to what I though university life would provide.”</i></p> <p><i>“The placement all TECC should provide more support towards getting jobs and employment. There should be some university cadet program for "hands on experience".</i></p> <p><i>“They are commercial. Need more skilled teacher & professor”</i></p> <p><i>“University policy should be clear to understand. It should not be changed person to person.”</i></p>

THE OVERALL EXPECTATION - COMMENTS	
POSITIVE COMMENTS	NEGATIVE COMMENTS
	<p><i>"University should provide sports activities."</i></p> <p><i>"Well was expecting a full campus where recreational activities like sports could be enjoyed rather than the building"</i></p> <p><i>CQU & Business Colleges are looking for business and money rather than student"</i></p>
CONTEXT: Other matters.	
<p><i>"Good"</i></p> <p><i>"I love playing."</i></p> <p><i>"Life is feeling tough. Because at age of 20's there are so many responsibilities we have to face. But its O.K."</i></p>	<p><i>"Agents misguide students about university. Provide false picture of university."</i></p> <p><i>"Job placement of the graduates more practical course structures"</i></p> <p><i>"life is a bit hard"</i></p> <p><i>"More business than education provider"</i></p> <p><i>"Students overseas before coming here should be given true advice & information."</i></p> <p><i>"Sydney is not big city like Rome or other European cities"</i></p> <p><i>"That is if it is possible to make all the universities is same standard."</i></p> <p><i>"University has to have humanity (feelings). Business at 2nd place. And should not create threat in students about policies."</i></p> <p><i>"University need to earn but looks to keep student's Benefits first & Business 2nd."</i></p> <p><i>"University representatives in India are leading students in wrong way. They don't tell student about anything about university life and courses."</i></p> <p><i>"We (as local) should more understand about overseas student how they living life in Aus. And government rulls."</i></p> <p><i>"We need some "hands on experience" (practical) besides the theoretical ones."</i></p>
TOTAL COMMENTS 19	53
% OF TOTAL COMMENTS 26.4%	73.6%

When considered in terms of the numbers of comments offered in each theme, the responses to the meeting of expectations overall are as shown in Table 169. The sequence of responses in the Table has been arranged to rank the number of comments offered in descending order.

Table 169: Meeting overall expectations – Response rates by issue (Q.85-87)

THE OVERALL EXPECTATION – RESPONSE RATES BY ISSUE					
CONTEXT	TOTAL	NO. OF POSITIVE COMMENTS	% OF TOTAL	NO. OF NEGATIVE COMMENTS	% OF TOTAL
University administrative matters.	25	3	12.0	22	88.0
Academic matters.	21	9	42.9	12	57.1
Other matters.	15	3	20.0	12	80.0
Getting along with others: teachers, staff and fellow students.	7	4	57.2	3	42.8
Library research and Internet access.	4	0	0.0	4	100.0
TOTAL COMMENTS	72	19	26.4%	53	73.6%

For the 125 questionnaires analysed in this research, the three questions 85-87 provided a total of 375 opportunities for response and comment. The distribution of the 19 generally positive and 53 generally negative comments offered was as shown in Table 170:

Table 170: Meeting overall expectations – Response rates by question (Q.85-87)

THE OVERALL EXPECTATION – RESPONSE RATES BY QUESTION					
QUESTION	TOTAL	NO. OF POSITIVE COMMENTS	% OF TOTAL	NO. OF NEGATIVE COMMENTS	% OF TOTAL
Q.85. Some other issue or problem?	19	0	15.2	19	60.8
Q.86. Overall, has your experience met your expectations?	27	13	50.4	14	30.4
Q.87. Is there anything else?	26	6	23.2	20	58.4
TOTAL COMMENTS	72	19	26.4%	53	73.6%

Conclusion

Overall, the responses in the experience section of the study reinforce the concept of students as consumers presented, for example, by Sherry and colleagues (in Sherry et al. 2004). The concluding pattern that emerged from analysis of responses to the questions was that:

Emerging Data Pattern 54 Dissatisfied customers comment more

- Whilst more respondents perceived a positive outcome of experience meeting expectation (63 or 50.4% positive versus 38 or 30.4% negative in Table 163 on page 339), it was dissatisfied customers who tended to comment more (53 or 73.6% dissatisfied comments versus only 19 or 26.4% satisfied comments in Table 170 on page 346), and therefore do most damage to reputation.

This issue of international students displaying positive or negative traits of customer satisfaction, its impact, and possible actions appropriate to business managers is discussed at length in the academic literature on customer relationship management (see for example Goodman 1999; Liu & McClure 2001; Goodman & Newman 2003; Goodman 2006; Lerman 2006). In particular, the remarks by Goodman equating known complaints to the ‘tip of the iceberg’ (Goodman 1999, p.5) suggested that the 53 negative comments offered by respondents to the questionnaire could affect as many as ten times that number of customers (Goodman 1999, p.2), or more than four times the 125 students in the survey cohort. The potential effect of this in terms of the undergraduate student population at the research site at the time of the survey is as shown in Table 171.

Table 171: The complaints ‘iceberg’ (interpreting Goodman 1999)

THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF NEGATIVE COMMENTS				
	NO.	POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AFFECTED	% OF COHORT	COMMENT
Negative comments	53	53 negative comments * ‘Goodman multiplier’ of 10 potential customers affected = 530 potential customers affected.		
B.Accounting Sub-continental cohort	186	530	285%	The potential negative effect of these adverse comments could reach almost 3 times as many people as were in the Sub-continental B.Accounting cohort at the time of the study.
B.Accounting cohort	491	530	108%	The potential negative effect of these comments could also adversely influence the buying decision of a customer base of around the same size as the B.Accounting cohort at the time of data collection.
Undergraduate Cohort	774	530	68%	The ‘iceberg effect’ could adversely affect a potential customer base of around 2/3 the size of the undergraduate cohort.
The Academy	1701	530	31%	And, the potential adverse effect of negative comments returned in this survey is broadly equivalent to affecting a potential customer base of 1/3 of the entire student body at the research site at the time of the survey.

This data suggested an imperative for further research. Noting that, ‘on average, twice as many people are told about a bad experience than they are about a good experience’ (Goodman 1999, p.2), as well as the finding earlier in this analysis of a high dependence on word of mouth advice from persons other than the university (Table 54 on page 241), then:

Further Research 16: The impact of negative customer experiences

- The potential impact of negative comments relating to educational experience should be further examined.

Students in their first term of study at the university

The fifth, and final, section of this Appendix presents data gathered from all categories that describe issues relevant to students in their first term of study at the university. Fifteen (12.0%) of the 125 respondents to the survey were in their first term of study at the university at that time. The responses of first term students to the main sections of the questionnaire are shown in comparison to overall responses in Table 172.

Table 172: Responses by students in their first term of study at the university

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES – FIRST TERM STUDENT RESPONSES								
QN.	RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS	1 VERY CONF.	2 CONF.	3 NEITHER	4 NOT CONF.	5 VERY U.C.	NO RESP.	TOTAL
33-55.	Confidence about living in Australia and studying at university.	1	2	3	4	5	0	15
	Other Terms	794	1231	235	69	19	182	2530
	%	31%	49%	9%	3%	1%	7%	100%
	Term 3, 2007 responses	31	233	72	7	0	2	345
	%	9%	67%	21%	2%	0%	1%	100%
QN.	CONTENT	1 ALWAYS	2 OFTEN	3 DON'T KNOW	4 SOME TIMES	5 NEVER	NO RESP.	TOTAL
57-66.	Coping with issues experienced at university in Australia.	827.4	1469.16	313.3	84.05	29.01	184.08	2907
	Other Terms	184	247	90	199	285	95	1100
	%	17%	23%	8%	18%	26%	8%	100%
	Term 3, 2007 responses	24	36	30	24	32	4	150
	%	16%	24%	20%	16%	21%	3%	1
QN.	CONTENT	1 V G	2 GOOD	3 NEITHER	4 BAD	5 V BAD	NO RESP.	TOTAL
67-82.	How students feel generally about their overall experience at university in Australia.	1036.73	1754.63	436.58	311.39	351.48	283.19	4174
	Other Terms	422	764	249	84	80	157	1756
	%	24%	44%	14%	5%	4%	9%	100%
	Term 3, 2007 responses	26	142	47	10	15	0	240
	%	11%	59%	20%	4%	6%	0%	1

Generally, the pattern that emerged from the data showed that:

Emerging Data Pattern 55: First term students are generally less confident than their peers

- For students in their third week at the university, those that did feel very confident or confident about living in Australia and studying at university

represented the same proportion of respondents as their peers; but the proportion of those who remain undecided outnumbered their peers two to one (21% of first termers vs. 9% of other respondents). They did, however, share an equal belief with their peers in their ability to cope with the issues they experienced at university in Australia, and generally felt equally as good about their overall experience.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in the 4th and 5th weeks of Term 3, 2007. Two students participating in the interviews were in their first term of study at the university (Interviewees Nos.11 and 33 in Table 23 on page 189). Two further students (Interviewees Nos. 27 and 28) had just started their second term. Highlights of their comments relevant to first term expectations are shown in Table 173:

Table 173: Interview comments: A final word - the first term experience

Interview Comments 16: A final word - the first term experience

Language	<p>11. Yes, four languages. English maybe since first.</p> <p>33. Basically [finished high school studies] in English.</p> <p>27. Mother language Punjabi.</p>
Preparations for learning at university	<p>11. Actually I am here four months [studying] English for Academic Purposes at [school].</p> <p>33. I choose accounting as my base course because I like to do mathematical. I didn't even bother to think about [special preparation for university] because I know it's all the same everywhere.</p> <p>27. IELTS one month.</p> <p>28. After high school I go to Australian university. At first I was coming, I plan, I make my plan to go abroad for a study and I choose the country, then I know that English is very much useful, like English country. Then I was prepared for English, then I am thinking about who's place it would be better for learning English.</p>
Coping with hardest thing	<p>11. Different subjects, like law, Computing. I never heard of this before. I never learned it before. Yes, first time I was shocked then I just tried to learn what the concept is about and then now I am doing much better. Yes, but not much.</p> <p>33. The first thing is the different culture and all the different peoples ... different teachers with different accents. I try to understand what they're teaching us; if we don't get anything, we just ask them, "can you please repeat". They always do; whenever any students get stuck they always sort it out; they go back and go slow.</p> <p>27. Language problem. I have problems speaking English.</p> <p>28. I don't suffer any things ... I have a brother-in-law, he was studying in Australia ... [he] is very assistant ... now he is doing a business in Bangladesh ... he gives the most information for me.</p>
Easiest things	<p>11. Accounting. Marketing.</p> <p>33. The way of assignments and exams. Because they give the course material in the beginning of the study; so that gave the students exactly what to do in their assignments ... they've got the study materials. So they get prepared before the deadline, so they get their shoes ready.</p> <p>27. It's easy to do the course. Because the teachers are very cooperative; that's why.</p>
Study routines	<p>11. Just come for classes. Time is not suitable for me, its morning 9 to 5. Takes</p>

and work	<p><i>more than an hour from work to uni.</i></p> <p>33. [Study] <i>Sunday about two or three hours; on Monday I spend five to six depends on the study load ... A couple of my friends we stay here [at university after classes] because we don't have work, after we finish in the labs and library searching through the books and studying.</i></p> <p>27. <i>No work. Study at home about three hours a day, five days. School four hours on the three days of the week. On other two days of the week study another three hours or so.</i></p> <p>28. <i>Five days I am doing a part-time job. Yes. I'm tired.</i></p>
The best things; and the worst	<p>11. <i>A better future. The worst: Mm struggling life. Struggling student life.</i></p> <p>33. [Best] <i>It makes you punctual about your study, because if you study in your country, you don't have anyone to force you to study but here you are for study so you have to study; we can't hide ourselves from study. [The worst?] It's hard to say, study is always [inaudible].</i></p> <p>27. [Best] <i>I thought because there are so many countries [represented here]. [The worst?] Just speaking.</i></p> <p>28. [The worst] <i>I think this is so boring and busy. I just like to finish my course.</i></p>
Making university life better	<p>11. <i>Change the times. Evening.</i></p> <p>33. <i>Activities, some sports, physical training ... makes your mind really relax.</i></p> <p>27. <i>Jobs for students ... extra classes for English for international students.</i></p>
Making learning at university better	<p>11. <i>Teaching; maybe small class, maybe 10 students in that class. Yes; scary.</i></p> <p>33. <i>Academic is, I can't say why; it's really good.</i></p> <p>27. <i>Here education is simplest way ... there are assignments we can get 30% 40% mark in the assignment.</i></p> <p>28. <i>It's okay; it's good.</i></p>
One suggestion for new comers	<p>11. <i>Don't come. I think life in home country is much better. Yes. Or if you want to come, come after finishing your study, not for a student. I am only son; I miss my family.</i></p> <p>33. <i>Get your [study] shoes ready!</i></p> <p>27. <i>I think you [the university] should know the background of the students from where he comes and in which situation he is living here. Because if we would know the mentality of the person, what he thinks, it's very easy for us to You are understanding what I want to say yes? Living expenses are very high here, needs are very expensive and it's very difficult for a single person to come here and live alone and then work and study and then make the money for the tuition fees. Because semester is only for four months, so it's very difficult to collect the money for next ...</i></p> <p>28. <i>Come abroad to study; it's a good idea. I think there is the best opportunity.</i></p>

Whilst only comprising around 3% of students surveyed in this research, the interview comments offered by the four first-year students highlighted a number of recurring themes in the lives of international students today. These themes include student safety, accommodation, social inclusion, support and protection from exploitation.

The same themes have emerged in the literature during the past decade. For example, IDP Education Australia (1997) in discussing the issues and challenges facing international students in Australia suggested that perceptions of racism needed to be

addressed. In considering the pastoral care needs of international students in New Zealand, Butcher and Mc Grath (2004) identified issues in the health, safety and financial needs of international students as being in need of better and proactive response by governments. Deumert and colleagues (Deumert et al. 2005) also identified significant gaps in the governance of international students' rights, classifying international students as individuals deserving of social and economic security. They advocated a student security regime that incorporated better university practices and more integrated civil society networks, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations.

More recently, international students in Australia have been described in terms of a new vulnerable workforce (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2007; Nyland et al. 2008), open to exploitation and experiencing severe financial problems. Drawing on the work experiences of 200 international students studying in Australian higher education institutions, and citing other observers of "the dark side to working while studying" (for example, CHSICL 1998; McDonald et al. 2007), a case is presented for national policy reform to bolster the position of international student workers. That case for improved practice has been reinforced by Trounson and Slattery (2009) who identify the need for some form of financial safety net for international students.

These themes in the discourse may appear to be coming full circle. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard (2009a) has given prominence to international student concerns. Reinforcing Australian Government support for international education in the light of a series of negative issues (for example, Hodge 2009; Ross 2009; Sawir et al. 2009), the minister recently undertook to further improve student experiences by announcing the creation of a Senate inquiry into student safety, adequate and affordable accommodation, social inclusion, student visa requirements, adequate international student support and advocacy, employment rights and protections from exploitation (Parliament of Australia 2009).

Conclusion

The results of analysis of the questionnaire data and follow-up interviews detailed in this Appendix were interpreted to craft answers to the research questions. These are presented in Chapter 6.

Generally, and with the data suggesting that international students perceive their experience has meet their expectation (Table 168: Meeting overall expectations - Comments (Q.85-87) on page 343) but not representing value for money in terms of the cost of living in Australia and the overall cost of a degree (Table 145: Q.74 - The cost of my degree, page 314), the data revealed that a need exists to better manage perceptions of service that might create for international students a good experience in Australia, and for universities, a sustainable market. This general conclusion suggested that the original premise which first prompted this research effort may be found to stand yet, namely "good teaching makes good business".

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